

DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

Ulrik Langen, Frederik Stjernfelt

THE WORLD'S FIRST FULL PRESS FREEDOM

THE RADICAL EXPERIMENT OF DENMARK-NORWAY
1770-1773



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Preface

This book is an English version of a comprehensive study which the two of us wrote with book historian Henrik Horstbøll for the 250th anniversary of Press Freedom in Denmark-Norway, 14 September 2020. That book is titled “Grovfækt” – Coarse Confectionary – and was presented in the presence of Danish PM Mette Frederiksen as a celebration of the anniversary in the Bourse of Copenhagen where Press Freedom pamphlets were once sold. “Grovfækt” is a thorough and detailed presentation of the Press Freedom Period in Denmark-Norway in the years 1770 to 1773 over 1,100 two-column pages.

The Danish-Norwegian Press Freedom was the first full statutory abolition of pre-print censorship in the world. It immediately gave rise to some of the most dramatic years in modern Danish-Norwegian history, and the surprising, promising, and later bloody, shocking events in Copenhagen had large international reverberations at the time. For that reason, from the start it was clear to us that we would wish to conclude our investigation with an international, anglophone presentation of the results.

To this end, we had to plan the present book rather differently from the Danish volume. It presents the events more concisely, with an emphasis on exhibiting the Danish-Norwegian context not evident to an international reader, and, most particularly, with a larger emphasis upon the international relevance of events and on the surprising international reaction which informed the world news peaking in the spring of 1772 and the years thereafter.

The Danish version was written with the participation of Henrik Horstbøll who is now retired and did not wish to participate on an equal basis in the English version. Still, he agreed to collaborate on the important chapter on economic debates during Press Freedom. We thank him for this generosity and would also like to take this occasion to remark that his investigations and insights also inform many of the other results presented here.

We would also like to thank a series of other persons for many different kinds of help and assistance, without whom this project would not have been possible: Charlotte Appel, Nils Bartholdy, Karen-Maria Bille, Toine Bogers, David Budtz Pedersen, Peer Bundgaard, Hanne Frøsig Dalgaard, Bodil Due, Jens-Martin Eriksen, Jens Glebe-Møller, Ruth Hemstad, Morten Hesseldahl, Bent Holm, Jonathan Israel, Niels Iversen, Jesper Jakobsen, Ellen Krefting, Birger Larsen, Poul Steen Larsen, John T. Lauridsen, Anne Mette Lauritzen, Ditte Laursen, Jesper Laursen, John Christian Laursen, Martin Schwarz Lausten, Thomas Lyngby, Tove Engelhardt Mathiassen, Jacob Mchangama, Florian Meier, Thomas Munch, Jes Fabricius Møller, Michael Agerbo Mørch, Jonas Nordin, Johannes Riis, Bo Krantz Simonsen, Agnete Stjernfelt, Karoline Stjernfelt, Annemette Sørensen, Søren Ulrik Thomsen, Anders Toftgaard, Mikael Vetner, Karen Margrethe Wendelboe, Joachim Wiewiura.

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Copenhagen, January 2022
Ulrik Langen and Frederik Stjernfelt

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1 Introduction

In the Cabinet

No one knows exactly what happened in King Christian VII's cabinet at Frederiksberg Castle outside of Copenhagen on 4 September, 1770. In the company of his German physician Johann Friedrich Struensee, the 21-year-old king single-handedly wrote a note on a loose sheet of paper. The memorandum was written in French and contained six points that needed to be addressed, including quite varied matters such as the allocation of extra means to the royal theater company, the submission of a report from an agricultural commission, the granting of postage exemption to a particular nobleman, and the preparation of an inquiry into a failed naval expedition to Algiers. One of the points was about exercising future restraint when awarding titles – now, they should be awarded on merit, not preeminence. The third item on the list reads as follows: “3. Furthermore, an order to the chancellery that gives complete freedom of the press so that books can be printed without any kind of censorship”.¹

The sheet was handed to the Cabinet Secretary who rephrased the King's note turning it into a so-called Cabinet Order articulated in a more formal language. The six points were divided into separate orders and then returned for the King and Struensee's approval. The orders had been given a much more detailed wording and motivation, and all was done in German. Eventually, the King signed the orders, and they were paraphed, that is, countersigned by the Cabinet Secretary. This was how a Cabinet Order was produced; the King's personal command, which had not been processed in the State Council or in the ministries, but was emerging directly from his Cabinet, that is, the unequivocal expression of the absolute monarch's will, provided with his signature that gave the words on the paper legal force. The orders were now forwarded to the authorities who were to carry them out. In the case of the Cabinet Order to abolish censorship, it was sent to the Danish Chancellery, which was to forward the order to the relevant authorities in the form of an ordinance, i. e., a piece of legislation. On 14 September, 1770, the Ordinance was released. It was a sensational break. As the first state in the world, Denmark-Norway had introduced full statutory freedom of the press. This is how the final ordinance read:

We are fully convinced that it is as harmful to the impartial search for truth as it is to the discovery of obsolete errors and prejudices, if upright patriots, zealous for the common good and what is genuinely best for their fellow citizens, because they are frightened by reputation, orders, and preconceived opinions, are hindered from being free to write according to their insight, conscience, and conviction, attacking abuses and uncovering prejudices. And thus in

¹ “3. Encor un ordre aux chancelleries qui donne la permission sans restriction pour la presse, que les livres doivent être imprimés sans aucune censure”, National Archives: Kabinetssekretariatet 1766–1771: Kgl. ordrer til kabinetssekretariatet, Cabinet Order of 4 September 1770.

this regard, after ripe consideration, we have decided to permit in our kingdoms and lands in general an unlimited freedom of the press of such a form, that from now on no one shall be required and obliged to submit books and writings that he wants to bring to the press to the previously required censorship and approval, and thus to submit them to the control of those who have undertaken the business until now of inspecting them; so have we graciously revealed and made known this our will concerning our kingdoms to our Danish Chancellery. Given at Friedrichsberg, the 4 September 1770. Christian.²

The elaborate passages in the Ordinance were quite far from the King's own dauntless and straightforward formulation. The Ordinance aimed at motivating the decision and explaining the reason for the King's desire to introduce press freedom.³ Looking at the choice of words in the specific sentences, the Ordinance represents an outlining of an Enlightenment program characteristic of radical thought of the period. The Ordinance was based on the notion of an orderly public, in which truth could be located through impartial inquiry: "[T]he impartial search for truth". This inquiry was to be carried out by "upright patriots" who acted according to their "insight, conscience, and conviction". The purpose was to use Enlightenment guidelines in order to get rid of "obsolete errors and prejudices" by "attacking abuses and uncovering prejudices". Thus, there was an implicit assumption in the Ordinance about who would constitute the actors of the public and what the function of the public ought to be. The Ordinance was based on idealistic, patriotic ideas of a public. On the other hand, it was unclear how the actors in practice ought to communicate in this new public. It was not anticipated that views on what exactly would constitute errors, abuses, and prejudices might prove divided.

Until the introduction of Press Freedom, it was the provisions of the Danish Law of King Christian V from 1683 that set the framework for the printed public. In principle, all publications had to be approved in advance by the leading professors in the Academic Council of the University of Copenhagen before printers and booksellers took them to the market. Violations could result in very severe penalties. Censors were particularly aware of the mentioning of religious and political matters, just as they were looking for lampoons and other defamatory writings, not least against court and King, or against foreign powers. Despite the strict wording of the legislation, in practice there were openings in censorship. Scholars could easily acquire uncensored foreign writings, just like numbers of small prints leaked onto the market without having passed the censors.

² This translation is by J. C. Laursen and published in Laursen 1998. Translated from the original German in Nyerup (ed.) 1791, 1–2; also in Hansen 1916, I, 46–47.

³ In this book, we write "press freedom" when speaking about the general principle; we write "Press Freedom" with capitals when referring to the specific Press Freedom Period in Denmark-Norway.

2.

Was sind die eiligen Vorfälle, daß es die unpartheijliche Untersuchung der
 Wahrheit eben so nachtheilig, als die Entscheidung vortheilhaftes Fortschritts und Vortheils
 hinderlich ist, wenn richtig gemerkt, man das allgemeine Wohl und wahre Beste ihres
 Mitbürgers beizubringen, durch Aufseher, Befehle und sonstige Meinungen ab-
 geschwehrt und befördert werden, nach freier, gewissen und Überzeugung frey zu spre-
 chen, Mißbräuche anzugehen und Vortheile einzubringen. Und da dies in diesem
 bezieht, nach richtigem Überlegung beizubringen haben, in diesem Briefe und Landen über-
 haupt eine unangehörte Freiheit der Rede solle gehalten zu gelassen, daß man
 an Niemand schuldig und verbunden seyn soll, seine Briefe und Besichtigungen, die es dem
 Reich übergeben will, die Briefe vorordnet geschrieben und approbation
 zu unterzeichnen, und solche die fuder bis diejenigen, denen diese Geschäfte die Aufsicht
 aufgetragen geschrieben, zur Aufsicht einzuliefern; so haben wir dieses dem
 selben Kanzler in diesem Briefe Willen, in Abseht auf dieses Königsriefe, freudlich in
 Gnade vornehmen und bekannt machen sollen. Gegeben Friedrichsberg d. 4^{ten}
 Septbr. 1770.

Christian

Schwarzer

1770 ⁴/₉
F. 40.

an K. d. dänische Kanzler

Fig. 1: The Cabinet Order regarding Press Freedom of 4 September 1770 became the occasion for the September 14 Ordinance which, from one day to the next, introduced Full Press Freedom in Denmark-Norway and the Duchies.

The Cabinet Order of 4 September 1770. © The Danish National Archives.

In the 1740s, institutions such as the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters and the Sorø Academy had been given the right to censor their own publications themselves. In 1755, subjects were given access to critical participation in socio-economic debates when the government invited patriots to contribute to *Danmarks og*

Norges Oeconomiske Magazin (“The Economic Magazine of Denmark and Norway” 1757–64).⁴ Anyway, this still remained a strictly monitored and controlled public until the Ordinance of Press Freedom in 1770 completely changed the terms.⁵ The sudden removal of pre-print censorship by ordinance had left out any mentioning to what extent the many provisions of the Danish Law of King Christian V from 1683 still applied to what was actually published. At first, many people seemed to have assumed that Press Freedom meant repealing the provisions of the Danish Law, but this should prove more complicated. Completely unforeseen, Press Freedom opened up completely new types of publics, which were far from devoted solely to the “the impartial search for truth”. New voices, new themes, and new tones quickly gained ground and completely changed the rules of the game.

The Press Freedom Period became a large-scale adventurous experiment. What would happen when a mid-size European absolutist state suddenly abolished all censorship? This experiment can be followed closely in a large collection of close to 1,000 writings collected by the civil servant Bolle Willum Luxdorph including nearly every new writing that flowed into the market after the introduction of Press Freedom until it was revoked at the end of 1773. With a distinctive sense of the exceptionality of this new media situation, he collected everything he considered to be Press Freedom Writings, i. e., publications owing their existence to Press Freedom or being related to subjects or debates born out of the newly gained freedom, leaving out any publication that, in his opinion, would have passed censorship and been approved for publishing before September 14 1770.

Almost all of the writings were published in octavo varying from ballads of eight badly printed pages to treatises of hundreds of pages, and the majority of them were ano- or pseudonymous. Luxdorph arranged his collected publications thematically and had them bound in 47 volumes, which he gave the title “Writings of The Press Freedom”. The Luxdorph Collection is unparalleled and reveals almost on a day-to-day basis how Press Freedom developed. This book is about the outcome of the Press Freedom experiment and is primarily based on the Luxdorph Collection. In this book we use the term “Press Freedom Writings” when referring to publications in the collection and to the little less than 200 related publications which escaped Luxdorph’s attention but have been located in other collections.

These Press Freedom Writings have not previously been subject to an in-depth, comprehensive investigation. Some among the approximately 1,000 publications have occasionally been used as source material for various purposes, but for many years the Press Freedom Writings were considered unworthy to be studied seriously. Already at the time, many learned observers frowned at the excesses of Press Free-

⁴ On this initiative see especially Maliks 2011.

⁵ The government control of the Danish-Norwegian public is described in Rian 2014. A thorough account of the history of censorship from the Reformation to present day is to be found in Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2016.

dom Writings, an attitude inherited by most later historians. In 1901, historian Carl Bruun described how “the most miserable writers and cheats criticized everything between heaven and earth, untalented satires, vulgar lampoons, anonymous and pseudonymous slander came into existence in hundreds of ways; it was like a Walpurgis Night of rudeness, stupidity, and meanness”. There were only a few bright spots and writings of any value, and all in all, the Press Freedom Period was “a disgrace to the nation”.⁶ The grand old man of Danish-Norwegian eighteenth-century history, Edvard Holm, was the first to treat the Press Freedom Period *en bloc* in one of four treatises from 1885 on the publics of eighteenth-century Denmark-Norway. He was far from enthusiastic about it and abstained from dealing with many of the Press Freedom Writings due to – in his eyes – their lack of quality. Regarding a certain volume in the Luxdorph Collection, he said, for example: “I feel very uneasy to quote from the sometimes downright disgusting allusions to the relationship of Struensee and the Queen that are found in the pamphlets published at this time. Whoever wants to get acquainted with these will find them in the above-mentioned volume of the Luxdorph Collection”.⁷ A little less than 100 years later, on the occasion of the 200-years anniversary of Press Freedom in 1970, the historian Harald Jørgensen wrote that “an alarmingly large part” of the Press Freedom Writings was worth nothing at all.⁸ Evidently, not much had happened regarding the view of Press Freedom during the 85 years between these works. Holm, Jørgensen, and many other historians thus generally rejected the value of Press Freedom Writings on the basis of considerations of their transgressions of good taste, their lack of literary qualities and political consistency. The writings were measured by the style and subject requirements of the existing, narrow elite public.

Also among literati, the Press Freedom Writings have been treated with a distance. Literary historian Peter Hansen mentioned that “no other section of our literary history has witnessed such a myriad of authors sprout like mushrooms from the acid soil of ignorance and immaturity as the swarm of popular reformers and political reasoners which the Press Freedom Period called forth”.⁹ In his view, Press Freedom indicated Struensee’s lack of understanding of the society he wanted to reform, just as it reflected his naive belief in “liberal Enlightenment”, while literary historian Vilhelm Andersen added, somewhat more optimistically, that “public opinion arose from the mud bath of trash literature”.¹⁰ In recent times, the Press Freedom Writings have received a much more positive treatment by Morten Møller, who regards Press Freedom as a breakthrough in the history of publicity, as well as a political and literary current with qualities in its own right.¹¹ The most in-depth analysis are presently

⁶ Bruun 1901, 366. On historians’ views of the Press Freedom see Rian 2014, 179–180.

⁷ Holm 1885, 9 (note 2). He refers to vol. 14 in Luxdorph’s first series of Press Freedom Writings.

⁸ Jørgensen 1970, 39.

⁹ Hansen 1902, 331–333.

¹⁰ Andersen 1936, 650.

¹¹ Fjord Jensen et al. (ed.) 1983, 282–294.

found in Henrik Horstbøll and John Christian Laursen's studies of the Press Freedom Period. They focus on these writings as important evidence when exploring the development of the culture of communication and the history of freedom of expression – an approach which is expanded further in this book.

European Press Freedom

Even if nowhere politically realized to any full extent, Press Freedom as an idea was nothing new in Europe.¹² It had been discussed ever since early Enlightenment in the seventeenth century. Two social roots in particular must be mentioned, that of religions heretics on the fringes of Christianity, particularly on the margins of the post-Reformation Protestant State Churches, be they Lutheran, Calvinist, or Anglican. Protestant churches in general were no more tolerant faced with critics and dissidents than were the Catholics, and heretics, often suffering suppression, developed a natural reason to favor freedom of faith and expression. Another root was that of early networks of the republic of letters in Northwestern Europe, favoring freedom for their own emerging trans-border public outside of the narrow national spheres monitored by princes, courts, and churches, but also developing claims for a more general press freedom. Already by 1700, many of the central arguments for press freedom had been developed. Religious dissenter groups claimed that freedom of expression was needed in order to approach true religion cleansed of superstition, and that princes and churches were but secular powers with no political right to dictate the faith of believers. A more general argument rooted freedom of thought and conscience in the very nature of human beings, often adding social utility arguments that press freedom would lead to the spread of enlightenment and the development of new truths useful for science, state, and policies. During the eighteenth century the important idea was added of press freedom as a bulwark against the arbitrary powers of states over their subjects.

Practical press freedom grew particularly strong roots in the Netherlands and England. In the seventeenth century, the world's commercial center was Amsterdam, people with very different cultural, religious, and political backgrounds flocked here, and in the circle around Spinoza ideas were articulated about "Libertas Philosophandi" – the freedom to think. The decentralized structure of the Dutch republic made it a constant struggle for the Calvinist church to gain political support for censorship. If censored in one city, there was a short walk for an author or bookprinter to the next city with a different political authority, and he could begin afresh. Thus, Holland grew to become a publishing-house for much of Europe, e. g., producing francophone writings, periodicals, and newspapers for the large French market

¹² European history of press freedom and free speech, see Mchangama 2022; see also Horstbøll, Langen, Stjernfelt 2020, Chapter 22.

still subject to strict absolutist censorship. English press freedom enjoyed an early surge in the 1640s, and flowered in particular after the 1688 Glorious Revolution, but just like in the Netherlands, there was no statutory press freedom, and writers would never know when authorities might suddenly see fit to intervene. In mid-to-late eighteenth century, a handful of absolutist rulers, influenced by Enlightenment ideas, began to experiment with relaxing censorship, particularly regarding religious dissidence and criticism. The leading example was the Prussia of Frederick the Great which was undoubtedly the European country with the widest freedom to publish on religion in the period. Other examples include Catherine the Great in Russia and Joseph II in Austria-Hungary; yet all such rulers stopped short when authors began directing severe political criticism against absolutist rule itself.

Denmark-Norway's neighbor and historical arch-enemy Sweden predated Denmark in the introduction of press freedom. The Swedish so-called Age of Liberty from the 1720s to the 1770s saw a weakened King controlled by the strong parliament of *Riksdagen*, and in 1766, one of the two leading factions there succeeded in passing the so-called "Tryckfrihetsförordning" – the Press Freedom Ordinance. Unlike the Danish version, however, the Swedish Ordinance had substantial exemptions for religious writings and left a role for the Church in censorship, just like it had exemption for critical attacks on individuals. On the other hand, the Swedish law, unlike the Danish, introduced freedom of information in the sense that many types of state documents, formerly government secrets, were declared free to print. It is a curious fact that we find almost no reference to Swedish press freedom in the extensive discussions during Press Freedom in Denmark-Norway. The wars of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century between the two countries were not forgotten.¹³ Furthermore, it can be argued, that while Swedish press freedom, ideally speaking, was an act of the people carried out by its elite representatives in the *Riksdag*, Danish-Norwegian press freedom was a favor granted by the merciful absolutist monarch to his humble subjects. This political difference of interpretation may have been one reason why the two ordinances were never compared.

Struensee, the King's physician achieving increasing powers through the fall of 1770, was, as we shall see, particularly well-informed about recent discussions in the international republic of letters. A disciple of Albrecht von Haller, a fan of Voltaire, an admirer of Frederick the Great, his favorite philosopher was Helvétius. He would look south to the continent rather than to Sweden.

13 On the Swedish Press Freedom Ordinance, see Nordin 2016, Nordin and Laursen 2020, and Nordin, Langen, and Stjernfelt in press.

Public Space versus Public Spaces

Press Freedom in Denmark-Norway was a political, cultural and ideological phenomenon in more than one sense. Once Press Freedom was implemented, statements and clashes of political and socio-economic ideas and interests were suddenly on the table. Press Freedom became a new component of the political system, changing existing power relations and giving new social groups and individuals the opportunity to express themselves, exercise influence, make money, settle accounts, and much more. Freedom of the press allowed for a whole range of new social practices, dialogue, criticism, controversy, entertainment, satire, libel, and it even acquired a social character in which a number of self-regulatory mechanisms emerged: reviews and criticism – in the sense of literary criticism and reviewing of other writings and writers' behavior – mapping, monitoring, sometimes threatening them. At the same time, Press Freedom provided a novel opportunity for individual initiatives: new writers with very diverse attitudes, developments and careers jump forward during the period.

A basic insight in this book is that the particular experience of Press Freedom and its writings cannot be separated from the extreme political changes of the period. Press Freedom was continuously fed, so to speak, with an avalanche of new political initiatives, scandals, coups and reactions, generating more pamphlets and radicalizing ongoing debates. For this reason, it is important to examine the specific contexts in which particular texts are included. Another important point is to consider the Press Freedom public sphere as practice, that is, as a process in which actors and places, so to speak, create Press Freedom by continuously using it, investigating it, changing it, and developing it.

How does one grasp a phenomenon like the brand-new public sphere which emerged with the introduction of Press Freedom September 14, 1770? The multifaceted experiences of practicing press freedom in Denmark-Norway 1770 to 1773 evade the constraints of traditional terminology of eighteenth-century book history or history of communication and elusive concepts like “the public sphere”. On the other hand, anyone dealing with early modern publics must relate to Jürgen Habermas' influential and controversial theory of the bourgeois public sphere from 1962, and it is hardly an exaggeration when T. C. W. Blanning refers to Habermas' book as the most influential *Habilitationsschrift* ever published.¹⁴ Habermas launched an ideal-typical model based on the observation that Western European societies were, until the end of the seventeenth century, dominated by representative publics spheres where those in power, i. e. princes, nobility, and church, displayed and exercised power in a form of largely monological representation. Through ceremonial and linguistic staging of power – in a “representative” public sphere – the rulers expressed and legitimized their power over a passively receiving population that did

¹⁴ Blanning 2006, 6.

not, in itself, participate in the exertion of the public sphere. This order was challenged by the emergence of a bourgeois public as the result of an increased exchange of goods and information. This bourgeois public sphere grew to constitute a new domain between the private sphere and the authorities, and places such as coffee houses, salons, clubs, and academies, in countries such as England, France, and Germany, are highlighted by Habermas as examples of fora where citizens would engage in conversations and rational criticism.

Over time, this critical and reasoning participation in the bourgeois public sphere became more and more oppositional to traditional rulers. At the same time, a so-called cultural industrialization took place, where e. g., luxury goods, books, and music were produced for a market of a consuming public, dissolving the traditional control of those in power over the representative public. During the nineteenth century, however, increasing commercialization had a limiting effect on the autonomous bourgeois public sphere, so that the rational exchange of opinions degenerated into a commercial culture of consumption. The bourgeois public sphere as a political utopia had been replaced by mass culture. Historiographic use of this Habermasian model has primarily revolved around the part that deals with the emergence of the bourgeois public – and has cared less about the overarching theory of capitalism’s limiting impact on modern mass publicity from the nineteenth century onwards and the problematic identification, in the theory, of discussing bourgeois citizens with capitalist entrepreneurs and industrialists.¹⁵

What particularly affected the prevalence and success of this model was the translation of Habermas’ book into English in 1988, giving rise to a veritable wave of Habermas-inspired studies, especially in the United States. It has been highlighted several times that the English translation of *Öffentlichkeit* into ‘public sphere’ has led to the perception being given of the public sphere as a metaphorical spatial dimension in many English-language studies, a dimension that has at times been taken too literally and inflexibly.¹⁶ The word *Öffentlichkeit* describes a communicative process and its conditions rather than one concrete space, whether it is topically or meta-topically understood, as the historian Massimo Rosprocher has formulated it. In the English translation, the term covers both a discursive, etheric dimension and describes the public sphere as a physical place where exchange of opinions takes place.¹⁷

15 Discussions and overviews of historians’ employment of the model: Calhoun 2010, 301–335; Jon Mee 2007, 175–195 and la Vopa 1992, 79–116. William H. Sewell has recently published a study elaborating the argument regarding the development of capitalism in Habermas’ model by introducing the notion of “commercial public sphere” replacing that of Habermas’ “bourgeois public sphere”, Sewell 2021.

16 The first to point to this problem of translation was Keith Michael Baker (Baker 1992, 181–211). The spatial metaphor is also discussed in Vanhaelen and Ward 2013, 3.

17 Rosprocher (ed.) 2012, 14–16.

Quite a few readers of the English translation thus came to understand the public sphere as if it took up residence in specific places such as coffee houses, salons, academies, and clubs only, i. e. the types of places that Habermas had highlighted in his work, and not in more generally perception as communication made possible by markets, publications, postal services, etc., as interactions on different levels and scales, from a few people in a coffee house to an unlimited amount of very different readers of widely differing published writings.¹⁸ Furthermore, Habermas' book has been criticized for evoking an idealized version of eighteenth-century public discourses and, not least, for establishing too sharp a separation between state and society.¹⁹ Likewise, Habermas-inspired historians focusing on the eighteenth century have been aware of the weaknesses of the model when it was held up against evidence of historical experiences. Not least the blind spots of the model in terms of gender and social groups have been criticized, including its weak conceptual understanding of popular publics.²⁰

In an important essay, Harold Mah has argued that the spatial understanding of the public sphere or as a domain for free conversation and with free access for all social groups has served analytical and political purposes but has not done justice to the complexities of the public sphere considered as a phenomenon of social reality. In an attempt to include wider sections of the population and endow them with agency, the public sphere has been expanded to include other social groups than in Habermas' original model focusing on educated and intellectuals. If a researcher could show that marginalized groups had access to this domain (even establishing their own public spheres) such groups could be endowed with agency and strength and gain legitimacy and authority. Another important point to Mah is the inexpedient propensity to present the public sphere as a totality transforming it into a subject ("the public opinion"), almost like a kind of individual with reason, desires, emotions, intentionality, and powers of action.²¹

A further aspect of the discussion of the public sphere regards problematization of the sharp private-public dichotomy that lies embedded in modern social and legal either-or understandings and which does not necessarily make sense in an early modern context.²² A large number of studies have taken Habermas as a starting point in establishing an oppositional relationship between public and private. For instance, in a number of gender studies, the distinction has been utilized to show how women during the eighteenth century were largely pushed into the private sphere,

18 This point is also stated in Jones 2009, 144.

19 Blanning 2006, 14.

20 See Landes 1988 and Farge 1994. Both Landes and Farge acknowledge the inspiration from Habermas while explicitly aiming at exploring the areas that the model does not include or give an account for. Also see Pollock 2009.

21 Mah 2000, 151–182. David Andress has followed Mah's critique in a Foucault-inspired study of Parisian public sphere in the first year of the French Revolution, see Andress 2006, 145–166.

22 Castiglione and Lesley (eds.) 1995.

often concretely spatially defined as the home or the house, while men acted as political subjects in the public sphere.²³ That interpretation, on the other hand, has been met with skepticism by researchers who opposed an overly tangible division between the private and the public.²⁴ The Danish concept of *offentlighed* is similar to the German *Öffentlichkeit* combining and conveying – as Rosprocher sums up – “ideas of publicity/publicness or openness/openicity, or even public culture/public domain, rather than the now conventional notion of the public sphere”.²⁵ So, when we refer to the public sphere in this book, it should be taken as equivalent to the German *Öffentlichkeit* or publicness.

One last point regarding the theoretical debate on Habermasian public sphere has specific relevance to the study presented in this book. As mentioned earlier, the Press Freedom Ordinance was clearly aiming at framing a rational, critical, and debating public sphere – in an idealist Habermasian sense – composed of individuals acting according to their “insight, conscience, and conviction” in “attacking abuses and uncovering prejudices” when conducting “the impartial search for truth”. In some ways, this did indeed happen, but in many more ways the new public sphere of Press Freedom diverged from the idealist shape of an enlightened public. As Antoine Lilti has argued, publics in second half of the eighteenth century were, to a great extent, constituted by the sense of *belonging* to a public. They were characterized by individuals sharing – at the same time – the same curiosity and interests (and being aware of this simultaneity), realizing that they made up a public although being physically separated, rather than by rational arguments and enlightened discourse. By turning focus to publicity, instead of public sphere tout court, the process of this sharing calls for more analytical attention. Lilti argues that publicity appears more egalitarian – and emotional, irrational, and transient – because it, among other things, defies control of information and secrecy, thus, often conflicting with elitist conceptions of cultural distinction and political expertise. This was indeed the case with the media revolution of the Press Freedom Period. Publicity was an important component in the rise of the many new authors in the first part of the period, as well a strong agent in the campaigns against Struensee after his fall in January 1772. So, rather than consenting to a Habermasian construct of a Golden Age rational public, which declined, in the nineteenth century, into mass culture and consumerism, it is worthwhile insisting on “the essential ambivalence of publicity as a practice” already in the eighteenth century.²⁶

23 Elshtain 1981 and Pateman 1995.

24 For instance, Klein 1995, 97–109 and Schjerning 2019, 184–199.

25 Rosprocher 2012, 15–16. Regarding the terms of openness/openicity Rosprocher refers to Kleins-teuber 2001, 96, which – regarding the terms of publicity/publicness – refers to Splichal 1999.

26 Lilti 2017, 14–15.

Press Freedom in Practice

Turning to the Danish-Norwegian context, classical works such as Edvard Holm's above-mentioned dissertations on eighteenth-century publicity and Jens A. Seip's influential article "The Theory of the Opinion-Guided Absolutism" propose the idea of the public sphere as an entity conceptualized as "public opinion" or simply "opinion".²⁷ As Emil Johnsen has argued, Holm's and to some extent Seip's ideals of public opinion support a monolithic conception of public opinion in the singular, as one collective subject – an observation in line with Mah's critique of Habermas' public sphere as a totality, a subject, a view disregarding that the public is always fragmented and polyphonic.²⁸ In a variety of ways, Holm's and Seip's understanding of publicity and opinion fits into Habermas' much later model of the public sphere. With regard to Danish-Norwegian conditions, however, the problem is that Habermas' theoretical model has but a weak connection to historical experiences of Danish-Norwegian public spheres. The most important objection is that the bourgeois public in Denmark-Norway did not to any large degree consist of a commercial bourgeoisie as opposed to state power, but rather consisted of officials employed within the same state power as well as writers, students, journalists, intellectuals, etc. It was not commercial citizens appearing in public with criticism of absolutism. Henrik Horstbøll has pointed out how the theory of opinion-guided absolutism established a distinction between analytical opinion formation on the one hand and state legislation and the exercise of power on the other, between bourgeois society and the absolutist state. Such a Holm-Seip-Habermas construction ignores the active role played by parts of the absolutist state administration in the literary public sphere.²⁹ From another viewpoint, but with a related claim, Jakob Maliks has argued that the government had already helped, with the so-called invitation letter of 3 March 1755 for the publication of economic writings, to relativize the traditional communicative system of absolutism. A public and critical discussion of socio-economic conditions was largely pushed forward by a civil servant and intellectual bourgeoisie, rather than by a commercial bourgeoisie in Habermasian sense. In that sense, the government had paved the way.³⁰

Based on eighteenth-century Danish-Norwegian production of periodicals, Ellen Krefting too has emphasized how the Danish-Norwegian public was not primarily rooted in commercial bourgeoisie, but was largely driven by university employees, clergymen and civil servants, even craftsmen and farmers. The vertical form of com-

²⁷ Seip 1958, 397–463.

²⁸ Johnsen 2019, 55 (plus endnote 161), 51–52.

²⁹ Horstbøll 1987, 40–42. Håkan Evju has also described the role of the civil servants of the absolutist state in Danish-Norwegian public sphere (Evju 2019). Furthermore, Eva Krause Jørgensen has investigated divergent conceptions of freedom of the press and the public sphere in relation to a specific public controversy over agricultural politics in 1790 (Jørgensen 2019, 411–429).

³⁰ Maliks 2011.

munication, i. e., the traditional representative public sphere and its feedback mechanism in the form of institutions of petitioning in which all subjects had the right to address the king with their grievances, now functioned concurrently with a horizontal, critical, debating, and not least growing public discussing literature, politics, entertainment, gossip, and practical information – rarely, however, questioning the legitimacy of absolutism.³¹

Common to the above-mentioned discussions of the Danish-Norwegian public sphere is that Press Freedom as phenomenon and period is not dealt with separately, either because the main focus has been on the period after Press Freedom or because Press Freedom is considered a parenthetical historical exception.³²

In this book, we regard the public sphere as an amorphous and constantly changing phenomenon with variable centers of gravity and possibilities under varying circumstances, and we thus emphasize the practice that created Press Freedom as well as the practice that Press Freedom created. With the introduction of Press Freedom, there was a quick shift from the normative framework of legislation to the actual use of the new liberty, which constitutes Press Freedom as a practice under constant self-monitoring and constantly up for discussion. In that sense, publishers, writers, and readers were the creators of Press Freedom, and the public was made up of all the relations created between its actors. The public sphere was not simply an established space into which communication flowed. Press Freedom was a constantly changing process of communication, including oral forms such as rumors, conversations, and discussions, written forms such as pamphlets, dissertations, poems, newspapers, periodicals, and handwritten scripts – and hybrids such as theater, pulpit, and academia. Quite crucial for this interaction was what, in contrast to the idea of the public sphere as one space, could be called the ‘topography’ of Press Freedom, i. e., its many concrete places, rooms, and locales like pubs, squares, streets, parks, theatres, printing houses, and sales outlets. Such places we conceive of as socially produced spaces where local practices and cultural changes developed, and public action became possible. The topography of the public sphere was part of the urban space, transforming in new, characteristic ways through the Press Freedom period.³³

By studying Press Freedom as practice, we detect a clear demarcation, multiplication, and location in the concrete realizations of the abstract concept of the public. Universalist topics of the pre-Press Freedom republic of letters were supplemented

31 Krefting et al. 2014, 289. Also, Øystein Rian has mentioned that it is “highly debatable” whether the model of Habermas reflects the case of Denmark-Norway (Rian 2014, 25).

32 One exception is Jesper Jakobsen who proposed a theory of continuity arguing that the Press Freedom in a number of ways represented a perpetuation already existing patterns of practice. Jakobsen 2017.

33 The idea of the topography of the public is elaborated in Krefting et al. 2014. For the last two decades many studies have used space and place as analytical points of reference when investigating historical publics, see Capp 1996, Sennefelt 2008, and Hallenberg and Linnarsson 2014.

by more intimate and everyday issues evolving from considerations on urban renovation, sociability, gender, performance, morals, and sexuality. The above-mentioned literary historian Vilhelm Andersen was – despite his general rejection of the Press Freedom Writings – quite on target when he wrote that “Copenhagen can rightly be called the author of the nameless and irresponsible Press Freedom literature”. It was, in a certain sense, the city that was writing. And, as something radically new, the audience had primateship: “The literary type of the time is not the poet or the researcher, but the audience”, Andersen concluded.³⁴ Academic discussion and literary experiment also benefitted from the new freedom, that is true, but in the big picture they had to give way to winds of change and new readership demands. Maybe the most innovate aspect of the Press Freedom was that there was no longer one single privileged public. It seems that the cheap, brief pamphlets quickly found a completely new readership of craftsmen, petit-bourgeois, maids, fishmongers, workers, sailors, soldiers, drunkards, prostitutes, and much else.



Fig. 2: The view over Copenhagen from the Hill of Valby towards the East gives a good impression of the small area of the tightly packed capital behind its ramparts – and simultaneously, it gives an image of the central status of the absolutist court with the huge shining palace of the first Christiansborg Castle, dwarfing the general city profile.

Copenhagen seen from the Hill of Valby, Painting by F. Zeidler, 1758. © Museum of Copenhagen.

By relativizing the idea of rational, bourgeois communicative exchange as a prerequisite to the formation of critical opinion, we identify a number of other types of audiences and expressions of opinion. In several social spaces, people did not seek to

³⁴ Andersen 1934, 648 and 650.

maintain a rational dialogue and constitute themselves as “audience” in the usual sense but were communicating on the basis of far more idiosyncratic and less stringent rationales of oral urban culture. Therefore, emotional communication played a more prominent role in many pamphlets and some periodicals, thus reflecting urban everyday life, than did rational dialogue. This can be described as a hypersensitive public sphere, with reference to early modern face-to-face culture, a society of presence in which constant observations of interactions, strong local acts of communication and circulating media played a decisive role.³⁵ The city provided a space for shared experiences and observations acutely reflected in the Press Freedom Writings. Therefore, we particularly focus on the emotional forms of expression that unfolded in the debates of the first phase of the Press Freedom and not least in the great publishing boom immediately after the fall of Struensee, just as city rumours and handwritten utterances have been included in the study as significant factors in the intensified communicative circuit of urban public space.

The subjects and approaches of Press Freedom were, to a large extent, very different from the more traditional, more narrowly learned and political circuit. Therefore, one can – as suggested by Brian Cowan – distinguish between a normative and a practical public sphere, i. e. between ideals of behavior and communication in public life and the more complex realities that came to shape actual everyday life in public space.³⁶ This distinction is clearly illustrated by the great difference between the ideal of publicity formulated in the Press Freedom Ordinance of 14 September 1770, and the content, the intensity and the broad social anchoring in large parts of the writings that emerged during the Press Freedom Period.

As Norwegian literary scholar Kjell Lars Berge has pointed out, Press Freedom brought about extensive and rapid changes in Danish-Norwegian textual culture by not only providing opportunity for the dissemination of knowledge, central to the Press Freedom Ordinance’s proclaimed intention (i. e., counteracting “prejudices” and “errors”), but also becoming a catalyst for the expression of opinions and criticism and the dissemination of entertainment. The Press Freedom period established a new communicative order, a basis for the development of public opinion – in both singular and plural – with new genres and new participants leading to new rules and new textual norms.³⁷ These latter effects were not necessarily intended by the Ordinance. The Press Freedom Period reveals an unprecedented mix of genres and an incipient dissolution of the social hierarchies in text production. Literary scholar Merethe Roos has pointed out that there were commencing new textual norms (and so-called “modernizing tendencies”) already before Press Freedom, but they became much more fully expressed in the new open public sphere of the Press Freedom Pe-

³⁵ On “sensitized publics”, see Bellingradt 2012. On *Anwesenheitsgesellschaft* (society of presence) see Schlögl 2008.

³⁶ Cowan 2001, 127–157.

³⁷ Berge 1999, 72–80; Berge 2015.

riod.³⁸ Certain poets and clergymen had paved the way. This is an interesting argument, but at the same time it must be highlighted that several of the radical writers of the Press Freedom Period went a very long way beyond the textual norms that prevailed among learned priests and poets before Press Freedom.

The new textual norms and the tentative dissolution of social hierarchies in text production are most clearly expressed in the most significant innovation of Press Freedom: the making of public debate, even public quarrel or textual feuds. The debate culture of the Press Freedom was shaped by the sudden opportunity of the Press Freedom Ordinance and by the endless stream of political initiatives pouring out of the new cabinet government. As we shall see, such events continued to bring new topics up for discussion in the writings; new legislation, urban problems, the conditions at court, no less than two radical coups within the confines of two years, and much more. Press Freedom was constantly being fed. It is exactly this feature that gives Press Freedom an escalating dimension. The tone sharpened, the language grew more and more free in step with the events and finally exploded in a powerful mixture of foaming glee, rumbling hellfire sermons, and whining thanksgiving rhetoric in the wake of the fall of Struensee.

Texts often indicate directions about how they are to be consumed (titles, chapters, length, formal instructions, etc). They are not only materiality; they are also tools. This is precisely what becomes clear in the development of the plethora of Press Freedom debates, where many texts present themselves as debate inputs with clear reference to specific debate contexts in the title of the publication. Another factor that had an impact on the debate culture of Press Freedom is the intimate relationship between oral and written statements. Oral debate and exchange of opinions were situational and took place through reciprocal actions and reactions over a short period of time. In written debates, the terms were different. Even if the absence of censorship speeded up written debate with the possibility of answering another pamphlet within weeks, sometimes days, it was not possible to react to or contradict printed claims on the spot as in an oral context. Written debate input in the shape of a pamphlet required much more planning, activity, and actual practice – writing, printing, marketing, disseminating, selling, etc. – which serves to underline our point about public as practice. *Öffentlichkeit* or publicness is something that is created when, for example, responding to a statement by participating in a series of activities and employing new, concrete practical possibilities. This new debate practice was a decisive factor in the creation of a Press Freedom public sphere with all that it entailed of actors, materiality and spaces. This had never been seen before. In that sense, Press Freedom was a radical experiment.

³⁸ Roos 2013, 147.

2 Eighteenth-Century Denmark-Norway and the Introduction of Press Freedom

The 14 September Press Freedom Ordinance simultaneously formed the first manifestation of a seminal change of power in absolutist Denmark. The personal physician of king Christian VII, the German doctor J. F. Struensee, effectively assumed total political control in a brief and intense 16-months period, introducing a whirlwind of new legislations, many of them inspired by radical enlightenment principles and ideas. A state coup on 17 January 1772, however, led to Struensee's fall and subsequent public execution on 28 April the same spring. Press Freedom, having exploded in a surge of new pamphlets and debates during 1771, persisted after the coup, but the new post-Struensee government, anxious about the destabilizing risks of a free press, slowly smothered the new freedom through a series of small interventions between 1772 and 1773, although pre-print censorship was never again reintroduced.

This amazing three-year period is the subject of this book. It has been possible for us to chart the Press Freedom period in meticulous detail due to the initiative of one contemporaneous civil servant, Bolle Willum Luxdorph, long-standing member of the Danish Chancellery – roughly, ministry of the interior for the Danish-Norwegian parts of the realm, as opposed to the German Chancellery for the duchies of Sleswick-Holstein (Danish: Slesvig-Holsten, in the southern parts of the Jutland peninsula), of which the Danish king served as a duke. Luxdorph was not only a top state official, he was also a poet, scholar, and book-collector, and he immediately realized that Press Freedom constituted a unique, historical novelty, which he wished to document in his collection. He organized his private acquisition of what he called “Press Freedom Writings” based on the idea that it was easy or in any case feasible to clearly distinguish the new sort of publications made possible by the 14 September law from other writings as they had been hitherto possible to publish under absolutist censorship. His collection of around 1,000 pamphlets, now at the Royal Library of Copenhagen, gives a detailed window to the new public sphere exploding in the fall of 1770.

As an important first step in our investigation, we have been able to date the majority of the writings in the Luxdorph Collection based on the observation that more than three-quarters of the pamphlets were advertised in one of Copenhagen's leading newspapers at the time, *Adresse-Avisen* (The Address Paper).³⁹ This makes it possible to take the first advertising date of a particular pamphlet as a proxy for its publication date. This makes it possible for us, in turn, to chart in detail the day-to-day development the new, experimental public sphere of 1770 to 1773: the quick

³⁹ Horstbøll, Langen, Stjernfelt 2020 contains a complete registrant over Luxdorph's collection as well as an overview over other Press Freedom publications of the period. The Luxdorph Collection is now digitized and accessible on the homepage of the Danish Royal Library, see <https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs>.

ping-pong of debates, arguments, strives, feuds; how they interact with the ongoing flow of new political initiatives and events characterizing the period; how writers new and old come forward to investigate and exploit the new possibilities, how authors develop and change strategies over the changing conditions of the intensive period – and finally, how Press Freedom is slowly closed down, step-by-step, by the nervous coup government of 1772 to 1773.



Fig. 3: Bolle Willum Luxdorph was a long-serving top official in the Danish Chancellery, poet, scholar, owner of a large library – and collector of Press Freedom Writings. Luxdorph was intensely preoccupied by Press Freedom and its limits, as a politician as well as a private citizen. Here Luxdorph in an intimate portrait in his dressing gown, without his wig – in his private collection in Snaregade. The urn in the background is believed to have contained the ashes of his late wife Anne Bolette Junge. *Bolle Luxdorph*, painting by Georg Mathias Fuchs, 1782. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Hans Petersen.

Absolutist Denmark-Norway

Understanding the radical novelty of the Press Freedom Period, its contrast to preceding conditions of absolutist Denmark-Norway through the eighteenth century is indispensable. How did it come about that several different notions of absolutism developed and were favored by factions in Copenhagen? And which of such factions was supporting the rise of Struensee to power, making Press Freedom possible?

The Denmark of the time differed considerably from the small state of the same name today. At the time, it was a middle-size European state and a considerable naval power. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the composite realm of Denmark-Norway was often referred to as “Helstaten” – the Unitary State. The formerly autonomous kingdom of Norway had been part of the realm of the Danish king since 1536. In 1770, the 21-year-old Christian VII was, “by the mercy of God, King of Denmark and Norway, the Wends and the Goths, Duke of Sleswick and Holstein, Stormarn, and Dithmarschen, Count of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst”, such as the official royal title had it. Apart from the anachronistic reference to “Wends and Goths”, the title was a real description of the realm over which Christian ruled. “Holstein, Stormarn, and Dithmarschen” referred to the Danish parts of the Duchy of Holstein.



Fig. 4: In the portrait of King Christian VII from the middle of the Press Freedom Period, one still glimpses presence of mind, initiative, and wit, of which he had been rumored as a teenager in the 1760s. Already by the close of the decade, however, it had become a well-kept secret in court and government circles that the mental state of the King was not quite normal. *Christian VII*, Painting by Alexander Roslin, 1772. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Kit Weiss.

In addition to the areas mentioned came Iceland, The Faroe Islands, and Greenland which were properly Norwegian dependencies; the trade colonies of Tranquebar,

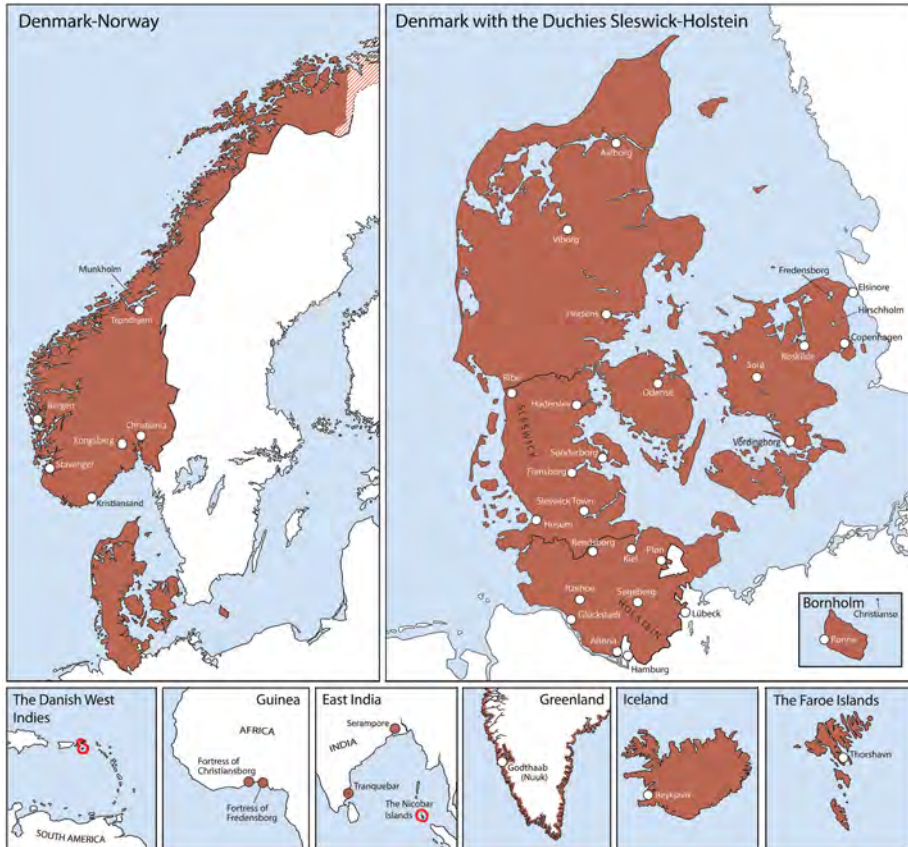
Serampore, and the archipelago of the Nicobar Islands in East India; a small strip of the Gold Coast of West Africa; and the Danish West Indies, St. Thomas, St. Jan, and St. Croix (now the US Virgin Islands). The Danish West Indies was a plantation economy made possible by the forced import of enslaved people from Africa bought from local kings along the coast, and the “triangular trade” shipping sugar and rum to Denmark, weapons and cloth to the Gold Coast, and slaves to the West Indies, was enriching Copenhagen and Holstein merchants.

Even if the King – as in the title – was Duke of Holstein, the more precise political conditions of that area were not without complications. The Danish King and the Gottorpien Duke ruled over each their parts of Holstein, while a third area was a condominium ruled by the two in common. Holstein (and the Counties Oldenburg and Delmenhorst) belonged to the Holy Roman Empire with the implication that the Danish King and the Gottorpien Duke were German princes and as such connected, in principle, to Emperor Joseph II in Vienna and his policies. Holstein and the southern parts of Sleswick were German speaking. The court and military language of Denmark was German, and there was a considerable German constituency in Copenhagen.

In Denmark, some 800,000 people lived; in Norway around 725,000, in Sleswick 245,000, and in the Danish parts of Holstein around 135,000 – in which Altona with 20,000 was the second city of the realm after the 80,000 of Copenhagen. In the other parts of Holstein which came under Danish rule from 1773, the population numbered 144,000. On top of that came 47,000 in Iceland, around 5,000 in the Faroe Islands and a similar number in Greenland. 28,000 lived in the Danish West Indies, the vast majority of whom were African slaves originating from the Gold Coast (now Ghana). The Nicobars probably counted no more than a couple of thousand inhabitants, apart from a few Danish settlers. The other overseas possessions had but small contingents of stationed officials and tradesmen.

Denmark-Norway was an agricultural country. In the area of present Denmark, 80% of the population lived in the countryside, 10% in provincial towns, and 10% in the capital. Geographically, socially, economically, as well as culturally, enormous differences marked the composite realm. The only thing which really connected the various parts of the realm was the King’s person. To every service in every church of the vast realm, the congregation would pray for the King, his family, and the local authorities representing royal power.

Map no. 1 shows the “Unitary State” (Helstaten) by the end of Press Freedom. Until August-December 1773, Oldenburg-Delmenhorst was also under Danish rule, while parts of Holstein were not – see Map 7 of the Estate Exchange in chapter 14.



Map. 1: Map of Denmark-Norway. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

As a Duke of Holstein, the King faced important problems. Many generations earlier, the duchy of Sleswick-Holstein had been divided between different inheritance lines, and important parts of Holstein were no longer under Danish rule, but under the Duke of Gottorp, now residing in Kiel and by intermarriage presently under the control of the Russian Czar. A third part of Holstein was co-ruled by the Danish King and the Duke of Gottorp, and these three parts were even, each of them, split into further discontinuous bits and pieces. Historically, several times this had given rise to crucial problems to the Danish government, as the Duke of Gottorp was free to ally himself with foreign powers, such as Denmark's arch-enemy Sweden. Denmark had all but ceased to exist in the fateful year of 1658 when the Swedish army, coming from Holstein, had crossed the frozen Belts from the western side and occupied all of Zealand except for fortified Copenhagen which was all that was left for King Frederick III to defend. By the humiliating Peace at Roskilde of 1658, Denmark lost all its ancient territory east of the Oresund strait, the provinces of Scania, Halland, and

Blekinge – except for the island of Bornholm. Several later attempts to regain the loss, long into the eighteenth century with the Great Northern War of the first decades of the century, granted that the relation between the two northern state complexes of Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland remained inimical into the second part of the century. Frederik III, in 1660, had grasped the possibility, in the wake of the upheavals, to introduce absolutism, and in the century from then and to the ascension of the young Christian VII to the throne in 1766, Denmark-Norway had become known as one of the most authoritarian versions of absolutism in Europe, e. g. as depicted in English diplomat Robert Molesworth's famous *Account of Denmark* of 1694.⁴⁰

Regulations of the Written Word Prior to 1770

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Danish intellectual life was increasingly influenced by early Enlightenment, Christian Thomasius, Pierre Bayle, the British Deists etc. through the author and playwright Ludvig Holberg, among others, and ideas of press freedom were ventilated in Danish-Norwegian public. Simultaneously, German pietism in its more and less radical versions grew to a strong presence, and the consecutive Kings Frederik IV and Christian VI and their courts articulated a Danish version of state pietism during the first half of the eighteenth century. This significantly introduced a move away from the strict Lutheran orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, and Christian VI wished to relax censorship so as to make way for moderate pietist writings as against orthodox Lutheran censors. This did not, however, disturb the absolutist notion that the king was God's elect, his ownership of the realm was God-given and his actions divinely guided and sanctioned. In the period of Frederik V's rule in the middle of the eighteenth century, this slowly gave way to the emergence of new ideas of enlightened absolutism, to "patriotic" ideas that the kingdom was not simply the king's personal property, but that proper absolutist rule necessitated the patriotic collaboration of enlightened groups among the king's subjects. Writers such as Tyge Rothe, J. S. Sneedorff, and P. F. Suhm elaborated on such ideas. They also found expression in the introduction of controlled exemptions of certain institutions from the strong pre-publication censorship which had prevailed ever since 1537, the year after the Reformation. Since then, the Academic Council of the University of Copenhagen, led by theology professors, had had the function as censors, and explicit permittance from the Council was required for the printed publication of every single piece of independent writing in the realm. Newspapers were governed by different, changing institutions of censorship. Now, scholarly institutions like the Academy of Science and Letters of 1742 and the Academy at Sorø of 1747 were permitted to publish independently, based on their

⁴⁰ Molesworth 1694; see also Olden-Jørgensen, 2008.

own peer review systems, and in 1755, the above-mentioned, royally approved periodical publishing proposals to the improvement of agriculture and economy was initiated – also with its own editor, independent of university censorship. Thus, ideas of enlightened absolutism and restricted versions of press freedom slowly institutionalized in mid-eighteenth century. Such niches without university control, however, remained strictly circumscribed exceptions in a closely guarded public sphere.

The basic law governing the written word all up to 1770 was the Danish Law of 1683 (“Danske Lov”), the large, early, legal accomplishment of Danish absolutism. It had very strict limits to faith, speech, and publication. No other Christian denominations than state Lutheranism were allowed. So-called Crypto-Calvinism and Crypto-Catholicism had been persecuted through the seventeenth century, and Catholicism in writing or action was associated with severe penalties all the way up to execution. Lese-majesty and blasphemy were the most severe crimes of the Law, and both were to be punished by public torture and execution: the cutting off of hand and/or tongue, followed by beheading. The Lutheran Reformation had introduced persecution of witches under threat of burning at the stake – a penalty still present in the Law, but slowly disappearing in practice around 1700. Magic expressions and writings, however, including prophecies and almanacs remained strictly prohibited, as were “skandskrifter”, that is, pasquils containing libel taken in a wide sense of the word. The absolutist public sphere was also monitored in a number of other ways apart from censorship and penalties: certain books, particularly central writings of the Lutheran church, were subsidized by the state, while the import of foreign books, particularly from German lands, was to be kept strictly under control by the bishops. Small relaxations had permitted Christian V’s Calvinist Queen to invite, under protests of the clergy, small groups of exiled French Huguenots to erect a church in Copenhagen towards the end of the seventeenth century, and small groups of Jews had been allowed to establish synagogues, but this did not lead in the direction of any more general liberty of religion, and forced infant baptism was maintained all the way up to the 1849 constitution.

An important relaxation, however, had been introduced in 1740 when sales of foreign books were allowed, but only to the learned and to noblemen – a sort of “two-tier” freedom of the press with larger degrees of liberty for a small elite. An interesting case of the same year may exemplify Danish publishing conditions of the period. J. S. Carl, the maternal grandfather of J. F. Struensee – the man behind Christian VII’s 1770 Press Freedom – was, like his grandson, royal physician at the Danish court. He was the personal doctor of the pietist King Christian VI and he himself came out of German radical Pietism. He held that simple means like mineral water and the support of natural healing processes were key to the treatment of many diseases, and he apparently had some successes with Christian and the Queen’s maladies. He summed up some of his principles in a treatise about “court medicine” in which he recommended royals to abstain from luxury and keep certain diets, but as an appendix, he added a short but radical political-religious treatise attacking the

current, decadent state of Europe's Christian kingdoms, which he found derailed by Lutheran dogma. To Carl, medical healing processes were hardly to be distinguished from a Pietist notion of personal salvation by means of the soul's ongoing self-purification. Like many radical Pietists, Carl held the idea that churches, dogma, ceremonies, control of believers and heretic-hunt were despicable aberrations from the free, pious, personal, emotional life in faith and the strife for social amelioration, forming the center of proper Christianity. Thus, the bottom line was a strong attack on the present condition of Christian states and their clergy. Carl even repeated such radical ideas in another follow-up writing, and as a result, he was dismissed from his position at court and banished from Denmark – even if Christian VI had himself fought against Lutheran orthodoxy by introducing his own, admittedly more moderate, version of pietism in the Danish-Norwegian state church.⁴¹ In 1741, to stop radical pietist activities, the king prohibited unsupervised Bible meetings outside of the church.

By the 1750s however, the large pietist surge was waning, even if it continued to live on in many congregations in Denmark-Norway, and the new theological fashion became Wolffian rationalism or “neology” imported from the Northern German states and introduced in Copenhagen by theology professor Peder Rosenstand-Goiske. Rationalism accommodated emerging Enlightenment ideas by shaping a compromise giving more theological prominence to the notion of *reason* – championed both by Enlightenment atheists and Enlightenment deists, with the latter preferring a simple “natural religion” accessible by reason only. Theological rationalism admitted a strong role of reason in faith, in the weeding out of Catholic and other superstitions as well as in the construction of theological dogma, and it nurtured the idea that large parts of a cleansed Christian theology could be constructed by reason alone. Rationalist disagreement, however, persisted as to which parts of theology would still need revelation in addition to reason, as to whether miracles existed, whether the trinity was granted by biblical evidence, and much else. Institutionally, however, the strong interdependence of state and church instituted by the 1536 Reformation, persisted. The church was a state institution, priests were state officials with secular obligations like the announcement of new legislation in the churches and the supervision of behaviors of the congregation. The state university was primarily a professional school for the education of priests, medical doctors, and, from 1736, legal attorneys; it was spearheaded by the highest faculty, theology. The king remained, in principle and in some cases also in practice, the head of the state church. And theology professors remained centrally placed in the Academic Council monitoring the borderlines of the absolutist public sphere.

41 Carl 1740; see also Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2016, 116 on.

Danish-Norwegian Geopolitics of the 1760s and Two Kinds of Absolutism

By the 1760s, the central problem of foreign policy of the Danish-Norwegian state became what was known as “Mageskiftet” – the “Estate Exchange” (see Map 8, chapter 14). The main international goal of the Danish-Norwegian government was to barter the King’s German counties Oldenburg and Delmenhorst for the Gottorp-Russian parts of Holstein, thereby making all of Holstein Danish and acquire a well-rounded, coherent territory comprising all of the Jutland Peninsula up to Hamburg, instead of the existing jigsaw puzzle of North German dependencies. War with Russia had been avoided within a hair’s breadth in 1761 when the Danish and Russian armies were marched up for pitched battle in Western Pomerania north of Berlin, and hostilities were only avoided by the Czar’s premature death. Now, Catherine the Great entered the throne, and a prolonged negotiation of the switching of territories came to dominate Danish-Norwegian 1760’s politics, increasingly drawing Denmark-Norway ever closer into an alliance with Russia, also fueled by their common enemy the Swedes. Simultaneously, Denmark-Norway’s position in the Russian orbit increasingly opposed Denmark-Norway to France and also threatened the Danish-Norwegian connections to England and Prussia. Russia made its diplomatic presence at the royal court in Copenhagen strong, exerting a continuous pressure to have removed from court and influence what it perceived as anti-Russian forces and persons. Since the time of Frederik V, the central political organ had been the State Council, spearheaded by strong and politically experienced noblemen like A. G. Moltke, D. Reventlow, and particularly J. H. E. Bernstorff. Frederik had not taken much interest in matters of state, more occupied by hunting and alcohol he had, to a large degree, left matters of detail to the State Council. As Frederik suddenly died in 1766, only in his early forties, his merely 16-old son was crowned as Christian VII, and the State Council continued its rule, not yielding much real power to what they seem to have considered an unruly teenager. Thus, Bernstorff was able to continue his cumbersome policy of approach towards Russia with the “Estate Exchange” as his overarching international goal.

An important and fateful countercurrent was emerging, however. In the acute preparations for war in 1761, the French general Saint-Germain had been hired to reorganize the Danish-Norwegian army, and he successfully prepared the military for the Russian battle that never came.⁴² He professionalized the army, partially introducing national conscripts, and he became friendly with important reform-oriented generals in the top of the military, particularly P. E. Gähler and later S. C. Rantzau, and they strove to modernize and reorganize the army, centralizing economy and command, canceling superfluous garrisons, and moving spending to improve the artillery. Their military inspiration from Prussia, however, also would in-

⁴² Struwe 2003.

volve political changes. Basing the army on national conscripts immediately would clash with the traditional rights of the landowning nobility to dispose over the peasant population, and their far-reaching organizational reforms of the military necessitated a radical, rationalizing reform of state matters as well.



Fig. 5: Behind Struensee stood, in the early days of his rule in particular, an established alliance lead by the French General Count C.-L. de Saint-Germain. Here, he is depicted in a Danish copper from 1765 with a Danish troop contingent and celebratory verse in German and French. The German poem emphasizes the General's wisdom making soldiers obey and his force granting victory; the French that he is, to the luck of all, successful in his endeavors with his thoughtful plans. After his positions in Denmark until late 1767, he continued a close mail correspondence with Generals Gäh-

ler and Rantzau, developing further plans for a revolution of the realm. *Count von St. Germain, the General of a Corps of Danish Troops (Graf von St. Germain General eines Corps von Dänischer Troupen)*, copper by J. M. Probst, Copenhagen 1765. © Royal Danish Library.

So, they began to develop an alternative political view of absolutism.⁴³ To them, the existing State Council of Frederik V formed an outdated aberration from the absolutist principle of sovereignty. It took away the real power from the King and gave it to a clique of reactionary noblemen who abused it to safeguard their own interests. This officer group, by contrast, looked to Frederick the Great in Potsdam, how he ruled directly by Cabinet orders without being impeded by any sort of nobility councils.⁴⁴ They regarded the young crown prince Christian, from 1766 King Christian VII, as a potential political genius who deserved full sovereignty. As a boy and teenager, Christian had impressed the court and the Danish public with his quick wit and erudition, and on the court's 1768 international tour, he surprised everybody by organizing, against his advisors, a large meeting with an impressive collection of French enlightenment philosophers, spearheaded by *Encyclopédie* editors Diderot and d'Alembert, in Paris where he effortlessly entered into conversations with his erudite heroes.⁴⁵ In the opinion of conservative observers at court, young King Christian was intoxicated with Enlightenment ideas and rumor had it that he, the new leader of the Danish-Norwegian church, despised religion. The group around Saint-Germain and Gähler championed the idea that this brilliant young sovereign should assume real power in a version of Enlightened Absolutism, no longer weighed down by reactionary noblemen but rather supported by progressive advisors like themselves. Simultaneously, they despised the client-state status under Russia which Denmark-Norway had been increasingly pressured to accept, all while the promised Estate Exchange seemed to vanish further and further into a remote, uncertain future. They wished a break with the close Russian alliance to leave Danish-Norwegian foreign policy more liberty and agility in the ongoing power concert between France, England, Prussia, Austria, and Russia.

43 The Saint-Germain group also attracted German officials at court such as General C. F. A. von Görtz and the Prussian envoy A. H. von Borcke.

44 On the officer group and their policies: Koch 1894–1895.

45 The King's meeting took place November 20 1768 in the city mansion Hôtel d'York in Rue Jacob, gathering 18 leading intellectuals: the mathematician and editor of the *Encyclopédie* J. le Rond d'Alembert, the linguist of ancient languages Abbé Barthélemy, the engraver with the *Encyclopédie* R. Bénard, the astronomer and cartographer C.-F. Cassini de Thury, the explorer and geographer C.-M. de la Condamine, the epistemologist and psychologist E. B. de Condillac, the novelist C.-P. de Crébillon, the philosopher and editor of the *Encyclopédie* Denis Diderot, the historian C. P. Duclos, the physician, naval engineer, and botanist H.-L. Duhamel, the journalist and art critic F. M. von Grimm, the philosopher of mind and education C.-A. Helvétius, the philosopher of materialism and politics, salon host P.-H. d'Holbach, the geophysicist, astronomist, and biologist J. J. d'Ortous de Mairan, the playwright, novelist, and essayist J.-F. Marmontel, the philosopher and economist Abbé Morellet, the lawyer, poet, and playwright B.-J. Saurin, and the art critic C. H. Watelet – cf. Langen 2010.

Struensee and his Rise to Power

It was into this complicated political state of things that the young German doctor Johann Friedrich Struensee found himself thrown in his quick ascension to power taking its beginning 1768.⁴⁶ In 1766, the court had organized a quick royal wedding, partially with a hope of appeasing the unruly young King, and partially to strengthen relationships with England by picking as the new Danish Queen the 15-years old sister of George III, princess Caroline Matilda – now often just known as Queen Matilda. Even if this hasty match failed to produce much close sentiment between the two royal teenagers, it did produce a male heir to the throne in 1768, Crown Prince Frederik – the later Frederik VI. Marriage did not seem to assuage the young King, however, and in 1767 he became the lover of a well-known prostitute with the nickname of “Støvlet-Katrine” (Boots-Catherine). It became public knowledge in Copenhagen how the two of them toured the city during the night, drinking, sharing a love nest apartment in the city close to the castle, sometimes ravaging whorehouses where she had old scores to settle with the brothel keepers, now protected by her royal lover. In parallel, it gradually dawned on insiders at court that the King’s behavior increasingly transcended the normal, also in other respects. He began harboring paranoid fantasies about being a changeling and had fits of rage, smashing castle interiors. The immediate solution of the State Council was to banish Støvlet-Katrine to Holstein and support, although very reluctantly, the King’s idea of an ambitious international tour for the court which might give Christian other interests and preoccupations. The tour took the court through North Germany and Holland to England and France, and in order to monitor the King’s mental health, a young, talented doctor was asked to join the travel company when the court reached the southernmost Danish city of Altona. That was Johann Friedrich Struensee.

Struensee’s background became important in the dramatic events to unfold. He was the son of the pietist priest Adam Struensee in North-German Halle, the epicenter of the so-called “state pietism” of A. Francke. In contrast to radical pietism with its anti-clerical tenets, Hallensian pietism was institutional and strove to change the Lutheran state churches from within in a compromise with orthodox Lutheranism. It built an institutional cluster of orphanages, schools, printshops, bookstores, pharmacies, and hospitals which it strove to replicate in new cities where it gathered supporters, and it urged believers – much to the consternation of orthodox Lutherans with their emphasis on the strict control of believers – to read for themselves the Bibles which the pietists began to print in vast amounts. Struensee’s mother Maria Dorothea was the daughter of the already mentioned radical pietist J. S. Carl who came to live with the Struensees after his banishment from Denmark in 1742. So, two very different versions of pietism were present in the young Johann Friedrich’s childhood home. Inspired by his grandfather, he studied medicine, and when his father

⁴⁶ On Struensee, see Langen 2018b. On his relation to King Christian VII, see Langen 2008.



Fig. 6: The German physician J. F. Struensee became, in the course of 1769–1770, intimate with both the King and the Queen. This made it possible for him, during the summer of 1770, to plan with General P. E. Gähler and Count Rantzau-Ascheberg a reform of absolutism which would prove to propel himself into full power later the same year. The first manifestation of the change of power was Press Freedom, 14 September 1770. *Johann Friedrich Struensee*, painting by Erik Pauelsen, 1771. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Hans Petersen.

was called as a Dean to Altona in Danish Holstein, the 19-year old doctor settled there. When his father moved on to become General Superintendent (bishop) in Danish Rendsburg in the north of Holstein a few years later, Struensee stayed in cosmopolitan Altona where he had now become a doctor employed by the city. Altona had, for many years, enjoyed a reputation as a safe-haven for dissidents and heretics of north German lands, liberty in Altona being considerably larger than in strictly controlled Copenhagen and indeed also larger than in neighboring Hamburg. Here, he soon cultivated a large social network of authors, officers, doctors, lawyers, etc. He became friendly with officers such as S. C. Rantzau and S. O. Falkenskiold, the nobleman U. A. Holstein, the courtier Enevold Brandt and began publishing a journal with co-editor David Panning – all of whom he should later count on as recruited allies at the court of Copenhagen. He learned inoculation from the Jewish doctor Hartog Gerson and J. A. Reimarus, a son of the famous Hamburg theologian and secret freethinker Samuel Reimarus, whom Struensee also acquainted. In brief, he became part of a North German network of Enlightenment figures, including also char-

acters like Lessing, the reform pedagogue J. B. Basedow, and the Jewish philosopher A. E. Gompertz, a friend of Mendelssohn's and the former secretary of French luminaries such as Maupertuis and the Marquis d'Argens. He kept up an intensive social life with frequent dinner parties organized at his home. As many in the period, Struensee admired Montesquieu and Voltaire, but his favorite authors among the emerging French high Enlightenment seem to have been Helvétius and Boulanger, the former for his scientific approach to the soul and for his support to free speech, the latter for his analysis of religion as a way of politically exploiting the fears of believers. Among his medical successes seem to have been a dawning understanding of how to prevent epidemics, inoculating kids in the city's poorhouse against smallpox and restricting access to the contaminated dead bodies of victims and their possessions. Already here, he acquired a reputation as a hound dog ("Hurenhengst" – literally, a whoring stallion).

But he also acquired hands-on experience with Danish censorship in addition to his grandfather's case from 1740. One of his intellectual friends was the Danish deist Georg Schade who published, anonymously, a large Leibnizian treatise on natural religion and reincarnation in Altona in 1761. His anonymity was broken, however, by the powerful Lutheran heretic-hunter J. M. Goeze in Hamburg's Katharina Church, Schade was turned over to Danish authorities in Altona, and without a court case he was banished for life to the small Danish Baltic islet Christiansø north of Bornholm. When in power ten years later, Struensee saw to the premature release of his old friend. But Struensee's own publications were also indicted by Danish censorship. In his and Panning's periodical *Zum Nutzen und Vergnügen* (For Benefit and Pleasure), Struensee argued for medical-inspired state policies as well as the virtues of satire, and he took his aim at Altona's most well-known and revered doctor, J. A. Unzer, founder of the successful weekly *Der Arzt* (The Doctor). Unzer was famous for his prepared medicines and tinctures with secret recipes, and Struensee attacked him for using dried dog's excrement as a central component of those cures. More generally, Struensee argued that superstition and quacks should be driven out of medical science. Cautiously, Struensee and Panning had published their journal in the twin city of Hamburg, but again authorities there alarmed the government in Copenhagen, and Struensee's journal was prohibited by his later enemy in the Danish State Council, J. H. E. Bernstorff. Struensee sought to fool censors by renaming the journal for book publishing instead, but in vain. Struensee, in short, did not only harbor Enlightenment ideas of press freedom on the principal, abstract level gleaned from the reading of contemporaneous French Enlighteners and his dinner discussions in Altona; he also had direct, personal experience with the effects of Danish censorship at several different levels.

His reputation as a doctor, however, was what made his friend Count Rantzau recommend him to the Danish court in need of medical treatment of their rowdy teenage king. Already on the court's 1768 journey, Struensee, with his relaxed attitude, seems to have come on very good terms with the King who soon came to con-

sider him as a personal favorite, and as the court returned to Copenhagen in early 1769, the King brought with him Struensee whom he promoted to his personal physician. Initially, Struensee kept a tacit, observant position at a distance to intrigues of the court, but his proximity to the King gave him both growing possibilities and enemies. In one of the most conspicuous turn of events of Danish history – and immortalized in numerous novels, stage plays, movies, graphic novels, academic monographs etc. to this day – Struensee soon also became the young Queen’s intimate friend. Neglected by her husband the King, Caroline Matilda took the fateful step of becoming the lover of Struensee, and all points to the fact that it was he who fathered her second child Louise Augusta born in the dramatic summer of 1771. He managed to keep the good will of the King who never seem to have cared much for the Queen anyway, and it was in this fragile and peculiar position at court that Struensee rose to power in September 1770 and began authoring his almost 2,000 pieces of new legislation.



Fig. 7: Caroline Matilda was but 15 when she became Queen of Denmark in 1766. She quickly overshadowed her spouse in popularity, particularly after his tendencies to debauchery and drinking became public knowledge during 1767. In the course of 1771, when her relation to Struensee was rumored, her popularity shrunk, and with one of the writer Josias Bynch’s early pamphlets *A Couple of Words to Denmark*, she would see herself described as a series of randy she-beasts. *Caroline Mathilde*, painting after Jens Juel, 1771, maybe by Herman Koefoed. © Rosenborg Castle.

Obviously, his relation to the Queen was an act of lese-majesty, and it was mentioned by the Inquisition Commission as a prime reason that Struensee, after his fall in 1772, was condemned to public torture and execution. But behind this spectacular love triangle, during 1771 soon known by everybody in Copenhagen, lay a broader political conspiracy – a “Cabale” as it was often called at the time. Struensee’s rise to power at court during 1768 to 1769 was intensely followed by the above-mentioned anti-State-Council military group of Gähler, Saint-Germain, and Struensee’s old Altona friend Rantzau. The former was still in the army top in Copenhagen, the second had been fired for his anti-Russian stance and had withdrawn to France on a large pension, and the latter had been sacked for the same reason and had returned to his Holstein estate. But their group and their acolytes in Copenhagen kept communicating, and they realized that Struensee was quickly becoming a potential new weapon to gain influence at court. As the court – including the top love triangle – went on a summer trip to Holstein in 1770 and stayed, among other places, at Rantzau’s estate in Plön, plans for a state coup developed. Another Altona friend of Struensee, Enevold Brandt, who had earlier been evicted from court, was pardoned and called back, a position in the top of the army was found for Rantzau, and in September, back in Copenhagen, the coup became a reality. As we know, a Cabinet Order of 4 September gave rise to the new law canceling censorship, which was published on 14 September, the same day in which another, meritocratic law stated that from now on, offices and promotions should be given solely on merit, not motivated by title or rank. The day after, the leading figure of the State Council over decades, J. H. E. Bernstorff was sacked, and the entire Council reorganized, only to be dissolved completely in December. The goal of the conspirators, anyway, was to govern directly from the King’s Cabinet. Struensee was made *maître des requêtes*, receiving all incoming mail and inquiries to the King. Effectively, Struensee was assuming a position close to that of a dictator. It remains discussed to what degree the King actively may have taken part in the many new legislations which began to stream from his Cabinet, still requiring the King’s signature. Particularly in the beginning of the period, he may have been an active force, but reports of his increasingly erratic and strange behavior during the summer of 1771 seem to indicate that towards the end of Struensee’s short reign, the King could hardly have played a very central role in government anymore.

The Press Freedom Period – A Brief Chronology

As mentioned above, the three Press Freedom years formed an intense and dramatic period, not only because of the swift development – and demise – of a completely new public sphere, but also because of the torrent of political initiatives and events which made every month ripe with surprising new developments. Much of the following chapters focus upon important themes and debates of Press Freedom, addressing absolutism and press freedom itself, addressing religion, clergy, morality,

economics, state debt, peasant conditions, the new Copenhagen municipality, drinking, meat prices, Struensee's government, and much more – after which we track the details of publications after the coup, the international reverberations of Copenhagen events and the slow smothering of Press Freedom. In order for the reader to be able to situate this dramatic vortex of events, it seems appropriate to provide a compressed narration outline of what happened.

The Press Freedom of 14 September did not immediately give occasion to many new publications. It was as if the public needed a couple of months to realize the scope of the new possibilities. The poet Johannes Ewald and the editor Christian Gormsen Biering published some of the first Press Freedom Writings in October: Ewald a poem celebrating the recently fallen Bernstorff, and Biering a satire over men's fashion. A pamphlet appearing in the provincial town of Aalborg already on 9 October arguing against the *corvée* – forced labor –, was the first real piece of Press Freedom Writing, and it gave rise to debate later in winter. The eternal student Martin Brun was the first to exploit the new liberty more systematically with a series of sharp, moralist fiction portrayals of loose women and stilted men in his journal *Den danske Democrit-Heraclit* (The Danish Democritus-Heraclitus) whose first issue appeared on 31 October. The same day, the brewer Christian Bagge published a critical pamphlet targeting the brewers' guild, a piece of writing which would give rise to the first among a plethora of feuds and debates of Press Freedom. In practice, the Press Freedom Period really began on 31 October 1770.

In parallel, the first initiatives of the Struensee government began to materialize.⁴⁷ The 23 October saw a Cabinet Order founding a new nursery home for poor kids and orphans; on 26 October, the costly labor on the large marble Frederik Church was stopped, and the same day an already planned cancelation of a number of public Christian holidays took place. On 16 November, an investigation into the use of torture was begun. On 4 December, a Cabinet order stated the general principle that no dispensations from law should be allowed; if actual cases indicated inadequacies of legislation, the law should rather be rearticulated. This was a step in the direction of equality before the law and an important curtailment of royal sovereignty. Standard absolutism had made it the King's prerogative to milder or sharpen sentences according to his own judgment. On 10 December, the State Council was dissolved.

Press Freedom decisively exploded when the Norwegian author J. C. Bie, under the pseudonym of Philopatreias (Lover of the Fatherland) launched a pamphlet in early December with tough attacks on priests, lawyers, and grain-dealers – that is, the nobility. The pamphlet was intensely covered by the paper *Adresse-Avisen*, publishing several comments and responses over Christmas, quickly growing into a maze of debates involving more than 80 pamphlets and lots of articles and com-

⁴⁷ A comprehensive overview of Cabinet Orders of the period (most of them in German) is published in Hansen 1916–1923.

ments in papers and magazines. Among others, the later Cabinet Secretary Ove Guldberg entered the new public sphere under the pen name of Philodanus (Lover of Denmark). Particularly the discussion of the salaries of the priests became intense, and the Philopatreas debate soon covered a broad range of economic, political, and social issues. Most participants remained anonymous or pseudonymous – a feature which would prove to characterize much of the Press Freedom Period.

On 21 December, Struensee's new position was formalized, as he received the title of *maître des requêtes* in the King's Cabinet and thus received all requests aimed at the King. The day before Christmas was busy, here three political steps were taken: the Foreign Ministry was established as an autonomous institution, being separated from the German Chancellery; the institution of a lottery in Copenhagen; and a prohibition against the use of grains for distillation of spirits, motivated in shortage of grain and wintertime preventing merchant ships from reaching Copenhagen. On 27 December, the State Council was formally abolished. On 31 December, the right of custom authorities to unprovoked investigation in private homes was abolished, the first of a series of legislation to safeguard a private sphere of individuals.

By New Year 1771, new pamphlets and writings were virtually pouring out, greedily investigating and exploiting the new publication liberty, and the period into late summer of 1771 should become the golden age of Press Freedom. The already-mentioned Martin Brun continued with an impressive output of writings, e. g. a series of role pamphlets where he made courageous political claims in the mouths of Ole the Smith Apprentice and Jeppe the Watchman. On 16 January came C. P. Rothe's pamphlet *A Eulogy to the Shoe-Brush*, attacking the fact that many public offices were given to former lackeys of high-ranking persons – such servants often lacking the relevant competences. This gave rise to a new, intense debate, and already by 12 February, the Struensee government published a law against offices to lackeys. On 21 January, Søren Rosenlund emerged as a new, frenetic voice under the mark of Junior Philopatreas, who later in spring terminated in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

On 25 January, Torkel Baden published a critical note on the exams system at the University which gave rise to a tail of debating writings. On 18 February, the established, learned historian P. F. Suhm published a piece – under his own name – celebrating, analyzing and defending Press Freedom. It also gave rise to debate, and the argument over Press Freedom itself, its motivations, limits and rightful uses, would prove to be a standard issue all the way through the period. The same day, government official J. Schumacher published a piece in which he proposed that no king should be obliged to pay the debts of his predecessor, immediately giving rise to further publications *pro et contra*.

All of a sudden, the existence of "Press Freedom Writings" was an established fact by early 1771. On 11 February, Jakob Christian Bie launched an entire periodical, *Den poetiske Gartner-Kniv* (The Poetical Hatch-Iron) with versified reviews of the

new writings, and a week later, an biweekly periodical with overview of Press Freedom Writings began to appear under the title of *Fortegnelse paa alle de Skrifter som Trykfriheden har givet Anledning til* (An Inventory over all Writings prompted by Press Freedom).⁴⁸

The current of new subjects and writings only seemed to grow. Translations of enlightenment treatises by Montesquieu, Frederick the Great, and David Hume appeared, just like a Danish version of the eulogy to the Danish King for his Press Freedom initiative, which had been penned by Voltaire and shipped from Ferney to the King in January. The political issue about the status of Norway within the framework of the dual monarchy now could be debated openly, including the proposal of a Norwegian university. The discussion about peasant liberty and the abolishment of the *corvée*, which had already raged in the 1760s, entered a new and more radical phase. Mystical visions and celestial signs were aired, while the lottery under preparation was subjected to hard criticism giving rise to a whole debate of its own. The composer J. A. Scheibe contributed with writings where he, in pseudonymous disguise as a traveling Russian, articulated attacks on many Danish customs and states-of-things.

The period from February to around 1 May, when the harsh winter was eventually yielding, displayed the largest concentrated outburst of writings of the whole Press Freedom Period. Every day seemed to bring interesting news from the small bookprinters exploiting the emerging market.⁴⁹ It was the “Golden Age of the Press”, as one pamphleteer wrote. There is little doubt that considerable parts of the public saw this first explosion of Press Freedom Writings in 1770 to 1771 also as a political support to the new Struensee government, in contrast to the abolished State Council government. Bolle Luxdorph, the collector of Press Freedom Writings, remarked that the new law did not remove the existing delimitations of which content it was lawful to print, but “as Philopatreas and the first writers celebrated the new government, attacked the former government and its sacked ministers, proposed new projects against all organizations of the state, flattering Struensee, Gähler, and Rantzau, supported and praised their plans, etc., they were allowed unrestricted freedom to write whatever they wished”.⁵⁰ In that sense, Press Freedom was not only seen as a result of the initiative of the new government, but also as a weapon which supported and benefited that government.

⁴⁸ We shall refer to this review magazine as *Fortegnelsen* (The Inventory).

⁴⁹ Main producers of Press Freedom Writings were small printshops such as J. R. Thiele, L. H. Svare, A. F. Stein, Borup, P. H. Høecke and Morten Hallager. Traditional, large book-printers catering for the learned networks like Philibert, Nicolaus Møller, Godiche, etc. played a smaller role in the emerging pamphlet culture.

⁵⁰ “da Philopatreas og de første Skribentere hyldede det ny Ministerium, dadlede den forrige Regjering, angreb de forafskedigede Ministre, indgav ny Projecter mod alle Statens Indretninger, smigrede Struensee, Gähler og Rantzau, billigede og roste disses Planer; etc, lod man dem have uindskrænket Frihed til at skrive, hvad de vilde”, Nyerup (ed.) 1791, 510.

Simultaneously, the stream of initiatives from the Struensee government continued. On 14 February, the sale of cheap bread to the poor was organized because of the rough winter with sea ice impeding grain transports. The debate about the *corvée* had reached Copenhagen, and on 20 February, a new law delimiting the amount of forced labor by the peasants was passed. *Corvée* should no longer be calculated solely from the estate owners' own perceived need for labor, but should be based objectively on the size, location, and quality of the fields of the given estate, and the estate owner became responsible for accounting for the labor done.

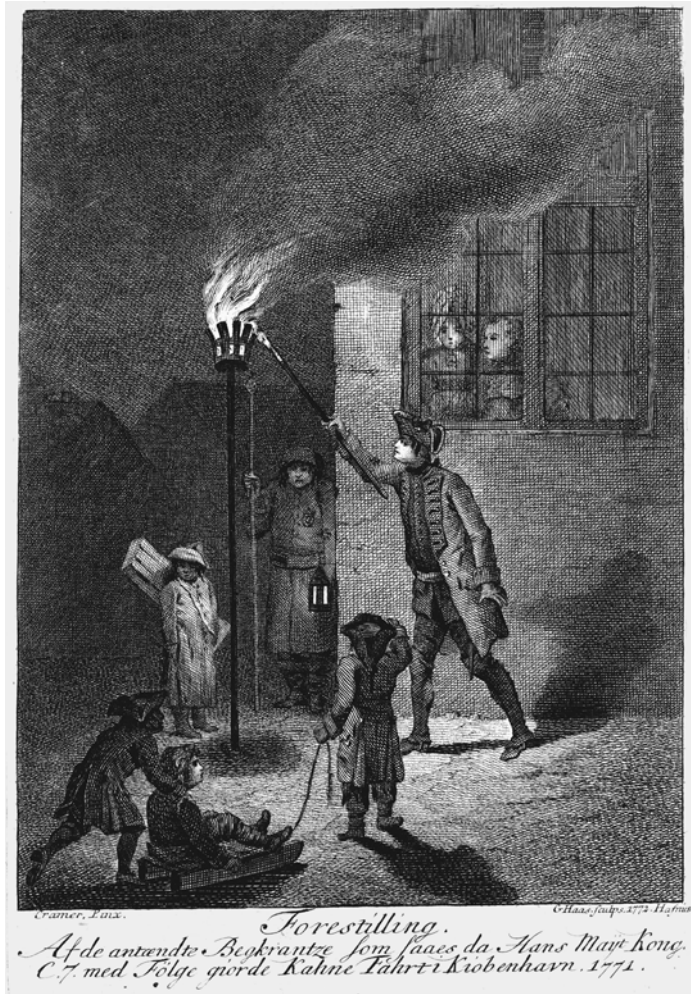


Fig. 8: A favorite winter entertainment for the court in the icy winters of Press Freedom was sleigh rides through the city. Torches and wreaths of pitch lighted the route so that “The Great” sped through the frozen streets, as if in an illuminated dream fantasy. *Representation. Of the lighted*

Pitch Wreaths that could be seen when His Majesty King C. VII made a Sleigh Ride with his Entourage in Copenhagen 1771 (Forestilling. Af de antændte Begkrantzte som saaes da Hans Mayt. Kongen C. 7. med Følge gjorde Kahne-Fahrt i Kiøbenhavn 1771), copper by Georg Haas, 1772. © Royal Danish Library.

On 8 March, death penalty for theft was abolished, and from late March to early April, an ambitious reorganization of the Copenhagen Municipality was completed with Count U.A. Holstein as new Lord Mayor of the city. Late in April, burials in church buildings were prohibited and funeral ceremonies were moved to nighttime – initiatives which were also commented in new writings. As of 2 May, academic honors should be given without respect to religion, and on 20 May the Royal Equestrian Guard was dissolved, assumedly one among several attempts to cut spending, and the relevant personnel were given positions in the army or made liable to be dismissed. On 19 May, a new Finance Collegium integrated a number of earlier financial state institutions, while 1 May saw the beginning of a series of relaxations of morality legislations with a revision of marriage law, followed by laws that adultery could be reported by the offended party only, the abolition of penalties for sex outside of marriage, etc. A line in the Struensee government legislations was an attempt to deregulate morality to the private sphere of civil society rather than as an object of state law. This hurricane of changes and new legislations could make anybody dizzy.

More thoroughly prepared and ambitious products began to appear in the well-spring of pamphlets. In May, Ove Guldberg published an entire state-novel, *Azan*, commenting on the state debt debate; Brun presented his enlightenment position in contrast to the activities of the devil in his satirical autobiography of Satan; Suhm published *Om Oeconomien, særdeles Norges* (“About economy, that of Norway in particular”), and the economist Martfelt published his comprehensive *Philocosmi Betænkninger* (“A World-Lover’s Reflections”) as a response to Guldberg’s Philodanus in the Philopatris debate.

As the court, in early June, took up summer residence at Hirschholm in the North of Zealand, things must have been looking bright from the point of view of the Struensee government. A long series of ambitious reforms had been initiated, the large fusion of all of the unmanageable small special law courts of Copenhagen into one institution called “Hof- og Stadsretten” (The Royal and City Court), separating executive and judicial powers, was destined for late June, Press Freedom had called forth a host of new writers, and a long series of issues which had never before been public, were investigated in a lively and bold new public sphere. After this point, however, things slowly began to go sour, and when the court returned to Frederiksberg Castle near Copenhagen half a year later in November, everything had changed, and the city virtually fumed with anger against Struensee. Also, major parts of the new pamphlet market had now turned against him.

Meanwhile, many debates continued in June. *Fortegnelsen* swelled with reviews. But signs spread that the rumors about Struensee’s intimate relation to the Queen,

that had been voiced since early spring, also began to affect pamphleteers. The theologian F. C. Scheffer launched a rude comment in a booklet of fables, and city gossip increasingly connected three things: the liberalization of morality laws during the spring months, the opening of the large King's Garden in Copenhagen for the general public with increasing frivolity among the bushes as a result, and finally the royal love triangle to culminate with the birth of the new princess Louise Augusta later that summer. The strongly moralist, conservative Lutheran Christian Thura published *Et Brev fra en Broder til en Syster* (A Letter from a Brother to a Sister) in early July, which implicitly – without naming names – attacked Struensee and the Queen for “contaminating a state and a government”.

The growing critique of what went on in the nocturnal thickets of the King's Garden began to claim that the root cause of the increasing frivolity of the times lay in the Royal Court itself. This was only emphasized by the birth of Louise Augusta on 7 July. Grandiose public festivities with music, fireworks, and servings celebrated the new princess in the King's Garden, drawing many Copenhageners there, while other, protesting Copenhageners left the churches in a boycott of the priestly announcements and prayers for the baby princess, because of the rumor, probably true, that she was Struensee's child. In the same month, news appeared about Struensee's formal advancements: on 14 July he was named Cabinet Minister, and 22 July, the day of Louise Augusta's baptism, he was ennobled as a Count along with his ally at court Enevold Brandt. Struensee announced that the colleges – the ministries – must no longer communicate with each other but that all connections between them should now go through Cabinet, that is, through him. A perception of Struensee's hunger for power, his lack of inhibition, his voluptuousness, began to spread.

Political activities, however, did not cease during the court's long summer at Hirschholm. On 30 June, all state revenue was fused into one treasury; on 11 July, all restrictions against trade between parts of the realm were abolished; on 21 July, a support system for widows was announced; on 23 July, customs laws were simplified. What might have appeared as a minor political detail, however, would cause an evil feud among pamphleteers: the 7 August law that subordinate state positions like scribes and messengers should be given to military personnel. That implied the sacking of well-earned scribes, and a tough pamphlet war through September elicited hitherto unseen levels of attack against Struensee. Other booklets pointed in the same direction. The established historian Jakob Langebek published, in early August, the anonymous *Nye Prøve paa Skrive-Friebed* (A New Example of the Freedom to Write) in which he attacked the exuberant life of the King as well as the power of Struensee, while a new courageous voice in the shape of the anonymous theology student Josias Bynch compared the Queen to several horny female creatures in a cheeky pamphlet of fables. Simultaneously, toward the end of September, the already-mentioned Thura struck again, with a pamphlet which was probably the first public allusion to the well-kept secret of the King's mental condition.

On 10 September, Struensee had shown the first signs of insecurity, as some 200 Norwegian sailors from the Royal Navy marched on Hirschholm to request their overdue payments from the King. Conditions among carpenters at the royal shipyard were chaotic, as speedy preparations for a new war expedition on Algiers in the Mediterranean was underway. Algiers had canceled an agreement with Denmark that its pirates would not attack Danish merchant ships, and the year before, an unsuccessful Danish naval operation had attempted to force Algiers to a new settlement. The marching sailors were stopped by a military guard but returned peacefully from Hirschholm having been promised due payment. But before that, the court was rumored to have prepared for an escape over the Sound to Sweden in case of a public rebellion. On 28 September, the court attempted to gloss over the tensions with the sailors and carpenters by throwing a party in Frederiksberg Gardens with a grilled ox and free wine – soon called “Forsonings-Oxen”, the Reconciliation Ox, in city rumors. But this gesture ended in another unfortunate event, when a rumor appearing on the same day had it that a conspiracy against Struensee would culminate with an attempt on his life during celebrations. This led the court to cancel its participation – which only helped strengthen the hearsay about a fear-stricken Cabinet Minister.

All these September events frightened the Struensee government and furnished the reasons that Press Freedom was restricted on 7 October. Now it was made clear that the old publication restrictions of the Danish Law of Christian V were still valid, with penalties for blasphemy, lese-majesty, libel, etc. – and that anonymous writings were obliged to state the name of the book printer who would have to bear responsibility for the publication in case the author could not be identified.

The great wave of reforms of the spring of 1771 slowed a bit during the fall, but still there were initiatives like the September law that pensions could not be redirected to children, that civil servants could not pass their office to other persons, and the November initiatives that the death penalty for infanticide and the concealment of births was abolished, and torture should cease to be employed. The evil pamphlets against King, court and government were weakened after the 7 October restriction on Press Freedom, but many other debates continued unabashed, and the new pamphleteer comet Josias Bynch published his erotic and blasphemous novel *Eve's Nightgown* on 30 October, the same day that Suhm – anonymously, and in French – published a critical piece on the level of the arts and science in Denmark.

Already at the time, the notion of “Gjæring” (Fermentation) was used about that strange, febrile condition of hatred against Struensee, rumors, and excitement, which grew in Copenhagen during the late fall of 1771. Still more people were convinced that Struensee and the Queen nourished further plans about a bloody coup which would remove the King from the throne in order to reserve it for the lovers. During the same period, a counter-conspiracy against the Struensee government began to assemble. Maybe it had roots already during the summer, at the small court of the Queen Dowager Juliana Maria and her son and throne pretendent, Hereditary

Prince Frederik at Fredensborg in the North of Zealand. But decisive action seems to have come from Struensee's old ally Count Rantzau now turning against him, partly because of regretting his dwindling influence in the new government, partly because of a new law about enforcing the payment of debts without fear or favor, which was not fortunate to the debt-ridden count. He allied himself with another dubious nobleman, M. B. von Beringskiold who also had personal scores to settle with Struensee and who now became the motor in assembling an able group of coup-plotters. The details of how the two of them came in contact with the Queen Dowager, her son Hereditary Prince Frederik and their Cabinet Secretary Ove Guldberg remain obscure, but in the early days of January 1772, the plot was thickening, and officers like general Eickstedt and colonel Köller agreed to muster military support to secure a palace revolution.

In the midst of these febrile developments in Copenhagen, the so-called "Theatre Feud" broke out in November, where a controversy over the Norwegian director and playwright Nils Krog Bredal's piece *Tronfølgen I Sidon* (The Succession in Sidon) pitted officers and students against each other with violent clashes in and around the Royal Theatre. On 21 December, the Struensee government decided to dissolve the Royal Infantry Guard who rebelled against the decision and gave rise to the "Christmas Eve Feud" where armed guards occupied parts of the royal castle of Christiansborg and marched on the court at Frederiksberg Castle before Struensee yielded and accepted formal dismissal of the guard rather than their being downgraded to ordinary soldiers. The guard's upheaval was supported by many Copenhageners and served to further the circulating rumors that something drastic was about to happen.

This sentiment was strengthened by the fact that the fearful Struensee ordered cannons to be made ready for possible employment by the Christiansborg castle in central Copenhagen. Probably, this was done in fear of mutiny after the Christmas events with the protesting Guard, but in the heated public imagination, this was taken as proof of his and the Queen's impending coup involving bloodthirsty plans of a final showdown with Struensee foes among the city population. Such rumors probably contributed to push the Queen Dowager and her son to accept participation in the coup. Discussions about how to deal with the Queen and her kids seem to have given rise to tensions with the coup group of Beringskiold, Rantzau, Juliana Maria, Prince Frederik, Guldberg, Eickstedt and Köller – but in any case the occasion was chosen to be the night after a planned 16 January mask ball in the court theater at Christiansborg. Rantzau vacillated at the last moment and even tried to warn Struensee through his brother the very same evening and subsequently refused to come to the castle with reference to an attack of podagra. Beringskiold had to fetch him in a litter to be there for the most delicate task: the arrest of the Queen, which required a top nobleman.

The coup was accomplished during the early morning hours of 17 January. The coup clique participated in the evening's mask ball, covered by Köller's regiment

who had guard duty at the castle that night, and after the ball closed around two in the morning, they assembled in the Queen Dowager's apartment. They went to the King's bedchamber and forced him to sign already-prepared arrest orders, and in the early morning they arrested Struensee, Brandt, and the Queen sleeping in their beds. The two Counts were imprisoned in the military citadel Kastellet in the North-eastern part of the city, and Queen Caroline Matilda was transported all the way to Kronborg Castle in Elsinore later in the morning. A string of Struensee allies, Gähler, the doctor C. J. Berger, the officer S. O. Falkenskiold, Struensee's brother C. A. Struensee along with a small dozen others, were arrested the same day.

After the 17 January Coup

Nobody knew what had happened that night, and rumors proliferated in Copenhagen. The King was displayed at the castle balcony later in the morning under shouts of hurrah from the castle square below, and later in the day, he was taken in a carriage with white horses on a tour through the city streets in order to calm public emotions. Hans Holck, the editor of *Adresse-Avisen* caught the moment and launched, the same evening, the weekly *Aften-Posten* (The Evening Post) to chart the details of what had happened; it soon grew into an important publication of the time.

On Friday evening, 17 January, the excited city exploded. Everybody now knew that Struensee had fallen, something decisive had happened in the castle, and a growing mob, led by drunken sailors, began to riot. The association between Struensee and frivolity saw the mob attack a mansion in Østergade which had recently been acquired by a certain innkeeper named Gabel with the intention of turning it into an international hotel. According to city rumors, however, Struensee had ordered him to turn it into an elite whorehouse with international prostitutes, and the mob entered the building and devastated it from roof to cellar. Rumors had it that representatives of the new regime had been present to deliver the house into the hands of the mob. Encouraged by this success, the mob turned to the more real, small whorehouses in the nearby narrow streets surrounding the Church of St. Nicholas, the so-called "Frøken-Contoirer" ("Ladies' Offices"). Between 60 and 80 assumed whorehouses in Copenhagen were ravaged during the ice-cold night, prostitutes thrown out on the street, in some cases stripped, scalped, and raped. The interiors were destroyed, while furniture, ovens, clothes, etc. were looted and sold in improvised street auctions. Only in the early morning were the coup-plotters sent out dragoons to stem the tide, the mob now threatening to turn against the rich noble palaces in the north-eastern Frederiksstaden parts of the city. The events of the night were quickly dubbed the "Clean-Up Party" ("Udfejelsesfesten"), a shock event whose roots were never investigated, and which gave rise, subsequently, to a current of pamphlet interpretations.

No documents about the plans of the coup-plotters have survived, neither pertaining to details of coup tactics nor to more principal long-range policy ambitions. Much points to the fact that the coup took place under a motto of “nothing on paper” with active destruction of evidence. But a strong media strategy had been planned. Already on the Sunday immediately after the coup, the Dean Jørgen Hee gave a long celebration sermon in the navy church of Holmens Kirke facing the Royal Castle, and the same week, all the city’s preachers and theology professors were summoned to an audience at court where the order was given to organize sermons in all churches during the coming two Sundays, in which God would be thanked for organizing the 17 January events and thus saving the kingdom. The most prominent priests were ordered to publish their thanksgivings as pamphlets in the new print market. They were officials of the state, they had to obey, and their theological interpretations of the coup as a divine miracle successfully spread among the populace and pamphleteers: it was God Himself who had acted and picked the Queen Dowager Juliana Maria and her son Hereditary Prince Frederik as His divine instruments in order to save the country and get rid of satanic Struensee and his gang.

Press Freedom was not immediately abolished by the new government but from one day to the next, the new public sphere changed fundamentally. The radical Bynch had published, as late as 14 January, a challenging satire, mocking the King for his adventures with Boots-Catherine and for giving away power to his barber. Already the week after, the shocked writer attempted a volte-face by publishing a new piece stemming with subservience and celebrating the King’s wonderful capacities. Rumors were circulating, nobody knew who might be the next to be arrested, and nobody knew what would happen to those already under arrest.

Simultaneously, many writers were in fine condition after 1771 and proved quick to adapt to the new conditions. Copenhageners hungered after information about what had happened, and February 1772 became the single month with the largest amount of Press Freedom Writings. Suhm quickly published a short piece “Til Kongen” (To the King), boldly addressing the King with a direct lesson about how to behave and how to practice absolutism – it became the biggest bestseller of the whole Press Freedom Period and was soon translated into many languages. Everything about the coup, Struensee, and Brandt sold quicker than printshops could work. It was publisher’s market. Martin Brun, e. g., anonymously published a stream of pamphlets with completely different accounts of the events and of Struensee’s person – maybe he sensed that there were groups among the Copenhagen audience with very different positions and demands. Many pamphlets dissected the “Clean-Up Party” against the prostitutes – a strange event, hard to make sense of, calling for interpretations. Struensee as a person became the central riddle of 1772. A load of pamphlets appeared about him, many of them aggressive, mocking, offensive, but also with divergent interpretations of his person, background, intentions, activities, and destiny.

Simultaneously, the new regime struggled to normalize things. The State Council was reinstated 13 February with Hereditary Prince Frederik at the head and Count J. O. Schack-Rathlou as a central figure. Many of Struensee's reforms were rolled back, such as the morality legislations, even if institutions like the Foreign Ministry and the Royal and City Court remained. Several of the more dubious conspirators were quickly squeezed out of power already through 1772 to 1773, including Beringskiold, Rantzau, and Köller, all while Guldberg's power stabilized and began to grow in the shadows. From 1774 he assumed the title of Cabinet Secretary, a position with dictatorial powers not unlike Struensee's.

Parts of normalization referred to Press Freedom. The new government seemed to have considered the reinstatement of pre-print censorship, but that should never happen. Instead, probably by improvisation, Press Freedom was curtailed bit by bit, step by step. Book-printers were called to meetings and warned, small fines were given to writers and publishers for minuscule transgressions, and a growing fear spread about what might happen.

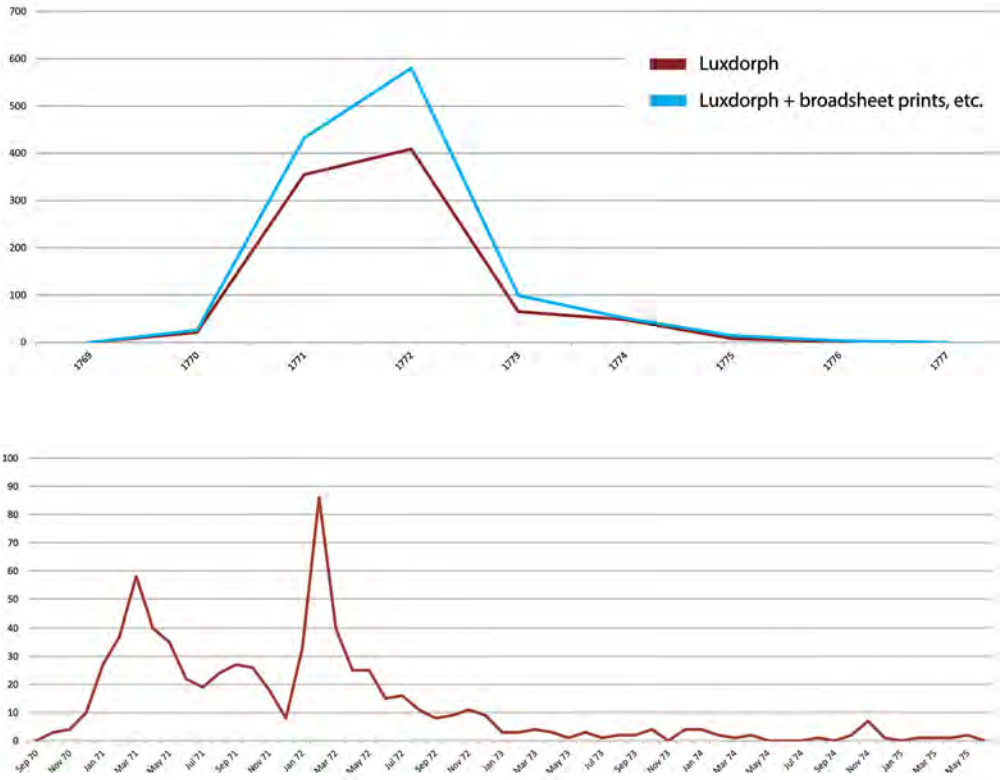
In parallel, the quickly erected inquisition committees pertaining to the three main culprits, Struensee, Brandt, and Caroline Matilda, carried out their task. The bloody coup plans of the three, which had circulated in the "Fermentation" imagination of Copenhagen during the winter could not be proved, but still, on 25 April, the two Counts were found guilty of lese-majesty, and already three days later, they were publicly beheaded at Øster Fælled north of the city in the presence of some 40,000 onlookers. The Queen constituted a more delicate problem; as a sister of the English King, she could not face any sort of rough treatment without endangering Denmark's international reputation and its relation to England. The result, as against the efforts of the British envoy, became a forced divorce from the King and banishment from Copenhagen. The Queen Dowager pushed for her to be imprisoned in Aalborg, but threats of naval intervention from George III granted that she was handed over to an English convoy in late May which took her to settle in the small German city of Celle in Hanover, in personal union with England. During May-June, most of Struensee's allies were released from prison without punishment, many of them banished to remote parts of the realm. The only one severely punished was Falkenskiold, imprisoned on the small, fortified islet of Munkholm outside of the city of Trondheim in Norway.

The pamphlet explosion of February to March 1772 quickly quieted, and the great period of Press Freedom was already slowly withering away. Martin Brun, the most active of all pamphleteers, all but stopped writing, and the second-most active, Bynch, launched a new political journal in June, *Statsmanden* (The Statesman). This enraged Hereditary Prince Frederik in the new state council, and he went directly to the new city chief constable Fædder and demanded that he step in. He did, and as the poor student Bynch was unable to pay the sizeable fine of 50 rix-dollars, he had to serve two weeks of humiliating imprisonment in late July. His pathetic pamphlets from prison gave rise to a small shitstorm against him. Simultaneously, Balthasar

Münter, the priest who had served as the confessor of Struensee during his imprisonment, published a voluminous account of how he had managed to convert him in prison before execution. The book also functioned as the official last word on the Struensee period. God had accepted the converted sinner, and all was well. The 300-pages book became a bestseller with both Danish and German versions: finally, a thorough analysis of the enigmatic Struensee was available, and it was translated into many other languages and versions, German, Dutch, French, English. The Struensee case became a *cause célèbre* in Europe, and many wished to know and comment upon what had happened in Denmark. While Press Freedom was slowly dwindling in Denmark, international press coverage succeeded by pamphlets appeared with very different interpretations of the Copenhagen events, and a sort of pamphlet war developed between the new Danish government and the international counter-pamphlets, some of them possibly with roots in foreign courts.

Bynch, however, refused to give up, and by November, he launched a new initiative, a periodical devoted to criticism of the sermons in Copenhagen churches. After five issues, the journal was prohibited, and the day before Christmas, the first legal restriction of Press Freedom by the new government emerged: a prohibition of the criticism of sermons. Martin Brun, however, grasped the possibility for proving himself on the side of the new government, and he quickly published an anti-journal, meticulously refuting every single Bynch review. In the process, he gave up his strong adherence to Press Freedom and demanded that Bynch be tried for blasphemy. Such was the sad end of two of the strongest and most innovative writers of the golden age of Press Freedom, now competing over who could prove himself most pious and correct. After the feud, both of them fell silent and ceased publishing.

By January 1773, the storm was over. The new government considered to reinstate censorship and picked none other than Luxdorph to pen a draft for a new legislation, but it never became law. Rather, the government seems to have decided to warn writers and printers by means of a couple of large signal cases. The general Count Schmettau had already in 1771 published a treatise in Holstein against the church, which had been prohibited, but the drawn-out court case against him was given up in March 1773, reputedly because a conviction of him would only lead to more interest in his writings. Christian Thura had, in September 1772, published a large volume titled *Den patriotiske Sandsiger* (The Patriotic Truth-Teller) which, based on an orthodox Lutheran theology, aggressively attacked court and King for betraying religion. He was sentenced to lifelong banishment on Munkholm, also in the spring of 1773. In September, the bookdealer C. G. Proft in Copenhagen was imposed a huge fine for the import of some of the foreign pamphlets defending Struensee and Caroline Matilda, challenging the theological coup interpretation. These cases did not figure highly in public, however, it seemed the government did not wish to send its signal of the end of Press Freedom to the public audience at large, rather to the narrow networks of authors, printers and booksellers.



Graph 1: Press Freedom Writings per year, based on title pages and advertising, 1770–1776. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

Graph 2: Press Freedom Writings per month 1770–1776, based on advertising. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

1) Publications through Press Freedom per year show strong activity in 1771 and 1772 after a weak 1770 beginning and an equally weak ending in 1773–1774. The red graph is based on publication years given on title pages plus advertisements in *Adresseavisen*; the blue graph shows activity if broadsheets plus further writings not collected by Luxdorph are included. In both cases, undated writings are included if their subject matter clearly allows dating.

2) If investigation is limited to that part of Luxdorph's Collection which was advertised for sale in *Adresseavisen* and *Berlingske Tidende*, allowing for a more precise dating, the resulting more detailed lower graph displays a radically more varying curve through the period. Press Freedom exploded in the spring of 1771 which is the overall period with most writings. Already the same Fall, with the restrictions of 7 October, activities conspicuously wane, only to explode again in the late winter and spring of 1772 immediately after the 17 January coup. Here, February 1772 is the single month with most writings. Hereafter, activity swiftly shrinks to leave only dropwise publication through 1773–1774. Luxdorph included a number of Press Freedom-related writings also from the period after the end of Press Freedom in the fall of 1773.

In the fall of 1773, the two government acts followed which, formally and without much publicity, ended the Press Freedom Period. On 20 October, a law appeared against the publishing of critical content in Copenhagen papers and journals, and by an unpublished decision of 27 November, this was generalized to the whole of the realm, just as it was generalized to include coppers and other publication types of all possible sorts. The chief constable assumed power to prohibit writings and give fines to offenders without involving court proceedings and without any possibility of appeal.

The Press Freedom Period was over. But real, practiced, living Press Freedom had already been dying for more than a year. The sneaking restrictions through 1772 had already forced most radical and daring writers to hold their peace. But the memory of the three strange and extraordinary years kept living in Danish memory until the democratic Danish constitution of 1849 established a new Freedom of Speech – yea, even unto this day.

In the following chapters, we draw a detailed portrait of the tumultuous history of the Press Freedom Period – the large debates, the hard clashes, the leading writers, the many consequences for the media and the public sphere, the developments of the social life of the city, how Press Freedom developed, topped, and gradually vanished. It is a story whose fascinating detail has never been unfolded before.

3 Absolutism and Press Freedom Debated

Legitimations of Absolutism in Denmark-Norway before 1770

The discussions of absolutism proved to be a main issue in the Press Freedom Period. In this chapter, we shall present the many different new ideas intensely circulating in the new pamphlet public on the background of a brief sketch of the state-of-the-art of debate on Danish absolutism in the decades leading up to Press Freedom.

The new, open discussions about absolutism and about Press Freedom itself in the Press Freedom Period must be seen in the broader context of existing conceptions of absolutism and political tensions in Denmark. Ever since Robert Molesworth's famous *Account of Denmark* of 1692, Denmark-Norway's international reputation had been as a type of absolutism close to despotism – if not virtually identical with despotism, a judgment repeated by Montesquieu in 1734.⁵¹ After the appearance and dissemination of Montesquieu's *De l'Esprit des Loix* in 1748, this debate was opened anew. Montesquieu took care to distinguish despotism and its exercise of unlimited, arbitrary power – as he found it e. g., in Asian empires – strongly from current European monarchies, particularly its version in French absolutism.⁵² It was true that many actual European monarchs enjoyed full sovereignty, according to Montesquieu, but that did not make them despots, because they chose to govern in a moderate way, within the confines of existing law, seeking some sort of informal consent of the subjects governed, and admitting as their aim the public good of state and people rather than personal gain. Montesquieu's treatise quickly became one of the most widely read books in mid-eighteenth-century Europe, and the State Council of Frederik V saw the importance of positioning Denmark in the new scheme of things in a more favorable way than Molesworth's old accusations.

Thus, in 1755 no fewer than two strong initiatives were taken by the leading nobleman of the Council, A. G. Moltke. One was the foundation of the above-mentioned state-driven and state-financed journal on economic issues which was exempted from standard pre-print censorship. It was edited by pietist theologian and top official Erik Pontoppidan and called all interested subjects to submit their thoughts for the improvement of economy, production, and agriculture of the double monarchy. This formed an important, if strictly circumscribed, relaxation of pre-print censorship, coming at the heels of the exemption of privileged institutions of knowledge like the Royal Society of Science and Letters (1742) and the Sorø Academy (1747) from censorship, to rely upon their own peer review systems instead. But Moltke

⁵¹ In his *Considerations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur decadence*, see Tamm 2008.

⁵² It remains, of course, an open issue of discussion whether Montesquieu's attack on oriental despotisms also contain a concealed attack on contemporary French absolutism which might not satisfy on all accounts Montesquieu's requirements for law-abiding European monarchies.

also saw the interest in painting, in the international public sphere, a more positive and correct picture of the special kind of absolutism developed in Denmark-Norway. This is why a small Genevan group of republican Enlightenment thinkers was established in Copenhagen beginning in 1752, comprising André Roger, private secretary of the Danish prime minister J. H. E. Bernstorff, the university professor Paul-Henri Mallet, and, a couple of years later, academy of art professor and tutor of the young Crown Prince Christian, Élie-Salomon-François Reverdil.⁵³

Mallet began publishing the journal *Mercur Danois* in French on Danish matters, and he was also entrusted with authoring a synthesis of Scandinavian history based on research in the old Norse tradition: *Introduction à l'Histoire de Dannemarc*, published in Copenhagen 1755 and quickly followed by the sourcebook *Monumens de la Mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves* in 1756.⁵⁴ Mallet articulated an analysis of the Nordic states as preserving an original liberty stemming from the fact that they had never been subjected to the yoke of Rome:

[I]s it not well known that the most flourishing and celebrated states of Europe owe originally to the northern nations, whatever liberty they now enjoy, either in their constitution, or in the spirit of their government? For although the Gothic form of government has been almost everywhere altered or abolished, have we not retained, in most things, the opinions, the customs, the manners which that government had a tendency to produce? Is not this, in fact, the principal source of that courage, of that aversion to slavery, of that empire of honor which characterize in general the European nations; and of that moderation, of that easiness of access, and peculiar attention to the rights of humanity, which so happily distinguish our sovereigns from the inaccessible and superb tyrants of Asia?⁵⁵

This idea, later dubbed “ancient constitutionalism”, came to play a central role in the legitimation of Danish-Norwegian absolutism in the second half of the eighteenth century. Original Danish monarchy had seen the kings elected by free assemblies of independent farmers giving rise to an age-old tradition of liberties and rights, it was claimed, and this ancient freedom had but disappeared only because of the growing centralization of land ownership to a small number of increasingly powerful noblemen. In this perspective, the introduction of absolutism in Denmark-Norway in 1660 was not at all despotic but rather had the character of reinstating original “gothic” liberty in order to end an intermediary period in which a suppressive and self-interested aristocracy had led ancient tradition astray. Such ideas if not

⁵³ See Horstbøll 2007, also Østergaard 2014.

⁵⁴ See Horstbøll 2007, 187. In Denmark at the time, also the old Baron Holberg (in his last writing, 1753) and law professor Kofod Ancher (in 1756) – later active during Press Freedom – attacked Montesquieu for not admitting unlimited or absolutist monarchy as a special category; thereby the two attempted to exempt Denmark from implicit accusations of despotism, cf. Tamm 2008, 168–172.

⁵⁵ Quoted from Horstbøll 2007, 187.

myths of an ancient Old Norse constitutionalism of free farmers should continue to play an important role in Denmark far into the twentieth century.⁵⁶

Following on the heels of Mallet, Roger continued the propaganda offensive and published his *Lettres sur le Dannemarc* in Geneva in 1757. The letters were quickly translated into Danish, and a German translation followed in 1758. When the book was issued in London in 1762, it was titled *The Present State of Denmark*. The anonymous editor introduced the English translation: “A Book written concerning a monarchic state by a republican of Geneva, will probably excite the curiosity of others, as it has done mine”. Roger extended Mallet’s historical argument into present-day politics. His first letter began, along the lines of Montesquieu’s concepts: “Sir, it is doing great injustice to the constitution of this country to say it is despotic. The monarch possesses, indeed, the sole authority; but his administration is one of the most moderate and regular in the world. [...] If by despotism is understood unlimited monarchy, the constitution of Denmark is certainly despotic. But this idea alone is not what affrights your free, republican soul”. The abuses, which those Eastern princes make of their unbound authority, would, of course, frighten a republican soul, and with some help from Montesquieu, Roger drew “the principal lines which mark the boundaries between monarchy and despotism; and these marks you may easily distinguish in the government of Denmark. It is founded on a system of laws that regulates the administration of justice in civil and criminal affairs”.⁵⁷

After thus having defended actual conditions in Denmark-Norway against accusations of despotism, Roger goes on to interpret the historical introduction of unlimited monarchy in Denmark-Norway, which had so scandalized Molesworth:

It is a gross mistake to imagine that the revolution of one thousand six hundred and sixty destroyed the liberty of a kingdom which had hitherto been free. Liberty, properly speaking, was known only to the nobility; [...] Hence you may conclude, that the revolution which deprived the nobility of such odious exemptions, in fact did nothing more than change the principles of a vicious aristocracy into those of a well-regulated monarchy.

Again, stable monarchism had, by the introduction of absolutism in 1660, replaced the earlier evils of aristocratic, unbalanced monarchism, according to the interpretation of Roger and his sources. Mallet’s and Roger’s combined efforts established an interpretation which went directly against that of Molesworth to whom the year 1660 had marked, quite on the contrary, the lamentable introduction of despotism to end the traditional liberties of Denmark-Norway, as the estates handed over power to an absolutist, that is, despotic sovereign.

Thus, the Danish State Council pursued a detailed propaganda policy campaign, during the 1750 and 1760s, to establish the idea that Danish absolutism had absolutely nothing to do with despotism. Rather, it was built on a long-rooted, special

⁵⁶ See Evju 2019.

⁵⁷ Horstbøll 2007, 176.

understanding if not a pact between the people, the estates, and the sovereign, so that the latter strove to put his unrestricted power to use in the interest of public good. Danish authors like Sneedorff, Rothe, and Suhm further supported this idea of a patriotic absolutism obliging regent as well as people to collaborate for the fatherland.⁵⁸

This propaganda formed the backcloth to the important political disagreement in the Danish elite, developing through the 1760 up to the 1770 seizure of power by Struensee and his elite backing group primarily based in the military top. In practice, absolutism in Denmark-Norway had, during the reign of Frederik V, acquired the shape that the King ruled through a State Council consisting of experienced noblemen like Moltke, Bernstorff, Thott, Schimmelmann, and Reventlow.

During the 1760s, as we have heard, an important group in the top of the military had developed quite alternative ideas as to how sovereign rule ought to be conducted. In 1761, Denmark-Norway and Russia were on the brink of war, and the experienced French general C. L. de Saint-Germain was hired to reorganize the old-fashioned Danish army. He had served in a number of international wars where he had established close contacts with leading Danish officers such as P. E. Gähler, H. W. Schmettau, F. Numsen, and C. Lohenskiold. This faction at the top of the army, however, grew increasingly weary with policies emerging from the State Council.

Radicalizing the lines in the new Swiss rearticulation of the self-understanding of Danish absolutism, they saw the State Council as an illegitimate encroachment of the high nobility on the unlimited sovereignty of the King, abusing the Council to further their own vested interests. Applying the ancient constitutionalism of the Swiss republicans in Copenhagen to present times, Saint-Germain and Gähler saw a strong presence of noblemen in the government as a fatal deviation from true royal sovereignty. Instead, they took inspiration by Frederick the Great's rule of Prussia by means of direct Cabinet Orders from the King to the relevant state organs, without any intermediary council of noblemen, but rather advised by invited Enlightenment philosophers like La Mettrie, Voltaire, or Maupertuis. The young Crown Prince Christian, from 1766 King Christian VII, had acquired a reputation as an intelligent and quick-witted adherent of Enlightenment principles, and the Saint-Germain group saw an immediate perspective in emancipating him from being smothered by a State Council, in order to acquire full sovereignty and replace current "aristocracy and anarchy", in Gähler's words.⁵⁹ Current administration was, to them, characterized by arbitrariness, sloppiness, corruption, the lack of clear principles and rational division of labor. Simultaneously, they increasingly grew dissatisfied with Bernstorff's

⁵⁸ Sneedorff 1757; Rothe 1759; Suhm 1762.

⁵⁹ See Koch 1894–1895, 72. The ideas of the group in its later period are well documented in the vast collection of letters to Gähler appearing among the papers of the Inquisition Commission against Struensee, see Hansen 1927–1941.

ongoing appeasement of Denmark-Norway vis-à-vis Russia, if not the direct subjection of Denmark-Norway under Russia's sphere of influence. Also, on central political issues, these top generals took a view of sovereignty more in the direction of enlightened or opinion-guided absolutism.

Instead of a governing State Council of noblemen, they envisaged a sort of merely counseling body of advisors subordinated to the royal Cabinet, with representatives not only from the nobility, but from all estates. With respect to commerce, they argued in the direction of free trade rather than mercantilism. And with respect to the increasingly pressing issue of the peasantry and their slave-like position of *corvée* under the Danish landed nobility, they supported, as did the above-mentioned Swiss teacher of the Crown Prince, Reverdil, the liberation of peasants from forced labor, also for economic reasons, as they expected free peasants to constitute a better asset for improving agricultural production output. In the swiftly changing political winds of the 1760s, Saint-Germain was dismissed as head of the Danish-Norwegian army no less than twice, in early 1766 and late 1767, but he remained on Danish salary while back in France, and he continued an intense correspondance with Gähler and, a bit later, another top officer, count Rantzau-Ascheberg, on the need for reformation of Danish politics. Saint-Germain, as field marshal, was the nominally militarily superior of the group, but much points to the fact that the real driving force in the planning and execution of reforms was Gähler.⁶⁰ When their noble opponents grasped the opportunity to sack Saint-Germain immediately after Christian VII's ascension to the throne, Gähler was also dismissed. In 1767, the group again rose to enjoy royal favor, now finding themselves in a position close to realizing their ambitious political goals, but late in the year, they fell from grace again, probably due to Bernstorff and increased pressure from the strong Russian envoy Caspar von Saldern. Thus, Saint-Germain, Rantzau, Reverdil and Görtz were dismissed, seemingly as a sort of bargain connected to the long-awaited ratification of the Russian-Danish treatise on the Holstein Estate Exchange in October. This time, however, Gähler managed to stay to assume top positions of the army from where he strove to continue reform, and the two remained in a close mail contact soon also including Rantzau.

So, when Rantzau's old friend from Altona, the physician J. F. Struensee, unexpectedly rose to become the King's personal favorite during 1768 and 1769, the party of the generals began backing him as their representative at court in order to facilitate their program for reform of absolutism, "la bonne cause", as they called it. In their intense correspondence ripe with allusions and code names for central persons, Struensee went under the label of "Le Silencieux", the tacit one, silently machinating at court.⁶¹ In early 1770, the plot began to thicken; during summer, the

⁶⁰ Cf. Bech 1979–1984 and Danstrup 1947–1949.

⁶¹ Gähler's correspondence constitutes the majority of the five-volume publication of documents of the 1772 Inquisition Commission (Hansen 1927–1941, vols. III-V) but apparently, this massive body

“Cabale” – the conspiracy – was ready, meeting in Holstein during the court’s summer stay there, and by 14 September, Struensee introduced Cabinet rule with the first two pieces of legislation that bear his mark, the introduction of press freedom and a general meritocratic admonition that offices and honors should, from now on, be given for efforts, merits, and results, not based on rank or title. Soon after, the State Council was purged, with the old noblemen replaced by top officers like Gähler and Rantzau, and not much later the Council was dismantled completely in December 1770. Gähler, in particular, went on to become Struensee’s top official and prepared, in detail, many of Struensee’s political initiatives. Saint-Germain followed the developments at a distance, corresponding with Gähler, thus, in a letter of 6 October 1770, he outlined the main set of principles he advised the new government to adhere to.⁶² This radical change in Danish absolutist rule thus formed the very gateway to the

of evidence was not of much use during the court case in which Gähler denied any complicity, and he avoided any more severe penalty. He was sacked from his positions and banished, with his wife, to Holstein in June 1772.

62 The letter, see *Danske Magazin* 5.III, 1897, L. Koch “Breve fra Slutningen af det 18 Aarhundrede”, 1–71, here: 38–40. Koch 1894–1895 calls this letter a virtual program for the Struensee government (73), and it does indeed read as a blueprint for its particular version of enlightened absolutism. Saint-Germain’s advice takes care to begin with a rejection of the claim of the losing noble party that his real goal would be despotism. He goes on to warn his Copenhagen accomplices that victory is not yet won, insisting that the throne must never be left out of sight. The ongoing hiring of new officials must involve honest men only who should be hired on capacities, never on name or reputation so that, if necessary, even the youngest applicant of all must be chosen if he proves to be the better. Everybody should have access to the King, but in writing only; nobody may have the possibility for conversing with the King and leading him astray. False complaints to the King should be punished. It is of utmost importance “d’establir des lois et des règles sur tous les objets”, to establish laws and rules about everything, and they should be so general that no exceptions or pardons would be necessary – that is, rule of law. Members of the Council must not be leaders of colleges (ministries), in that case, they would be the judges of cases in which they themselves are parts. The Council must not meet and reach any agreement before meeting with the King; its activities should be preparatory and advisory only, and every single member should utter his own opinion. In practice, in Saint-Germain’s advice, the existing powers of the Council would all be abolished. All prerequisites must be abandoned and a revision commission for state finances erected. Ministers should consistently implement the King’s orders; the colleges should not form centers of their own political initiatives. No titles should exist but descriptions of offices – empty titles, however, could be sold off to vain noblemen. Peasants could buy their liberty from the King – the idea of a sort of win-win deal between court and peasantry, short-circuiting the nobility. Finally, as if with a strange prescience, Saint-Germain warns the new government that the main target of their enemies in the now vanquished noble party is going to be Caroline Matilda, and he strongly admonishes Gähler that they should do all in their might to protect “this good Queen”.

An important feature absent from Saint-Germain’s advice, however, is Press Freedom, even though it had been introduced just a few weeks before his letter. In the parallel voluminous Gähler-Rantzau correspondence (Hansen 1927–41 vol. V), however, Press Freedom also does not play any central role. Much points to the fact that while Struensee’s policies developed further the schemes of the generals, Press Freedom was his personal pet addition to their plans.

Press Freedom Period – as well as to the debates over absolutism now acquiring a freer and more voluminous space to make themselves heard.

Variants of Absolutism in the Press Freedom Writings – Bie and Brun

In the definitive kickstart of early Press Freedom in December 1770, J.C. Bie's pseudonymous *Philopatreas* pamphlet, the support to end aristocratic State Council rule is unanimous. Taking his departure in the common complaints about rising grain and flour prices under the headline of "On the dear Times, and Decay of Trade", Bie accused the high nobility of keeping grain away from the market in order to increase prices, and he continued to scold the general danger of self-interest in politics. If private interests in the government achieve access to shaping the conditions of trade, "then permissions and prohibitions will be fashioned after their own advantages, but the commonwealth must pay. Ministers should remain ministers and tradesmen remain tradesmen, if not, the former will become all-powerful and the latter will become beggars. – This is one of the most important reasons behind the extravagant level of grain-prices."⁶³

Thus, Bie's complaint over scarcity and its root causes leads directly into an attack on the traditional presence of large landowners in the government and thus, indirectly, to a support to Struensee's new transfer of power from State Council to Cabinet rule. So, the Saint-Germain group's alternative structuration of absolutism would find quick support in influential Press Freedom Writings.

Martin Brun, the most prolific pamphleteer of all, in his massive output of pamphlets in 1771, did not articulate any unified doctrine of absolutist government in writings specializing on this issue, but still, via the many digressions, diatribes, and genre experiments that became his hallmark, it is possible to piece together a version of opinion-guided absolutism with a strong presence in the new pamphlet market. We shall later hear about Brun's ambiguous fascination with atheism and materialism in his roles as Ole the Smith and observant Greenlanders, and assuming the role of Jeppe the Watchman in January 1771, Brun ventured directly into politics. In "Jeppe the Watchman's Observations on State and the Common Good, gathered during his Night-Watch in the Year 1771",⁶⁴ Jeppe celebrates Press Freedom, but quickly continues into an attack on the learned: there are far too many students at the university, there will not be work for all of them, and Jeppe also despises the skepticism

⁶³ [J.C. Bie], "Philopatreas trende Anmærkninger. 1 Om de dyre Tider og Handelens Svaghed. 2 Om Rettergang. 3 Om Geistlighedens Indkomster", Sorø 1770: Lindgren/J.G. Rothe, (Dec. 11 1770), 10.

⁶⁴ [Martin Brun], *Jeppe Vægters Betragtninger over Staten og det almindelige Beste, samlede paa hans Natte-Vagt i Aaret 1771*, Copenhagen: Nr. 8 paa Børsen, 1771 (29 January 1771).

which he sees emanating from their studies: “[W]hat the heck is the use of dissecting flies? I also know that many preposterous and pernicious scholars, all of these Ister-Brothers, just like Atheists, Deists, Naturalists, Egoists, Idealists, Materialists, Pyrrhonists and a hell of a lot more. Ole the Smith has told me that these Pyrrhonists doubt everything.” (8). The identification of a long series of Enlightenment positions as “isters” (Danish “ister” also meaning intestinal fat) makes of all of them versions of skeptacists, but Jeppe is no skepticist, he could not possibly doubt a house on fire when he sees one. Even if skeptical against skepticists, Jeppe immediately turns to his own political program in six points: 1) all guilds should be abolished; 2) academic lectures should be given in the native language of the country; 3) all religions should be tolerated; 4) no strong or harmful drinks must be sold – they are much more dangerous than atheism; 5) nobody may study who does not possess his own means of living; 6) nobody should be despised as bastard children – you do not chose your own parents. The overall layout of Jeppe’s ideas points to reforming absolutism in a liberal direction with freedom of the press, of occupation, faith, and civil status.

Later in the spring of 1771, Brun’s preoccupation with politics increasingly approached the issue of the partitions of society in estates and classes to focus upon the very execution of government. Two further craftsman aliases gave Brun free rein to express more detailed political criticism: Simon the Shoemaker and Søren the Painter. They are no longer narrators, however, rather guides which give the narrating voice access to magical objects furnishing direct overviews of details of the world – the mountaineer’s Magic Mirror of Scania, and the Dream Cabinets of North Scotland, respectively.⁶⁵ The Magic Mirror has many sophisticated grindings and facets which give access to see all sorts of secrets in the world: a State Council deceiving a king to raise taxes; a general staff giving wine and beautiful equipages to the officers but mouldy bread and water only for the foot-soldiers; a clerical council deciding that 125,000 persons should be burned as heretics, only because they wish to enlighten the people and cut priestly salaries – an indirect reference to Bie’s Philopatreas.

In short, the Magic Mirror reveals all sorts of political malpractice: war, criminal judges, lazy professors, the animal cruelty of hunters. Also, the Danish slaveholding plantation economy in the West Indies is attacked: the mountaineer shows Simon how the Blacks are tortured by the Blanks (the whites), and he explains the reason: Whites believe that Blacks have no soul. Simon has a competing explanation, though: “No, it comes from the fact that the existing Blanks are, to a large degree, but the scum of all nations, people without principles, morality and humanity, and

65 [Martin Brun], *Bierg-Mandens Speyl i Skaane, proberet og beskreven af Simon Skoeflikker*, Copenhagen: Nr. 8 paa Børsen, 1771 (4 February 1771); and [Martin Brun], *Den forundelige og over al Verden berømte og navnkundige Drømme-Sahle i Nørre Skotland beskreven af Søren Mahler-Svend*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (19 March 1771).

whose entire religion consists in grimaces and phrases memorized”. Blanks going to the colonies are the scum of the earth. The finance minister of Denmark, both before, under, and after the Struensee government was count Heinrich von Schimmelmann who owed parts of his riches to sugar plantations in the Danish West Indies (now the US Virgin Islands), so Simon’s critical observations on slavery hid a vicious attack on the government top.

Simon also addresses antisemitism – he sees in the *Mirror* a lot of Caananites who say: all of the world despises us because we cheat people, but we are forced to do so because of the special taxes levied on us. Simon also views in the *Mirror* a large council of doctors, priests, and monks attacking Press Freedom: “We must really take care, a thick, phlegmatic Father yelled, that Press Freedom be abolished. The others sighed, for as they knew the King was wise, they doubted the realization of this proposal which they so dearly wished for”. The dream cabinet easily makes Brun appear as a radical political Enlightener, but the conclusion seeks to secure that he should not be taken as an outright, dangerous Freethinker. His final glance in the *Magic Mirror* shows a congregation of Freethinkers, bent on demolishing all religion and morality until they are attacked by a storm and swallowed by an abyss.

The Dream Cabinet follows a similar scheme. Here, dreams in the special cabinet give access to hidden truths, and Søren dreams about the Temple of Honor where he is surprised to find no princes, only a dry philosopher, a poor satirist, and a hungry poet. He finds Homer, La Fontaine, the *Danish Spectator* journal and the Norwegian poet C. B. Tullin. Poets and thinkers, even if poor, thus have more rightful access to honor than grain speculators and magistrate members who try, in vain, to use their gold to buy themselves access to the Temple. Finally, Søren observes in his dream a heap of bad writings, jealous pamphlets, self-interested projects, libel, Spinozist and Machiavellist writings, etc. In that stinking heap, Søren also notices financial writings to prove that the nobility should have everything and the people nothing. In many Press Freedom Writings, a new liberty to attack the political role of the nobility is palpable, and such attacks even became a sort of fashion. The magic objects in these pamphlets give Brun’s narrators access to reveal a long series of secret, illegitimate political activities to be attacked. These pamphlets conspiratorially give the reader access, on a general level, to insight in many different types of actors in the political world and their more or less despicable, clandestine activities.

The next step to Brun was to open his pamphlets to concerts of different voices in a sort of *mise-en-scène* of opinion-guided absolutism where the concerns of different estates and social groups are heard. In particular, Brun stresses the importance of hearing also the lower estates. It may take place allegorically, as in pamphlets about the conversations between the coffee-pot, the teapot, and the chamberpot, or between the windowpane and the lead.⁶⁶ It may also take place more literally, as in

66 [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem Kaffekanden og Thepotten samt Kammerpotten. Skrevet i Fryse-Maaneden*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (6 March 1771), and [Martin Brun], *En splinter nye Sam-*

writings about princes being advised by different popular representatives.⁶⁷ In the conversation between the three pots, criticism is voiced against the coffeepot, representing affected upper-class behaviors in fine salons. Brun's sympathy is evidently with the simple, overlooked but indispensable chamber pot, while the coffee pot is a snob, praising itself for passing around among the fine hands of socialites and facilitating their possibility to express themselves. Tea is a less socially distinguished drink and represents a simpler level of social stratification and the teapot tends, during the text, to side more and more with the chamber pot who claims that it is no less touched by the white hands of the fairest of ladies than the arrogant coffeepot who is really but a simple servant. The equal status of pots – that is, social groups – across social stratification is Brun's implied conclusion.

The conversation between the pane and the lead framing the panes repeats the same structure with the self-confident glass and its subordinate but necessary lead fittings. Both parts of the window, however, claim to be overlooked and actually compete for the victim position: the pane gives access to light but is overlooked in the process, while the lead keeping up the panes is not even recognized. So, in Brun, both higher and lower social strata may resort to victim strategies. From there, the two discussants venture into international politics. The lead has heard that the Turk is planning a war with many casualties and ironically adds: "Christians never think like that". It continues, geopolitically, that the King of Persia ought to attack the Turk who would then find himself surrounded by the Russians. So, the lead takes the perspective of Denmark's ally, Russia. The pane agrees and finds that Turkey should be divided amongst the European nations and envisages a comprehensive redrawing of the overall map of Europe. Ever since the introduction of organized censorship in 1537, some of the utterances most often subjected to state persecution had been comments on international politics which were conceived of as immediately dangerous to king and state. As often in Brun, the pamphlet terminates in an almost deifying celebration of King Christian, of his wisdom, power, grace, wit, and intelligence – the lead even finds it would require no less than a Danish Voltaire to fittingly praise his majesty's greatness. Seemingly, Brun flattered himself to be in that position as a writer. In this pamphlet, Press Freedom all of a sudden makes possible free public comments upon foreign powers and international politics – overlooked social groups now partaking in opinion-guided absolutism advising the King's policies.

tale imellem Vindues-Ruden og Blyet til deres Nytte og Fornøielse som kan læse og tænke, Copenhagen: Nr. 8 paa Børsen, 1771 (4 March 1771),

67 [Martin Brun], *En Samtale holden i Niels Klims Rige, imellem Kejser Klim selv, nogle af Ministerne, en Borger, en Bonde og Klims Hofnar*, Copenhagen: no printer indicated, 1771 (8 April 1771), and [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem en ejegod, viis og stor Fyrste og en Minister, Borger, Bonde, Philosoph, Professor, Kiøbmand og Krigsmand angaaende Finantserne, Handelen, Laugene, Krigsmagten til Lands og Vands, Lærdommens Udbredelse, Agerdyrkingen og de dyre Tider. Til alle Stænders fælles Velfærd og Lyksalighed*, Copenhagen: no printer indicated, 1771 (10 April 1771)



Fig. 9: Martin Brun's dialogue between the coffee pot, the tea pot, and the chamber pot satirized the relations between different social strata. On the title page, the distinguished coffee pot passes around among the hands of the refined party while the tea pot is left unused on the table and the unwelcome chamber pot takes the naughty corner behind the conversing company. [Martin Brun] *The Conversation between the Coffee Pot, the Tea Pot, and the Chamber Pot*, 1771. © Royal Danish Library.

A further, almost parliamentary step is taken in two utopian, princely conversations from the spring of 1771. In the conversation between Emperor Klim (the name borrowed from Danish playwright Ludvig Holberg's Gulliverian 1741 novel about *Niels Klim* and his subterranean travels) and his ministers, a burgher, a peasant, and his jester. The latter selects the themes: bribery, cultivation of foreign mores, and the imports of luxury have led to poverty of the prince as well as his people. An indirect attack on the sacked foreign minister Bernstorff gives room for a rare direct praise of Struensee: "[A] stranger at the emperor's court, more patriot than the Bernstone, took upon himself to defend our case" (5). This gives room for a quick ping-pong among representatives, and the burgher democratically concludes: No single human can know all truths, which is why everybody must be heard: "All estates in conjunction could discover everything. The nobility and the learned might know the most, but they only rarely have occasion to be informed about the smallest conditions of things, and those who know are only those who suffer from those conditions, ordinary so-called mob and ordinary people who can neither read, write nor speak" (13). The burgher articulates the germ of a theory of the public sphere: all estates, even the mob, must be involved in the public, for only people themselves know about the people's grievances and can bring them to the attention of the king. Dialogue proceeds and all the represented groups bring forth reasonable points of complaint; none of them appears as foolish, self-revealing figures. So, the Prince should be enlightened not only by expert advice from top officials and nobles, but particularly by an open debate involving all social levels of society. The pamphlet is simply opinion-guided absolutism idealized.

The same structure is repeated in Brun's next pamphlet, now a wise Prince faces a minister, burgher, peasant, philosopher, merchant, and officer, and they address general political issues such as trade, guilds, war, learning, agriculture, and scarcity. Here, however, real disagreements among the proponents begin to pop up. The Prince admits he is a mere mortal without omnipotence nor omniscience who therefore is in need of advice from all of his people, and he declares himself willing to learn. That is what Press Freedom is for – the pamphlet directly motivating Press Freedom in the framework of opinion-guided absolutism. Here, a beginning nationalism is palpable: now Struensee is attacked for inviting strangers to court, and Saint-Germain for his military reforms, even if none of them is mentioned by name. Interestingly, it is the philosopher promoting the liberalization of economy and the abolishment of guilds, arguing from the natural right of every human to work in the way it suits him or her the better, while the burgher counters with his fears that the consequence would be wild competition where everybody would tear the flesh out of each other's mouths. The philosopher is the economic free-market liberalist, not the tradesman. Finally, all representatives join in a poetic chorus celebrating the enlightened Prince, each in their particular genre and meter. Compared to the first "parliamentarian" pamphlet, the second one realizes that the different social groups not only harmoniously participate in throwing light upon unseen social problems,

but that they may also articulate different and even opposing interests and ideologies in a war of words against each other. Brun realizes that Press Freedom and opinion-governed absolutism is not only a harmonious tea party, but rather opens the door to public social strife.

In such pamphlets, Brun directly idealizes and popularizes circulating ideas about enlightened absolutism informed by open and diverse public opinion – with a particular emphasis on the introduction of hitherto overlooked social strata into the debate. It is interesting how Brun, in complete parallel with such enlightenment eulogies, simultaneously continues his judgmental attacks on Copenhagen sexual morality, bordering on prudery (see Chapter 9). A large degree of Enlightenment liberalism in politics did not necessarily go hand in hand with any sort of libertarian approach to affected social behavior, not to speak of sexual licence.

Bynch – A Statesman in Prison

Brun should, to a large degree, turn down the volume for his social and political criticism after the January 1772 coup, but his fellow provocateur of the “Golden Year of the Press” 1771, Josias Bynch, displayed less such caution. Initially, he was caught red-handed. Three days before the coup, unknowingly, he published the first volume of a new periodical called “Den paaseende Bias” (The Observant Bias, after an ancient Greek sage).⁶⁸ It contained a sketch of a theory of satire accompanied by a satire example in which a certain regent named Klaudius inherits a bankrupt country from his father, tours the city with the prostitute daughter of a sock salesman and gives his power away to his barber. This was a wicked and easily decodable satire of Christian VII who had indeed inherited a state deficit from Frederik V, toured the public houses with his mistress Boots-Catherine and was now sharing power with his physician. Bynch must have woken up to a literal shock on the morning of 17 January to hear about the arrests, not only of Brandt, Struensee, and the Queen, but also some 15 of Struensee’s top officials. Nobody knew who might be next. Bynch’s panic is palpable in the next issue of his journal which was on sale only a week later, now with a breathless celebration of King Christian who is praised for almost single-handedly to have revealed his false friends and advisors at court and had them arrested.⁶⁹ This shameless concoction of faked royalism was the beginning of Bynch earning the nickname of “Vendekaabe” – turncoat – and during the year 1772, he emerged as a main public scapegoat for the new post-coup regime. After Suhm’s brief “To the King” pamphlet appeared three days after Bynch’s *Bias* no. 2, Bynch further tried to repair his reputation with a lengthy, pedantic, and byzantine criticism of Suhm’s initiative, with Bynch priding himself of jumping to

⁶⁸ [J. L. Bynch], *Den paaseende Bias*, no. 1, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 14 January 1772.

⁶⁹ [J. L. Bynch], *Den paaseende Bias*, no. 2, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 24 January 1772.

the King's defense against Suhm's didactic imperatives.⁷⁰ Also, this effort failed to convince, and in an evil, anonymous pamphlet in February, a certain "S" – probably the priest Schönheyder of the Trinitatis Church, close to the new regime – directed a counterattack at Bynch, sowing doubt about the reality of his new-found royalism, implying he had really been a Struensee admirer all along, finally to indicate he might soon end up in prison.⁷¹ Publishing anonymously, the pamphleteer nonetheless seemed to be known by Bynch, who probably realized that from a person close to the new regime, rattling the prison keys might be no empty threat. Bynch again tried to come back with a new pamphlet directly addressing the King, and now borrowing many of the points of Suhm's short pamphlet which had, in the meantime, proved excessively popular (see below).⁷²



Fig. 10: Among the infamous achievements of young Christian VII were his excesses of 1767 when he was touring the city with prostitute Anne Katrine Bentzen, known as Boots-Catherine. It was a well-known affair among Copenhageners, but it proved particularly unwise for Bynch to root around these events, attacking the King only a few days before the 17 January coup. *Anne Katrine Bentzen*, painting by unknown, ca. 1765. © Museum of Copenhagen.

70 [J. L. Bynch], *De Retsindiges Kritik over Hr. Conferentsraad Peter Friderich Suhms Moraler til Kongen. Opsat, efter manges Begiering af en Veldømmende*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (21 February 1772).

71 [J. C. Schönheyder], *Erindringer ved den Veldømmendes Kritik over Suhms Moraler. Af den Gienemlæsende*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (26 February 1772).

72 [J. L. Bynch], *Brev til Kongen paa alle Underdanernes vegne. Af B*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (1 April 1772).

After the execution of Brandt and Struensee on 28 April, there seems to have been something of a turn in the volatile Copenhagen atmosphere. Hostility against the two Counts began to lessen, and after the publication of the verdicts against them in May, everybody could see that no evidence at all had been found for the many terrible plans ascribed to Struensee by the “Fermentation” city rumors only a few months earlier: claiming the sovereign throne for the Queen or even for himself, accompanied by a bloodbath on Struensee opponents in the streets of Copenhagen. Simultaneously, the majority of arrested Struensee allies were released through May and June, some banished to remote parts of the realm but only one – Falkenskiold – facing a severe punishment, indefinite incarceration on the islet Munkholm in Norway. In this gradual change of climate, Bynch seems to have recovered some of his old bravado. He quickly initiated a new periodical, *The Statesman*, immediately followed by another, *The Anti-Statesman*.⁷³ Both were anonymous, but behind the pen names of the contributors to the periodicals, Bynch was the only writer. The former journal presented Bynch’s own political analysis of absolutism, the latter added a parody of a despotic counter-position appearing as incoherent. This double strategy allowed for Bynch to present his philosophy of state.

The Statesman vol. 1 presented the journal’s three alleged contributors, a nobleman, a burgher, and a student – an estate pluralism reminiscent of Brun. It was probably the portrait of the burgher named “Philopolis” – lover of the city – however, which would soon cause Bynch new trouble:

He bears no hatred to the executed ministers of state. He has not been a member of those societies which constituted the new State Council after the arrest of Struensee, also not in that Commission which, without law or sentence, outlined the height and breadth of the scaffold. His private economy is a miniature of what state government ought to be on a larger scale. Titles and orders he regards as female finery which may as easily be begged for by an unworthy as it may be deserved by a worthy, and as something which has, in no day and age, been the mark of lofty souls. (7–8)

It proved too much for the new regime to read such blatant neutrality regarding the guilt of the two bedeviled Counts, accompanied by a delegitimization of the commission sentencing them and the support to a Struenseean disregard for titles and heraldry. Issue no. 2 gives more of the idea of Bynch’s general political position, which is hardly original nor very precise: “Make your state as perfect as possible and as happy as convenient”. The regent should not favor any person nor estate. In the passing, the answer to a staple question of the Press Freedom period is promised in a later issue of *The Statesman*: “The answer to the question of whether nobility is useless and often harmful in a state as well as determination of which transformation the state must undergo if nobility was canceled and reduced to meritorious per-

⁷³ [J. L. Bynch], *Statsmanden et Ugeblad*, No. 1–2, Copenhagen, no printer indicated. No. 1: 17 June 1772; No. 2: 24 June 1772; [J. L. Bynch], *Anti-Statsmanden*, No. 1–3, Copenhagen, no printer indicated. No. 1–2: 1 July 1772; No. 3: 3 July 1772.

sons only, this will be answered by our Burgher in a coming issue” (10) – not leaving, however, much doubt in the reader as to which direction *The Statesman*’s answer would take. The overall theory of absolutism presented by the periodical is organic and anti-aristocratic: a balance between estates should secure that the body of the state remain sound; the regent must not be surrounded by hypocrites (read: nobles) but knowledgeable men only; he should wage war for defense only, keep at bay the lethal illness of civil war, he must “with united forces cultivate peace, diligence, order, obedience, and the arts”. (13) Significantly, Bynch does not at all refer to religion nor churches but rather to norms deriving from uniting rights of nature, morality, and reason. *The Statesman* articulates a simple version of the moderate Enlightenment utopia of enlightened absolutism, exploiting classic metaphors like the state as a body or as a household governed by a wise patriarch and with no apparent role for religion in politics. Speaking of natural rights instead of the *Lex Regia* doctrine about the divinity of the anointed, absolutist regent, however, probably also did not please the new regime.

In parallel to the two issues of *The Statesman*, three issues of *The Anti-Statesman* appeared through June and early July. It presented, as mentioned, a parody of arguments against those of *The Statesman*. It asks, rhetorically, “Could wit subdue self-assertion? – Could honesty drive out self-interest from the world? – Could modesty and meekness close the mouth of the shifty, the jealous, and the sullen? – No!” (1) The *Anti-Statesman* is skeptical of what is portrayed as a naïve Enlightenment conception of humanity and celebrates a negative anthropology in which self-interest, envy, and contrariety are ineradicable properties in human beings. The *Anti-Statesman* celebrates the events of the Great Clean-Up Party just after the coup and its rightful revengefulness against Struensee and his assumed associates the prostitutes. It is evil of *The Statesman* to characterize information about the coup as mere “fairytales” and attack the priestly sermon campaign after the coup where the relevant acts of treason were revealed. Or would the *Statesman* really go so far as to prohibit the clergy from speaking until after the public sentences of the prisoners? The *Anti-Statesman* tears the patriotic mask of the face of the *Statesman* and does not yield from accusing the *Statesman* of complicity in treason.

In a vertiginous gamble, Bynch actually now represents Schönheyder’s attack against himself in February in the mouth of the *Anti-Statesman* as a parody. The *Anti-Statesman* goes on to compare the *Statesman* with an official who he accidentally overheard saying evidently crazy and harmful sentences such as: “Struensee had straightened up state finances, he had no means in foreign banks, and the sums he sent there were in order to pay state debt. He had secured provisions of grain. He had weakened and hamstrung the wings of nobility. He would not appear as unimportant to posterity as he was now hated by our patriots”. Bynch obviously held a disguised sympathy for such utterances which he dared present here only with so to speak double subsidiarity: as one fictive person’s critical resumé of another fictive person’s claims. Using the *Anti-Statesman* as a mouthpiece, Bynch thus gives a por-

trait of the negative of his own political ideal of enlightened absolutism. To the *Anti-Statesman*, despotism should be preferred, for people actually want to be under a yoke, all princes are egoists and must conceal this from their subjects, they must wage cruel wars, they want to enjoy awe and fear from their subjects rather than esteem, and they should surround themselves with concurring hypocrites. The *Anti-Statesman* appears as an avowed Machiavellian realist as to despotic politics. To the *Anti-Statesman*, the political Enlightenment utopia of the *Statesman* is but comparable to dreamy Swedenborgian spiritualism. Swedenborg was a Swedish pietist-inspired mystic and the inventor of spiritism – a staple reference during Press Freedom and here mocked for his claimed access to the world of spirits. Why, asks the *Anti-Statesman*, would the *Statesman* take away from the King his sweetest consolation in tough times in the shape of a favorite friend by whom he can rest his weary head? Indirectly, Bynch here accuses the top of the new government not only for despotic Machiavellianism, but of assuming a position similar to Struensee, as the King's favorite, if not dictator.

Bynch's double periodical initiative of the summer of 1772 forms a rare example among the Press Freedom Writings of political audacity after the January coup. Most other pamphleteers had realized that the time of free political criticism was now waning. Bynch's initiative simultaneously illustrates that in this period, assessments and claims about the character of sovereignty and absolutism had inevitably become tied up with the interpretation of what had happened during the Struensee period. Bynch's version of enlightened absolutism immediately called for comparisons with what Denmark-Norway had just seen during the reign of Struensee, and it was for that reason that Bynch tried to combine his *Anti-Statesman* portrayal of a cynical Machiavellian state vision with characteristics of the coup government such as continued support for royal favorites, criticism of courtly ceremonies and attacks on the divine status of the absolutist King. This was deliberately muddying the political waters and attempting to make the coup government seem hypocritical.

Finally, and surprisingly, Bynch takes the step of revealing that both of his *Anti-Statesmen* were just artificial positions, fashioned out of old books, a sort of ideal types of intellectual history. This was probably an attempt to take the blow out of a possible counterattack from the new government by admitting the whole double-periodical stunt as an elaborated, speculative fiction, if not a joke. If that was his intention, however, Bynch sadly failed. Hereditary Prince Frederik had, after the coup, assumed the leadership of the reformed State Council in February, and he had a fit of rage as he discovered the existence of *The Statesman* in June. He went directly to the new police director Fædder, without going through the Danish Chancellery, and gave him the blunt order to immediately stop the periodical. Not long afterwards, as he saw the *Anti-Statesman* advertised, Prince Frederik pushed again, and Fædder reacted by giving Bynch a fine of 50 rix-dollars. This was far above the economic powers of a failed student, and Bynch, humiliated, had to accept the substitute punishment of two weeks imprisonment on bread and water in the townhouse arrest on

Gammeltorv in the city center. It was no long incarceration, but it is obvious from the reactions of Bynch and other pamphleteers that the social degradation and loss of reputation in a prison term outweighed by far the pains of the actual confinement. Furthermore, this led not only to the final, decisive public revelation of Bynch's identity and his authorship, but also to several pathetic, whining publications from the incarcerated Bynch.⁷⁴ He now chose to apologize for his spring attack on Suhm and pledged for charity so he could escape abroad. Adding insult to injury, this gave rise to an ensuing pamphlet shitstorm against him during the late summer, particularly ridiculing his changing views of Suhm, who never bothered to answer Bynch's many writings on him. This finally established his nickname of "Paul Wendekeabe" – Paul the Turncoat. Bynch now appeared as a broken man. From this nadir, few probably expected Bynch to recover.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, he re-emerged three months later with a new, clerical periodical initiative in November, as cocky as ever (see chapter 6). But, as the fate of his political double periodical of June-July served to demonstrate, if you did not exactly enjoy the prominence of a Suhm, it was no longer time for celebrating Enlightened Absolutism in any form or shape. Guldberg, one of the discreet strongmen of the new coup government, was said – by his own son – to be a man of 1660, that is, a supporter of classic, decisively unenlightened, God-given absolutism, of a sovereignty not in any way guided by opinion or informed by enlightenment, but rather taking his advice directly from above.⁷⁵ With Guldberg's power increasing through 1772 and 1773, the liberty to propose and discuss modifications of classic absolutism only narrowed. This should also determine his clash with his old friend, P. F. Suhm, by far the most articulated and in a certain sense dangerous defender of enlightened absolutism in and even after the Press Freedom Period.

P. F. Suhm – a Free Intellectual

Peter Frederik Suhm was no doubt the leading intellectual in Denmark-Norway of the 1770s. Simultaneously, he was one of the only representatives of the learned elite to actually exploit the new publication possibilities offered by Press Freedom, expressing himself in easily written, popular pamphlets aimed at the new general mar-

⁷⁴ [J. L. Bynch], *Et Brev til Hr. Konferentsraad Peter Frid. Suhm*, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 1772 (27 July 1772); and [J. L. Bynch], *Et Digt over Frieheden. Skreven i et kummerfuld Fængsel af [seal]*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (4 August 1772).

⁷⁵ The coup government of 1772 who gradually developed into Guldberg assuming similar powers to Struensee in 1774, did not, however, reestablish the State Council on the same footing as before 1770. Initially calling it a "Cabinet Council", they inherited to a large degree the Struensee group's ideal of Cabinet rule, and now there should be no overlaps between the Council and the Ministries. This also paved the way for Guldberg's appointment as Cabinet Secretary in 1774 with virtually unlimited powers to rule in the King's name.

ket. Most other scholars, learned, clergy, officials, etc. did not venture into this new market if not directly forced to do so (see chapter 10).

Suhm was middle-aged and already an established figure when Press Freedom broke out. He had spent fifteen years in Trondhjem, Norway, from 1751 to 1766, which gave him a life-long love of Norway and also a self-chosen role as a public representative of Norwegian interests in politics of the double monarchy. He had gone there in order to propose a young heiress, Karen Angell, and this marriage bolstered Suhm's economy so that he never had to apply for office but was able to enjoy a career as a private scholar and free intellectual. In a number of senses, he was a man of contradictions. He was at the center of a close-knit network of learned friends and scholars in Copenhagen, with whom he very often disagreed: Luxdorph, Jacob Langebek, Otto Thott, Guldberg, Kofod Ancher, and many more. On a series of points, he was close to being a representative of radical Enlightenment with his strong support to Press Freedom and his aversion against ranks and titles – but simultaneously he was as strong an opponent to Struensee as anyone. He was a royalist, against licentiousness and attacks on religion – but simultaneously the author of the first draft of a parliamentary constitution in Denmark-Norway, which would have effectively dissolved absolutism, had it been accepted. He was an insider to the 1772 coup, but quickly developed a distaste for the post-coup government's conservative development and became its severe critic, both for its restrictions on Press Freedom and for its rolling back plans for the emancipation of the peasantry. He was the most intense celebrator of Press Freedom and often acted uninhibitedly in his own writings, but did not hesitate, in several cases, to submit himself to censorship as well as self-censorship. Despite his considerable intellectual span and his broad recognition, he refused to accept state offices because he preferred to stay at home and study, in his large house and gardens in central Copenhagen with a library approaching 100,000 volumes. Despite his constant defense of church and religion he was skeptical against the majority of contemporary currents of theology and supported full freedom of religion. He celebrated, at the same time, radical liberty and moral virtue, both as political ideals and personal aims. He championed honesty and love to truth, but simultaneously kept a secret diary full of clandestine political information and the wildest gossip which could not be published at the time. In general, he stood out publicly as a fearless voice, even against close friends.

To Suhm, Press Freedom was only a short interlude in a 50-years career, but still it played an exceptional role to him. It was here that his writings became popular and connected themselves closely to political developments. In Luxdorph's Collection, there are around 20 numbers by Suhm, mostly under his own name, but he wrote considerably more during the period, and it is not always easy to see why some have been characterized as Press Freedom Writings, others not so.



Fig. 11: P. F. Suhm was the leading Danish intellectual of the 1770s but before this, he had spent a period of years in Trondheim where he married Karen Angell, the heiress to a large fortune. The stay had made Suhm aware of the problems of Norway in the Dual Monarchy, and he participated in the foundation of the Norwegian Academy of Sciences. Also, when he returned to Denmark, he continued standing up for Norway, e. g., regarding economical issues and the demands for a Norwegian university. During Press Freedom, Suhm developed radical political positions such as an unpublished constitution sketch, a public patronizing of the King, and a political *roman à clef* attacking Guldberg and – in semi-clandestine versions – an early catalogue of human rights. *Peter Frederik Suhm*. Miniature by Jacob Fosie, n. d. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Kit Weiss.

Suhm became an early and strong supporter of the 1770 Press Freedom, and already in the 1760s, *avant la lettre*, he appeared as one of the strongest Danish supporters of press freedom. To him, press freedom was a crucial element of enlightened absolutism, if not of even more daring political reforms, and his first effort in the Press Freedom Period, in February 1771, addressed Press Freedom itself. We shall return to this.

Suhm's Involvement in Radical Politics – a Democratic Constitution Draft

Press Freedom, however, also provided the take-off for Suhm's increasing involvement in politics and the development of his radical political philosophy more broadly. As mentioned, Suhm had, already in the 1760s during his stay in Trondhjem, emerged as a leading voice for Norway in the double monarchy, participating in the establishment of a Norwegian Society of Science and Letters and a book series there, and his second effort in Press Freedom was a political analysis of Norwegian economy.⁷⁶ That was controversial, not only for its many concrete proposals, like institutions for orphans and against venereal diseases (institutions the like of which Struensee was busy implementing in Copenhagen), increasing the number of doctors and midwives, planting of forests, etc. But even more so for its more general idea of a new plan for the governance of Norway "like an artificial machine" with cog wheels of different sizes interacting, in order to strive for the equality of different estates. This aim would require a detailed charting of the whole of Norwegian society, undertaken by a College of "native Norwegians". This was extremely controversial, for such a thing would form a germ of independent political governance of the Norwegian state. Suhm also demanded the foundation of a Norwegian university, the return of silver from Norwegian mines to the country's own disposal and a targeted effort against poverty among starving Norwegian peasants. At the same time, a number of pamphlets was beginning to appear discussing Norwegian policies, both in Copenhagen and in provincial cities and towns of Norway. Such debates had rarely been seen before, and they form an important root of Norwegian independence a generation later in 1814.

Suhm, in a certain sense, continued the Swiss 1750 to 1760s campaign of improving the general reputation of ancient Danish-Norwegian governance traditions and even added his own contributions in a number of ways. In a historical piece on early Danish history which came out in the Press Freedom summer of 1771, he based himself on and further developed the ideas of ancient constitutionalism:

The word farmer was, in those times, an honorable name [...]. They were not despicable and poor, as those we call nowadays farmers, but they were to be regarded as our time, only they were many more in number, and had, in certain ways, manorial rights, in that they, along with the nobility and the more distinguished, selected and confirmed our kings.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Peter Friederich Suhm, *Om Oeconomien, særdeles Norges af Peter Friderich Suhm*, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (7 May 1771).

⁷⁷ P. F. Suhm, *Historien af den danske Agerdyrkning og Landvæsen indtil Kong Haralds Død Aar 1080* (in *Samlinger* vol 1 no.2, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (1 July 1771); also in *Samlede Skrifter*. IX, 1792, 126–127.

This political analysis undoubtedly also flowed into Suhm's increasing interest in Old Norse matters and conditions which came to the fore in the number of fictions on such issues which he began to publish during Press Freedom, cf. below. But he also struggled to improve current Danish political and cultural reputation as well as conditions in a number of other ways.

In a French pamphlet coming out in the fall of 1771 with Friebourg as the pretended place of print, Suhm strongly defended the level of Danish scholarship and Danish arts in the mouth of a fictive, visiting Englishman.⁷⁸ In a certain sense, it formed a cultural supplement to Mallet and Roger's defense of Danish absolutism and a rejection of Molesworth's old book – on another level. In great detail, Suhm went through a number of Danish institutions, scholars, researchers, scientists, poets, artists – clearly with a double intention: to address an international public to convince about the level of Danish culture, but also to address a Danish public which he deemed much too much infatuated with foreign cultural influence and incapable of appreciating the actual high level of culture of their own country. Part of this had the reason, to Suhm, that “the Great” – that is, noblemen, courtiers, officials, and so on – spoke and read German and French much more than Danish. Writing in French was also an attempt to reach this elite and convince them to learn Danish language and culture. Among the plethora of names presented and discussed, we find luminaries such as the medieval historian Saxo Grammaticus, astronomers Tycho Brahe and Ole Rømer, playwrights Ludvig Holberg and Charlotta Dorothea Biehl, poet Johannes Ewald, politician J.H.E. Bernstorff, painter Johannes Wiedewelt, theologian Ove Guldberg, politician and collector Luxdorph – and Suhm himself. Obviously, he could not omit himself in order not to blow his English alias. The long list of names naturally included many Norwegians, Icelanders, and Sleswick-Holsatians, but also Germans, Swiss and French, even a Russian and an Englishman, residing in Copenhagen, and Suhm's claim for the level of Danish intelligentsia is interesting also for its open, international character. Suhm's cultural Denmark-Norway appears as a closely integrated part of the “learned republic” of Northwestern Europe, a picture which would disappear but completely over the brief timespan of the next generation or two.⁷⁹

Names and institutions of Suhm's cultural Denmark-Norway, however, were not unilaterally praised. In many cases, Suhm tempered his characteristics with criticism, giving his praise more substance and simultaneously allowing him to publicly

⁷⁸ [P.F. Suhm], *Essay sur l'Etât Présent des Sciences, des Belles Lettres et des Beaux Arts dans le Danemarc et dans la Norvegue par un Anglois*, Friebourg [?], no printer indicated, 1771 (8 October 1771).

⁷⁹ With the loss of Norway in 1814 and national romanticism entering the scene around 1800, the so-called “Golden Age” of Danish culture of early nineteenth century with H. C. Andersen, Kierkegaard, Grundtvig, the Ørsted brothers, and many others was much more emphatically nationally Danish and centered around Copenhagen than the international 1770s vista presented by Suhm.

attack a number of institutions in need of improvement on different points, such as the university, professional and military schools, libraries, theatres, etc.

The pamphlet appeared, in quick succession, in a number of alternative versions. One was supplemented with alleged notes by a Frenchman, many of them attacking, correcting and even mocking Suhm's claims. It was a sort of inimical reprint, a counterargument.⁸⁰ Another version, also anonymous, was translated into Danish, also annotated but with a completely different set of notes, now summing up to almost as much text as the main text itself.⁸¹ These notes went into extended discussion with the main text in a more friendly way, correcting it on some points, supplementing it on others. It seems probable that the author of the Danish annotation was none but Suhm himself. Thus, he could address a Danish-reading audience, and by presenting his points in a dialogue between two fictive voices, they gained more seeming objectivity and credibility, cf. Suhm's own principle that all things are best investigated by conflicting viewpoints. The many competing versions of the pamphlet, all anonymous, some pro and some con the original text, testify to the bewildering possibilities of the new public sphere: copyright was not invented, and anonymous pamphlets were open for anyone to copy, reprint, or distort for their own purposes.

The 1772 coup, however, would propel Suhm's political engagements to a completely new level. Suhm was an insider to the Copenhagen elite and knew something was brewing. He even had been prepared to participate in the actual coup events, "But Guldberg did not keep his word. Maybe he feared that I would use the event to introduce republican principles", as Suhm wrote in his secret diary. Events seem to support him about the reason for Guldberg's hesitation to include him on the coup night actions. Two days before the coup, on 15 January, Suhm was paid a visit by a naval officer named Frederik Krabbe, familiar with the group of coup conspirators, and he proposed to Suhm a daunting task. In his secret diary, Suhm relates what happened. Commanding capitan Krabbe

said there was a plan underway to be realized towards the end of the week by night; but it would not suffice to abate the present "Cabale" [conspiracy], one also had to make sure for the future that nothing like this could ever happen again, because the King was weak, and the Queen's Crown-Prince would no doubt at some point become head of government, and he

80 In itself, this attack on Suhm appeared in two versions, one in bookprinter Claude Philibert's magazine *Choix*, (No. 3. 257–279, probably Nov. 1771), the other as an autonomous pamphlet: [P. F. Suhm, critical notes ascribed to K. F. Hellfried] *Essay sur l'État Présent des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et des Beaux-Arts dans le Dannemarc et dans la Norvege par un Anglois. Nouvelle Edition corrigée, & augmentée des notes critiques, Par un Danois*, Copenhagen: Philibert, 1771 (4 December 1771).

81 [P. F. Suhm, extensive notes maybe by Suhm himself], *Forsøg at beskrive den nærværende Tilstand af de grundige og skønne Videnskaber samt smukke Konster i Dannemark og Norge. Skreven paa Fransk af en Engelskmand, oversat og forøget med Anmerkninger af en Dansk*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1771 (Dec. 1771)

would be able to call back his mother, and she revenge herself. The only means was to restrict government. Would I write a plan for this?⁸²

Suhm simply receives, from the small group of persons just about to take over the Danish-Norwegian state, the offer of rearticulating the legal structure of Danish absolutism from the bottom up. Of course, he greedily grasped the possibility, and in less than two days he wrote a detailed sketch for a new constitution, radically restricting the king's power. It is an amazing document.⁸³ Power should now be divided between a constitutional King and an elected parliament. The sketch sets out the essentials:

Sovereignty must be placed on a firm footing, so that it cannot be shaken, and no encroachment can be undertaken into the welfare of the subjects. For this purpose, all bestowing of titles must remain in the King's power, but no-one could be fired without the consent of the estates by law and sentence, no taxes levied without them; not main change in the economy of the country and internal governance without them. A parliament of 48 persons, meeting in Copenhagen, which should be renovated every three years, and the same persons not eligible again but after nine years, should represent the estates. (79)

Absolutism should be kept in check by a democratically elected parliament. This was constitutional monarchy. Suhm goes on to articulate his proposal in practical detail with election procedures and geographical constituencies ("portions") across Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Sleswick-Holstein. Electability to the parliament, however, is not general:

Each portion should consist of three persons. To these could be elected nobles and non-nobles, even clerics, yet no-one apart from bishops and priests. Noone could be elected in the country without having real estate, and no-one in the cities without being a well-regarded official. In each portion should be at least one from the country and likewise one from the cities. (80)

Also, suffrage should be limited: only clergy, deputies, estate owners, leading burghers, official writers, town officials etc. could be voters. The counterweight to sovereign power, in short, is an elite democracy, both as to voters and to electables. Decisions in parliament are made after majority vote, and special procedures for exceptional crises are considered:

Would there be a strife among 'portions', then all provinces in Denmark should decide the matter after votes, the same for Norway, etc. Would there be strife among estates in each realm, all three realms (the duchies being one of them), should decide after majority. Would there be strife among the realms [of Denmark, Norway, and Sleswick-Holstein], God forbid, then the vote of the third realm would be decisive. (81)

82 Suhm 1918, 70

83 "Fragment af et Udkast til en ny Regjeringsform", in Suhm 1788–1799, XVI, 77–86.

It is remarkable that in the presentation of estates, the nobility is not at all mentioned as an autonomous estate but is rather subsumed under a general “country estate” along with peasants. Even if decidedly against Struensee, Suhm – nobleman himself – shared his and his faction’s animosity against political privileges for the nobility. Simultaneously, a clear division of power between parliament on the one hand, and king, court, and State Council on the other is envisaged: “In Parliament nobody could sit who had engagement at court or participated in the council. And if any person from parliament was found to receive salary from the court, then his voters, in each of the three realms, should be able to vote him out” (81–82). Political cases are now to be decided by conference between these two separate and independent branches of power. Nothing could be decided in the absence of agreement between king and parliament. All things less principled than matters concerning “the whole and the great” should be left as expedition cases to the Council and the Colleges (the ministries). A Supreme Court of 12 or 16 members is to be elected from parliament, constituting a tentative separation of powers also pertaining to the top end of the judiciary. Particularly important issues like taxation and military should be decided by qualified majority only. Suhm attempted to secure his construction against coups by making parliament members immune to imprisonment, except after vote in Parliament and the Supreme Court combined. In general, no subject can be imprisoned but after law and sentence.

The result is a bipartition of powers in an executive and a legislative-judicial branch, even with some degree of independence of a Supreme Court. Even if limited suffrage may appear archaic, one must consider the times: it is four years before the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of Virginia, it is seventeen years before the French Declaration of Human Rights. Universal suffrage existed nowhere in the world, and when Denmark got its democratic constitution 77 years later, it was a close call that the lower house, the *Folketing*, got universal suffrage for all grown men, while the upper house, the *Landsting*, got strictly limited suffrage privileging landowners.

The document shows the radical character of Suhm’s position, anticipating a series of modern principles like constitutional monarchy, division of powers, representation of all estates as well as all parts of the realm, majority decisions, rule of law, etc. In politics, Suhm decisively formed part of radical enlightenment, even if he remained considerably more moderate on other points, such as morality and religion. Comparing him to Voltaire – at the time the most well-known representative for international enlightenment in Denmark-Norway – Suhm almost appears as his completely converse mirror image. Both of them favored enlightened absolutism and Press Freedom, but on most other points the two diverged. Voltaire supported relaxation of mores and harsh attacks on clerical institutions, but simultaneously he did not at all favor democracy, he did not find common people were capable of becoming enlightened, and absolutist princes should not receive advice from elected parliaments but rather from profound thinkers like himself. All in all, Voltaire was polit-

ically considerably more moderate than the radical Dane. Suhm, on the other hand, would protect morality and the institution of the church for social rather than for theological reasons – even if he strongly supported freedom of religion. On such issues, Suhm was the moderate. Bottom line, however, was that Suhm called, to a much more radical degree than Voltaire, for democratization and a strong restriction of sovereign powers by a constitution with a representative, elected parliament. Effectively, a full implementation of Suhm's program would dissolve absolutism in favor of constitutional monarchy.

Already on the very day of the coup, 17 January, Suhm presented his constitution sketch to Guldberg, at whose home he dined both of the evenings the 17 and 18. Suhm now appeared as a central ally of the coup group, if not simply as one of them. But Guldberg flatly rejected Suhm's constitution. As Suhm bitterly writes in his secret diary: "I supplied Guldberg with my judgment on the change of government; but he rejected it, accustomed to slavery".⁸⁴ Guldberg steadfastly stayed true to absolutism in its original, definitely un-enlightened version.⁸⁵ This disagreement would form the first germ of an opposition which would, over the next years, drive the two friends apart, Denmark's leading intellectual and Denmark's rising dictator.

It is tempting to pose the counterfactual question what might had happened if Guldberg had accepted Suhm's draft. The King was not in a condition to resist a reform based on Suhm's outline, and even if the Queen Dowager Juliana Maria and her son the Hereditary Prince would hardly have been enthusiastic, it is an open question whether they would have had any real authority to oppose it, if Guldberg had persuaded the involved top officers Eickstedt and Köller among the conspirators to put military might behind reform.

Suhm's constitution sketch remained unpublished and was probably unknown in the period apart from a few elite insiders, until Rasmus Nyerup republished it in 1799 in vol. 16 of Suhm's *Collected Writings*, shortly after Suhm's death. Even then, 25 years later, the piece was so controversial that attorney general Christian Colbjørnsen was close to opening a Press Freedom case against Nyerup for encouraging to sedition and subversion of the *Lex Regia*. Seen in the context of the Press Freedom Period, Suhm's constitution shows that even then, it was spontaneously perceived that there could be danger connected to the publication of certain viewpoints, so that even favored elite authors like Suhm chose self-censorship, not unlike the case with his provocative state novel *Euphron* two years later, cf. below.

⁸⁴ Suhm 1918, 72.

⁸⁵ Looking back, Guldberg in 1790 summed up his position: "... after the announcement of the *Lex Regia*, no Danish subject can ever speak about a parliament without attacking sovereignty" – that is, without committing lese-majesty. Quoted from Schiern 1872, 839.

A Terrible Power, Absolute Power! – Suhm’s “To the King”

Texts like the constitution sketch, however, make clear which deep and often radical ideas really drove Suhm, even if they became visible to the public only in moderated, watered-out or more indirect forms in what he chose to publish. Thus, you can see the constitution sketch as a hidden force behind the single maybe most famous pamphlet of the Press Freedom Period, Suhm’s *To the King*, which came out on 27 January, little more than a week after Guldberg’s rejection of Suhm on the day of the coup. Suhm must have hastened back home through the Copenhagen winter night from the dinners with Guldberg, intoxicated by the fall of Struensee and furious over his servile friend – to grasp his featherpen in order to addressing the King directly.

To the King was only eight pages long, and it was distributed for free by the Berlingske book printers. The same day, they published it on the front page of their newspaper, and the day after, the text also appeared on the front page of *Adresseavisen*. It was talk of the town, and it was quickly republished across Denmark-Norway and translated into Swedish, German, French, Latin versions, suddenly giving the Danish historian quite an international reputation.⁸⁶ Simultaneously, it further fermented the international interest in the strange events unfolding in Copenhagen during the spring of 1772. The brief pamphlet definitely brought the brewing discussions of the character of absolutism out in the open – also because it formed, under its celebratory surface, a slap in the face of the King.

The coup excitement and the political will to change from the constitution sketch is palpable in the bold and acute text, directly and cheekily addressing the King’s person. It starts out briskly: “Long enough have religion and virtue been trampled underfoot; righteousness and honor all too long banished from our borders”. It may seem surprising, knowing the constitution sketch from a week before, now to find actual political problems diagnosed in terms of religion and virtue. This is typical of Suhm, however: politically liberal and radical, morally virtuous and religious. To him, the two presupposed each other.

But how had it come about that religion and virtue had been trampled underfoot? “Yet You, O King, are innocent in this. A shameful conspiracy of wicked people has taken power over your person; made access to your person impossible for all righteous persons; You saw and heard things only through their eyes and ears” (3).

⁸⁶ *Til Kongen. Af Peter Friderich Suhm*, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1772 (27 January 1772). The *Berlingske* version appeared in both octave and quarto. The pamphlet text also appeared in the Aalborg paper *Jydske Efterretninger* 7 February and in Christiania in *Norske Intelligentz-Sedler*, 12 February, just like a number of book printers published pamphlet versions: Thiele, an anonymous Copenhagen printer, Trondhiem Adressekontor 14 February, Dedecken in Bergen 19 February. Several German versions came in Copenhagen as well as Flensburg, a French version revised by Suhm in Copenhagen – just to mention versions appearing in the King’s realm. Outside of the realm, German versions of it were bound with many versions of the *Zuverlässige Nachricht*, the most widespread German account of the events in Copenhagen.

Everything was given as a prize to lewd robbers and blasphemers. Suhm verdict of the imprisoned Counts is very harsh. This, however, might easily develop into an attack on the King himself as well, for it was under his sovereign rule and his more or less tacit agreement that the whole disaster has taken place. For this reason, Suhm must concoct a theory so as to exonerate the King from guilt in order not to publicly put the very principle of royal rule into danger: “While all this was happening, You were pleased, for You thought that everybody was pleased, that the happiness of Your subjects was increasing” (4).

This theory, protecting the King from appearing evil, achieves this aim at the expense of portraying him as rather naïve or even somewhat impaired, to let himself be easily fooled in this way. Contrariwise, the coup-makers are celebrated, first the two well-known royal participants, then the anonymous actors who actually planned and realized it: “Thanks to all those patriots, all those who from righteous insights tore the blindfold from Your eyes, which prevented You from seeing” (4). And it was a close call, for Suhm had seen subjects sharpen their sword against subjects and peaceful people excited to be ready for murder – Suhm here taking over the circulating urban rumors about Struensee’s evil plans: “Maybe Your city of residence would, within a few days, have become the victim of arson, leaving only a pitiable ruin, and Denmark and Norway left unfortunate under the rule of that very King who most strongly desire their well-being”. Suhm is really balancing his words here in order to subtly accuse and defend the King at the same time. This gives place for the main part of Suhm’s admonition to the King, a long series of imperatives which, at the same time, forms an updated theory of absolutism: “From God and your people You have received absolute power, You also owe to God and to that your account for how you use it. A terrible power, absolute power! The larger the power, the larger the obligations!”.

The theory developed here is in line with the Swiss reinterpretation of absolutism: there exists a special understanding between King and people which implies that he is responsible not only to God, but also to the people (“You also owe account to God and to that” – where “that” refers to “the people”). In the newspaper versions of the pamphlet, however, this insistence on the popular obligation of the King disappeared; the word “and” was deleted so that the text became “You also owe to God that account”.⁸⁷ Some anonymous editor seemingly had found it too dangerous to equalize God and the people in a theory of absolutism. Here, competing absolutisms fight in the detailed wording of Suhm’s pamphlet.

Suhm continues teaching important restrictions on sovereignty in his imperatives to the King: Select honorable men, and judge and fire no-one except after the laws, he demands. Just as in the constitution sketch, Suhm is calling for rule of law

⁸⁷ The Danish text goes like this: “Af Gud og Dit Folk har Du Eenevolds-Magten; Du er ogsaa Gud og det Regnskab skyldig, hvorledes Du bruger den” – the disappearing word “og” here in italics. This important detail was highlighted in the review in *Fortegnelsen* (vol. 2, nr 137).

which may be the most crucial restriction of royal sovereignty. The absolutist king is, in principle, free to act against the law, to pardon or increase punishment for convicted criminals, even arbitrarily suspend legislation if he so wishes. Suhm did not introduce here his ideal of an elected parliament, but he does take the step to place the King no longer under one, but under three different powers: God, the people, and the law.

Let those unrightfully banished return and get their offices back, Suhm continues, “punish mildly those which are possible to treat with grace but punish rightfully and without pardon those who have disgraced Yourself and us.” Suhm pushes for a merciless treatment of the imprisoned Counts. Set limits to expensive entertainment, pay state debts, let Norway have its own currency back, never let Norwegian heroes be banished from the throne. Remove tough taxes or levy them more equally – in that case Suhm himself will be happy with a tax raise so as to bear the burden of the poor. “Then the land of sovereign power will be the land of Freedom, Happiness, Abundance, Safety, even more than the free England itself, where self-interest and wicked ministers could not prevent the voice of the people to reach the King” (6). Remarkably, Freedom comes first among Suhm’s series of positive abstractions. “Hark the truth from my mouth”, Suhm concludes, then we shall call you Christian the Great, the Wise, the Good. Those thinking differently have sold themselves to vice. Here, by painting the King’s enemies with the theological category of sin, Suhm connects his analysis of the situation to the theological interpretation of the coup which was developing in those days in the sermon campaign (see Chapter 9). Suhm’s pamphlet came out Monday 27 January, the day after the massive priestly campaign establishing the idea that the coup was a God’s miracle. Even the cool historian Suhm does not hesitate to read the cosmological story of salvation into local historical events, and just like the priests, he makes use of the scary effect of the “Fermentation” rumors about planned bloodbaths, civil war, and ravage of the capital.

On his last page, Suhm turns away from the King and addresses God directly. He seems to imply that he needs assistance from a higher realm to make the King obey the presented series of imperatives. Now, Suhm sounds like the priests of the day before: “Eternal God! You who rule over Kings, humans and worlds; You who with Your breath have vanquished the ungodly and made their attacks into nothing, give us reason and hearts to realize your wise governance, to realize your omnipotence, to follow your holy laws.” It is a thanksgiving and prayer addressed to God. But in his final words, Suhm prays as if on the King’s behalf: “Give our King the power to stick to You, let Him realize that You are His King and He our father. Amen! Amen!” (8). Suhm had reasons to doubt the faith of the King. In his secret diary, he notes that when Bishop Harboe came to the young Crown Prince in order to prepare him for confirmation, “he found him completely ignorant in the Bible, but well-versed in Tindall” (38), that is, the early British freethinker and deist Matthew Tindall. So, Suhm wages a double war in his “To the King”: he wishes to establish new, if infor-

mal restrictions on the arbitrary aspects of sovereignty, and his wishes to oblige the King on morality and religion. It is impossible not to read the pamphlet as an extremely rude lesson to the King. First the King was excused with his wicked advisors blindfolding him. Now, it is more than implied that he has, hitherto, not been able to “stick to” God, that he has never really realized that God is his King. The wicked were able to blindfold him, only because he was already blind.

Few others than Suhm could possibly publish such a royal attack without facing severe consequences. His estimated historian colleague Langebek had done something similar, albeit anonymously, with his “New Example” in August (see Chapter 9), but you need look no further than to the sad destinies of less privileged student pamphleteers like Bynch and Thura in 1772 to 1773 to tell the difference. Suhm used the unique situation and his high standing among the coup-makers to present an attack on the King and on the standard interpretation of absolutism which would, in almost all other situations, have posed a grave danger to himself.

The pamphlet contributed to create a new debating public addressing the status of absolutism itself all across Denmark-Norway and contributed to ignite the international interest in the dramatic political turmoil in Copenhagen. It does not appear from the pamphlet text, but it is conceivable, in hindsight, that the pamphlet was also intended as a first admonition to the new regime about to constitute itself among Suhm’s friends in the coupmaker group.

That is the idea you get from a pamphlet from the fall of 1772, in which Suhm delivers a detailed attack on the character of Struensee, *To my Countrymen and Co-Citizens, Danes, Norwegians, and Holsteiners*.⁸⁸ Pragmatically, such an initiative seems strange: now, almost half a year had elapsed since the decapitation of Struensee. The intense spring interest in his person and destiny was waning and seemed to have found its final burst in Struensee’s confessor pastor Münter’s detailed narration about how he managed to convert the ungodly during his visits in his cell, which came out in July-September (see Chapter 13). Next to nobody now dared defend Struensee whose condemnation was unanimous in the Danish-Norwegian public sphere, especially after Bynch’s July prison term for pretty meek comments about Struensee. Why would Suhm feel a need to add his detailed attack on a problem that was no more?

On closer inspection, the pamphlet is a sandwich. Hard and detailed Struensee attacks in the intro and the conclusion only serve to frame what is really the pamphlet’s central aim: to argue for the conservation of certain among Struensee’s initiatives, such as Press Freedom, peasant liberation, the Royal and City Court. Such freedoms and independence of the judiciary were central to Suhm’s reform vision of absolutism. Again, Suhm used his high standing to do a thing which very few writers dared in revengeful 1772: to actually recognize and defend certain among the de-

88 [P. F. Suhm], *Til mine Landsmænd og Medborgere. De Danske, Norske og Holstenere*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (16 October 1772).

ceased Count's political initiatives. Even Suhm could only do such a thing by simultaneously demonstrating, meticulously, aggressively, and in great detail his distance to the fallen Count. On this reading, the pamphlet is Suhm's way of attempting to influence the new government, where the re-organized State Council headed by the Hereditary Prince and the conservative Count Schack-Rathlou had already given signals to harbor a considerable skepticism against Press Freedom. So, the implicit addressee of the pamphlet would have been the new government in general and Guldberg in particular, Suhm's closest friend among the coup-makers. He had refused Suhm's new constitution in January, but maybe he could still be persuaded to preserve the most important of Struensee's political achievements.

Press Freedom after Press Freedom – Suhm's Politicizing 1774–1775

Around New Year 1772 to 1773, everybody could see Press Freedom was on the wane, Lex Bynch had legally restricted Press Freedom, the court case against Thura was underway, and still fewer Press Freedom Writings appeared. Suhm, however, would continue a remarkable one-man-campaign for Press Freedom even after the further legal restrictions of 1773, far into 1774. Initially, his campaign took Suhm's new-won success as a fiction writer as a springboard. In 1772, Suhm had won the prize of the "Society to the Improvement of the Beautiful and Useful Sciences" for his anonymously published novel *Sigrid: or, Love, the Reward for Bravery*, one of the first to use Old Norse material and inspiration for current fiction.⁸⁹ A number of further works by Suhm elaborated this vein, mainly borrowing inspiration from Saxo Grammaticus' twelfth-century *Gesta Danorum* on the early history of the Danes, for instance *Idylls and Conversations* (1772) and *Frode* (1774), just like historical fiction pamphlets like *Conversations from the Land of the Dead* (1773) and the surreal *Adolphi Dream* (1774) came out.⁹⁰ These fictions never failed to include also more or less direct representations of Suhm's political viewpoints: his contempt for court life and politics, his support to Press Freedom and liberty for the peasantry, his inspiration from ancient Greek philosophy as from Leibniz, his high moral ideals also for political rulers, his skepticism, despite support for the church, against theological currents of the time, and much else. This lonesome campaign, again, was possible only because of Suhm's special standing in the Copenhagen elite and his friendship to

⁸⁹ [P. F. Suhm], *Sigrid, eller Kierlighed Tapperheds Belønning*, published in *Forsøg i de skønne og nyttige Videnskaber*, vol. 10, Copenhagen: Det smagende Selskab, 1772 (17 September 1772).

⁹⁰ [P. F. Suhm]: *Idyller og Samtaler*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (30 October 1772); [P. F. Suhm]: *Samtaler i de Dødes Rige*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1773 (22 January 1773); [P. F. Suhm]: *Adolphi Drøm*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1773 (2 April 1773); [P. F. Suhm]: *Frode. En Fortælling ved Forfatteren af Sigrid*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1774 (5 October 1774).

Guldberg whose power did not cease to rise until he, as of October 1774, was named Cabinet Secretary immediately under the King, with powers similar to those of Struensee in 1771. That friendship, however, would be put to the test by Suhm’s final and most daring political effort, the state novel *Euphron* in the same year.⁹¹

Euphron, placed in a remote time and place in a fictive monarchy, developed an inventory of royal love, in-law issues, competing neighboring nations, political favorites, rape threats, high moral principle, and the like, which Suhm had cultivated in his Old Norse fiction authorship. This time, however, it was directly used to fashion a *roman à clef* which allowed for Suhm to fuse fiction and politics into an explosive mixture. *Euphron* presents an unabashed allegorical attack on the development of the Guldberg government and should eventually place Suhm under Guldberg’s censorship. *Euphron* seems to be inspired by the French author J.-F. Marmontel’s *Bélisaire* which had been prohibited in France in 1767. Its main character is the Byzantine general Belisarius, based on an anecdote on Emperor Justinian I who is said to have dismissed Belisarius despite his great efforts for the empire and reduced him to a beggar. It had been read as a general warning against how those in power treat their true servants – as well as an attack on Louis XV of France in particular. Suhm’s title character of *Euphron* is exactly a wise, but now dismissed, advisor of King Sapor of Carmania, an easily decodable version of Denmark. Euphron – Greek for “righteous” – is a Stoic hero of infinitely high and unshakeable moral standards, both for himself and on part of his daughter. The plot, in brief, goes that Euphron has, for many years, been the top advisor of King Artarias, but has been sacked after the ascension of Artarias’ son Sapor to the throne. Euphron had tutored the young Sapor as a Crown Prince and had promised his father Artarias to keep him on the right track and fence off tyranny. Sapor has married Queen Katun from neighboring Mansuria (Germany) and hired a new advisor, Cosrou, from the same country, while Carmania is increasingly becoming a dependency of Mansuria, which now dominates state institutions and even plans to introduce Mansurian language. Euphron has, with his wife Angelica, the beautiful daughter Irene, and she has become the object of desire for King Sapor. He wants to marry her without divorcing Queen Katun, referring to the fact that polygamy is allowed in Mansuria. Euphron, however, declines to break the law of the land and refuses to give his consent to the marriage. The greater part of the novel follows the various initiatives of Sapor and his favorite Cosrou to use bribe, persuasion, threat, or force to make Euphron give in and accept to marry off Irene to Sapor. This takes place through many intrigues, and Euphron stays strong in his rejection even if his wife and daughter eventually tend to yield to Sapor’s insistence, and even if Sapor musters strong allies like the high priest Senja and the Emperor of Mansuria himself, Drungar the Great. At a late point in these intrigues, the old council member Phocas at Sapor’s court stands up to sup-

91 [P. F. Suhm]: *Euphron. En Fortælling*, Copenhagen: Lauritz Simmelkjær, 1774 (28 November 1774).

port Euphron. He is Euphron's old friend, even if the two have often been in deep and explicit disagreement over politics.

Finally, Euphron helps his daughter to flee while he himself is captured by royal troops and sentenced to death. On the scaffold, he shouts: "Pray for King and fatherland!" From the multitude, now a shout is heard: "Euphron, our father, dies!". This makes the henchman throw away his sword to shout: "Damned be Cosrou and all Mansurians! Down with the soft Sapor! Long live Euphron our King!" (65). Euphron is now carried off by the exalted crowd while his devotion to obligation reaches an absurd peak: he keeps insisting that the multitude must complete his own execution because a royal order must never be neglected. The excited mass continues to drown Cosrou in a wine barrel. Euphron, however, refuses to accept the title of king, and Sapor, impressed by Euphron's noble behavior as well as Phocas' insistent speeches at court, turns to his old teacher and promises to give up his pursuit of Irene. He pledges to stay with Queen Katun and to govern, from now on, after Euphron's principles. Euphron then articulates those principles in a 42 bullet points document, as a sort of constitution. Happy end: Irene marries Phocas' son and Euphron retires to the countryside to pursue his studies in a position as an *eminence grise* for Sapor's new government.

The keys in this *roman à clef* are not hard to disentangle.⁹² Euphron represents Suhm himself; Cosrou is a Struensee variant, the King's evil favorite from the neighboring country, while Phocas is Guldberg, the disagreeing but honest friend. To these central characters could be added that the royal couple Sapor-Katun shares strong features with Christian VII and his Queen Caroline Matilda, just like Queen Katun at a point entertains a close relation to the Struensee-character Cosrou. The great Drungar shares some features with Frederick the Great; whether the high priest Senja who married the royal couple, have more similarities than that with bishop Harboe is less clear.

The most controversial among these keys is the identification of Phocas with Guldberg, now virtually dictator of Denmark-Norway. At a late point, as mentioned, Phocas enters the narration with a speech. He had, in many ways, "had different principles than Euphron, among others that it was useful for the state that the peasants remained in the condition and the suppression by their lordships, in which they found themselves, and that this could not be changed without shaking the foundations of state". Phocas had, by adopting this viewpoint, been able to stay at court, but now, finally, he speaks out for Euphron. He admits their disagreements but adds: "I did complain that such a man should be dismissed and not enjoy the appreciation which his righteousness deserved, but I kept silent. When a stranger, a Mansurian, was elevated to the highest position, I complained that no Carmanian should be found suitable; yet, I kept my complaints to myself" (49). Real-life Guldberg has not been pleased to read this implicit but correct claim that he had stayed

⁹² The historian Jens Møller developed the key reading of the novel in Møller 1973b-

at court and kept silent all along the Struensee period. Now, however, Phocas finally turns against Sapor and his Cosrou government.

Suhm’s own judgment is given through Euphron’s final speech, before he withdraws to his country seat. Here, he celebrates selflessness and honesty, and goes into detail:

Firmness of mind during good and bad times, humility in success, high-mindedness in failure, patience, even happiness through suffering, neither fear nor longing for death, disgust through appearing different from what one really is, quiet courage during danger, coolness through surprises, pure fear of God without hypocrisy, a mind which is never seduced by the flashy vanity of courts, by its deceptive temptations, by the flattery of courtiers and friends, a mind which commits no wrongs against friends nor foes, which is shaken by nothing from its well-considered positions – such properties constitute a hero. (73)

One reads Suhm’s personal moral confession in the mouth of Euphron.

What particularly would have agitated Guldberg, however, is that his alter ego Phocas, in his final speech, turns to yield completely to Suhm’s heroic self-portrait. Phocas now praises Euphron, his withdrawal as well as his rules of government left behind. Indeed, Phocas now bows to Euphron’s principles on every single point: “I myself am now ready to follow all of Euphron’s sentences, for even regarding agrarian policy he has now brought me to other thoughts, which was formerly the only thing on which we disagreed” (74–75). The long speeches of Euphron and Phocas through the novel appear as a fictive conversation between Suhm and Guldberg, Denmark’s top intellectual and its now *de facto* dictator – with Suhm himself winning the discussion. In his first speech, Euphron/Suhm had portrayed Phocas/Guldberg’s rejection of peasant emancipation in very rude terms. And in Phocas/Guldberg’s last words, he is made to bow completely to Suhm’s principles. This is contrary to what had happened in real life, in which the Guldberg government had, in August 1773, rolled back Struensee’s initiative in the direction of liberation of peasants – Struensee had changed the calculation of the amount of work owed by peasants to landowners, from being the landowner’s privilege to an objective measure. So, Suhm presents a parallel world in which Guldberg was consistently more liberal than in reality, finally yielding to Suhm’s argument. Mere teasing between friends, or a stern public rebuke for keeping peasants suppressed?

If that was not sufficient to give Guldberg a fit of rage, Suhm also prepared no less than two different versions of *Euphron*. The version we have discussed so far was the public one, on sale in Copenhagen from December 1774. Suhm, however, also prepared a private version to distribution only among selected friends. In that version, Euphron’s “rules of government” which sealed the narrative by granting Sapor’s continued wise rule, were made explicit in a long and argued list of 42 bullet points.⁹³

⁹³ There is no difference between the title pages of the two versions; their size is 80 and 94 pages, respectively.

Again, the “Government Rules” form an astonishing document, and its first seven points constitute a virtual declaration of human rights:

1. “Honor religion and its servants, and reward the better of them, for they are the firmest pillars of state”.
2. “Value highly learned men; Your praise, the well and reputation of the country depend upon them. Hire no-one to important office without him having competences”.
3. “Let anyone enjoy unrestricted freedom of religion, knowing that no-one but God judges the hearts”.
4. “Everybody should have the freedom to think, speak, and write as he pleases; thereby the kings will have the best means to know truth. Ministers are scared by this; they fear enlightened kings and would not wish that the complaints of people should have direct access to the King or sent there by others but themselves”.
5. “Should any private man find himself offended by the abuse of this liberty, then laws are open to him; just like to the King who should, however, very rarely and in significant cases only, use the laws; for persecution for lese-majesty used frequently and in insignificant cases, descends into tyranny. Neither on such occasion, nor ever, should the regent make use of any other road than that of court cases, for all other ways are despised, suspicious, and handmaids of tyranny”.
6. “Keep balance between estates; use the nobility primarily for war and court positions, the middle class to all civil and judicial offices, but give liberty to all”.
7. “Such liberty should be enjoyed by the peasant as well, and is not enjoyed by him yet, alas, in your country. Freedom consists in cultivating your own land, in being judged by law only, and in having unchained hands to live wherever in the country you may wish. To realize this, you must first give the peasants of your own estates such freedom; then you must incite landowners hereto, by encouragements and signs of honor; and finally, buy gradually their properties and free the peasants. For by order you should not do this; for everyone possesses his land by the same right as you possess your kingdom, and you must have deeply engrained in your mind that a King have no power to do whatever he wishes but no more, exactly, than what is right”.⁹⁴

Coming before the American Declaration of Independence and the French Revolution, this list has been argued to be one of the first Human Right declarations.⁹⁵ In any case, it is a remarkably early such list, and rules 3) to 7) forms the core of Suhmian rights. As to 1), it is remarkable that Suhm’s argument for religion is a social one: it should be respected for its contribution to stability of state, not because it is true, because God demands it, or because the Bible or other revealed doctrine requires it. In that sense, it is an argument of the Voltairean kind: “If God did not exist,

⁹⁴ P. F. Suhm *Samlede Skrifter*, III, København, 1789, 106 on.

⁹⁵ Cf. Møller, Jens 1973a. Israel 2019 argues that, contrary to widespread belief, the Late Enlightenment lists of human rights do not grow out of Christian natural law and natural rights which have no special focus upon individuals, but pertain to natural rights of states, churches, etc. He sees the idea of individual human rights as being developed only in the 1770s in the interaction between French and American radical Enlighteners. Here, Suhm’s contribution must be seen as part of this development. Suhm does not give sources, but he was, with his large library, well-versed in contemporary European discussions.

you would have to invent him”. Remarkably, it discreetly involves call for a weighted judgment on the utility of priests: only “the better” among God’s servants should receive support. Suhm wants to extend meritocracy to the clergy. Rule 2) celebrates the learned in a broad sense, requiring honor and appropriate salary for them. Suhm was economically independent, so this was not said out of self-interest. Suhm’s conception of honor stems from Sneedorff’s *On civil Government* (1757): honor is what makes virtue attractive; virtue without honor is a ship without sail. If honor does not make citizens pursue virtue, virtue has no effect. Suhm thus has a theory of recognition as a motor in society and it is thus crucial which kinds of efforts are rewarded by honors. 3) Unrestricted freedom of faith is remarkable. It is argued from a premise in a certain sense Lutheran: that God alone judges the hearts. But no Danish Lutheran had ever drawn any consequence in the direction of freedom of religion from this idea – quite on the contrary, orthodox Lutheranism had, from this premise, implied that the state church should do its utmost in order to control and even force the faith of the believers, condemning ungodly and heretics with severe legislation and punishments. Here, Suhm takes a radically libertarian position in a period where deviant religious viewpoints were still subjected to harsh punishments, cf. the destiny of Georg Schade (see Chapter 6). This condition had been relaxed during Press Freedom, but in 1774 nobody could know how much of this liberty would remain under the Guldberg government. The Danish state church should not embrace Suhmian standards until it was forced to do so by the 1849 constitution, and even during negotiations of 1848 to 1849, the church fought to block all deviant beliefs from gaining rights to public worship. Suhm has often been called conservative as to religion; this is very far from being correct.⁹⁶ He was a believer himself, with his own rationalist, Leibnizian theology and wished to honor the church for social reasons, but his toleration and his rejection of standard Lutheran forced belief is very far from conservative. Rule 4), Freedom of Thought, Speech, and Writing, comes as less of a surprise after Suhm’s consistent support to Press Freedom through many writings even long before Struensee. It is remarkable, though, that he sticks to this standard in a period where central parts of Press Freedom have been rolled back by the October-November 1773 decisions; also, that he points to the ministers as a source of censorship in absolutism, because they want a privilege on which information should reach the monarch. This addition would particularly have annoyed the recently appointed Cabinet Secretary Guldberg.

Rule 5) addresses the restriction of Press Freedom with respect to libel, both for subjects and for the majesty. Suhm does not address the relevant punishment, but it is important that he points to independent court ruling in such cases – indicating a very important restriction of arbitrary royal sovereignty. Important is also the insis-

⁹⁶ Suhm’s biographer Bruun calls him “socially liberal, but conservative as to religion” (Bruun 1898, 99).

tence that the king should use this possibility very rarely if at all; the king should cultivate a hard skin and not abuse this possibility to smother political criticism.

Rule 6) as to the balance between estates is connected to a claim for representativity in the State Council, a demand older than absolutism itself, but not realized in contemporary Danish absolutism. In Suhm's constitution sketch, this demand developed, as we saw, into an elected parliament. Such ideas, however, are not mentioned here.

Rule 7) The demand for freedom of peasants had been promoted by the Swiss constitutionalists' version of Danish absolutism, Reverdil in particular, and was one of Suhm's favorite issues; here he even proposes a practical stepwise procedure to realize it. Again, this paragraph ends by making explicit the limitations on the king's power over private land – the inalienability of property rights – another proposed restriction on absolutist sovereignty.

Although not daring to reintroduce his parliamentary ideas from the constitution sketch two years earlier – things had already developed far from the open space of possibilities in the coup days of early 1772 – Suhm again wishes to place absolutism on a clearer, explicitly restricted footing. The ensuing 35 rules are less principled but rather take the character of rules-of-thumb of different kinds. Still, a couple of highlights should be mentioned: Suhm, on some points, advises economic liberalism, as when he warns against saving money in the treasury: money lies better in the pockets of the subjects – or when he demands the end of all monopolies. Taxation should be progressive, and state debts must be made public; in effect, Suhm demands a public state budget.

A couple of paragraphs as to incitement structures are important. Rule 15) demands good salaries for officials, along with severe punishment in case they “steal from or offend” King or people. This combination of whip and carrot was emerging as an important result of the discussions of “Shoe Brushes” and bribery during Press Freedom (see Chapter 7). Rule 18) reveals central aspects of Suhm's philosophical anthropology: Suhm claims that prosperity ignites the industriousness of subjects (as against competing claims that peasants work harder if kept in poverty), an idea taken further in rule 34): “Honor and industriousness [...] are the bases of the state” – human beings are driven by two fundamental, irreducible motivations: social recognition and economic gain, and sovereign rule should deliberately use both as incitement structures to improve the economy. As to governance, Suhm claims political equality between different parts of the King's realm, as well as estate representativity of the State Council. Rule 38) claims that the central realm should enjoy prominence, only when that has been brought on good footing, the King should turn to “faraway lands”. Here, he must refer partly to North Atlantic dependencies like Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, partly to Danish tropical colonies and trade stations in the West Indies, the Gold Coast, and India. His metaphor that such places may be branches threatening the tree of the state to topple seems to imply that they may really constitute deficits rather than assets in the state budget. The ultimate implica-

tion is not evident, but some degree of liquidation of the colonies and liberation of the dependencies is a possible direction. Did Suhm, with his vast European horizon, know the recently published, extensive anti-colonialist treatise *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes*, authored by the Diderot circle and published in Paris 1770 under the name of abbé Raynal, which we know was for sale with Philibert in central Copenhagen? Norway, however, was by no means a “far-away land”, and Suhm’s list concludes with his demand for a Norwegian university, supported by a statement which may also serve to summarize Suhm’s general philosophy as to enlightened absolutism, addressing the King: “Your honor and benefit is to rule over enlightened people”.

Thus, the 42 government rules form a succinct articulation of Suhm’s political philosophy. They circulated in private only, but the special, elitist character of Suhm’s network of acquaintances grants that most of the political top of Denmark-Norway would have known them. Guldberg, we know, was not amused.

In a letter to the exiled economist and peasant emancipator G. C. Oeder of 28 December 1774, Suhm attaches the full, private version of *Euphron* asking Oeder what he says “about our system or rather systemata? Which treatment against the peasants! In my anger, I wrote the attached narrative *Euphron*, which is also for sale here, yet without the rules; for else I would have come in conflict with our present censor the chief of police. – We are and remain, alas, a people of slaves, and we have hardly ever been more slaves than now”.⁹⁷ Suhm presents the rolling-back on peasant liberation as his pretext for writing *Euphron*, and it is clear that the absence of the Rules of Government from the public version of *Euphron* is due to self-censorship out of fear of the chief of police, and, behind him, the government. Later, in the spring of 1775, there is a letter from Guldberg to Suhm, addressing some new texts authored by Suhm. Here, Guldberg encourages Suhm’s writing: “Do continue working on those two other stories, and then, my best friend, you can more than atone for *Euphron*, which I still hear about from time to time. For everything in the world, and for all the friendship we have invariably shown each other, do never touch those things again.”⁹⁸ This is a letter between two old friends indeed, but it is simultaneously an order from the effective regent of Denmark-Norway to the country’s leading intellectual. There has been some discussion of the weight between those two aspects: mutuality of friendship versus unilateral dependency of power – but Suhm’s reaction was clear and speaks to the latter interpretation. He suddenly, obediently, ceased publishing about politics, and even his ongoing project of Secret Observations, cultivated through years, he terminates definitively the very week after Guldberg’s angry letter. Suhm must have been caught in a conflict between his high moral standards of honesty and pursuit of truth on the one hand, and his obligation to obey royal command on the other, but in the end, he chose, or felt forced to

⁹⁷ Quoted from Møller 1973b, 496.

⁹⁸ Møller 1973b, 496.

choose, the latter. So, Guldberg's order formed the end of one of the most spectacular products of Press Freedom: Suhm's four-years adventure with radical politics. Suhm now withdrew to his historical studies and popular fictions, remaining as productive as ever for the next 25 years, but now without ever again interfering in the broader public nor in the narrower elite with political upheaval.

Despite the fact that most of Suhm's radical ideas only entered the political mainstream much later, there is no doubt that he contributed to establishing a wider support to the reinterpretation of absolutism in the direction of enlightened and opinion-guided rule. The King's mental weakness had made it evident to many that such modifications of absolutism were needed, and Suhm strongly contributed to keeping that debate open. There are also signs that some of his ideas influenced not only later generations of intellectuals but also of rulers. Johan Bülow became chamberlain and the tutor of Crown Prince Frederik during his teenage years of the early 1780s, and we know that he ordered from Suhm a copy of *Euphron's* government rules for use in the teaching of the Crown Prince.⁹⁹ This was only shortly before he, 16 years of age, ended Guldberg's rule by the 1784 coup, supported by liberal officials like Bülow himself, A. P. Bernstorff, and, a bit later, the Duke of Augustenborg. By the first Cabinet meeting in which the young Crown Prince took part, he brought a document declaring that from now on, all resolutions would have to carry both the King's and his own signature. He swiftly managed to get the signature of the King on this document, and when the Hereditary Prince discovered what was going on, a physical fight broke out between the two Frederiks. The Crown Prince prevailed over the humpback Hereditary Prince, and Guldberg's fate was sealed. In a certain, indirect sense, this would have been Suhm's late revenge. In the end, his government rules helped to instruct the Crown Prince when he pushed out Guldberg and ended Cabinet rule. This new 1784 government did not immediately change Press Freedom legislation, but the enforcement of existing paragraphs was relaxed, if not completely given up, and a new, informal Press Freedom period from 1784 to the early 1790s emerged. At the university, the young literary historian and Suhm disciple Rasmus Nyerup appeared as a strong supporter of Press Freedom from the 1780s, to play a strong role in the publication of Suhm's *Collected Writings* in the 1790s.

During his intensely political period from 1770 to 1775, Suhm seems to have meticulously weighted and estimated publication conditions and possibilities for each single one of his efforts, changing between full Danish publication under his own name, pseudonyms, anonymity, masked French publication with false title page info, or accepting self-censorship or even censorship. His *Secret Observations* represent yet another publication strategy: they seemed to be intended for posterity and were never published in his lifetime; – they only saw daylight in 1918. Suhm's contributions to the ongoing reflections of an opinion-guided absolutism form, for these reasons, so to speak, three concentric circles. The outer circle is his public fig-

⁹⁹ Bruun 1898, 144.

ure – nobody could doubt that this version supported central restrictions on absolutism such as Press Freedom and Peasant Liberty. The middle circle was known to an inside elite in Copenhagen, adding further restrictions on sovereignty such as Freedom of Religion and Rule of Law. The inner circle consisted of pretty few persons including Guldberg and probably a few others among the coup conspirators who knew that his real and most radical point of view included severely constraining or even abolishing absolutism by the introduction of a new constitution with an elected parliament.

Due to the combined efforts of Bie, Brun, Bynch, Suhm, and others, nobody could doubt that the Press Freedom Period gave Danish opinion a strong push in the direction of a much more restrained absolutism following different mixtures of restrictions on sovereign power, all of them developing variants of enlightened or opinion-guided monarchy. This was probably one of the strong reasons for the post-coup government to tone down Press Freedom: it wished to reintroduce standard pre-enlightenment absolutism with little or no restrictions on sovereignty but that of a suitably selected State Council. Even so, they did inherit from the brief Struensee period the idea that such a Council be subjected to Cabinet, which is what allowed for Guldberg, from 1774, to assume the intermediate and effectively governing role as Cabinet Secretary between King and Council.

Suhm’s embrace of the ancient constitutionalism myth in motivating his radical policies were continued by historians like Tyge Rothe. In the new relaxation of Press Freedom after 1784, new aggressive figures, coming of age during the 1770 to 1773 Press Freedom period, continued discussions of enlightening, updating, guiding, and restricting absolutism: a new generation of radical authors such as Niels Ditlev Riegels – who himself participated behind the scenes of the 1784 coup – Peter Andreas Heiberg, Michael Birkner, and Malthe Conrad Bruun.

4 Press Freedom Debates During Press Freedom

The most constant theme among the proliferating debates during Press Freedom was that of Press Freedom itself. Particularly in the most frenetic publication year of 1771, Press Freedom was intensely debated. Opening the debate was none other than Suhm.

The Suhm-Ancher-Sporon Debate on Press Freedom

As mentioned, Suhm had campaigned for Press Freedom already in the 1760s and after its realization in 1770, he enthusiastically celebrated the new possibilities in a brief essay *Freedom to Write* of February 1771, in which he simultaneously presented his analysis of a free public sphere.¹⁰⁰ The brief piece opens with excitement:

Finally, the wished-for day has come, the time which I have been longing for so much, that everyone can write what he thinks, that no ties and chains lie on reason anymore, that everyone can show himself as he is. A laudable action of our graceful King, an action which you must hope he keeps strongly, as it is his own action; that he, for the sake of the good writings and the good thoughts it will bring to the light, overlooks the evil, the bad ones; for persecution of writings, even those which might deserve it, is the same thing as to prohibit writing; it would be to tear down with one hand what the other had built up; it would be to smother geniuses and by fear to make hands stiff and brains dull. (42)

Suhm realizes that this new initiative surpasses even the recognized source of liberty, England, which does not respect privacy and gives despotic access to searching people's homes for papers, even if they are not known to be guilty, as he says. Even truths, which Suhm personally would not like to see attacked should not be protected against attacks, for that would amount to abolishing Freedom of Writing.

This pertains to the classic issue whether it is possible to articulate, in legislation, a sharp borderline allowing the political policing of prohibited publications. That is not possible, according to Suhm. He argues that the case of England shows that arguments against truths serve only to position those truths "in a greater light" than before, just like "bad writings disappear by themselves, only the good ones stay forever" (43). Thus, Suhm's picture of the public sphere is a sort of selection or survival process, where bad writings perish while good ones prosper – not so far from Oliver Wendell Holmes' famous, much later "marketplace of ideas".¹⁰¹ A further, important argument goes that bad writings, in their short life, may even possess the indirect virtue that they call forth good counter-arguments which might not otherwise have been articulated: "A bad, despicable, evil, wicked writing often calls

100 "Skriveriethed", in *Samlinger* no. 1, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (18 February 1771).

101 US Supreme Court judge Holmes articulated this famous metaphor in a dissent in 1919; Healy 2013.

forth good ones. If we had not had Philopatris we would also have had to miss Philodanus”, as he says with reference to Bie’s and Guldberg’s pamphlets in the ongoing Philopatris debate which was unfolding as he wrote. The many actual bad writings are only a result of the very recent declaration of Press Freedom: it takes more time to write a good one than a bad one. Soon, good pamphlets will outnumber the bad ones, Suhm prophesies. More people will now have the possibility of participating, and this will create a political public sphere, raising the Danish language, which “the Great” (high nobility, royals, courtiers, people in high office) despise and often do not know how to speak at all. This requires, however, that novice writers learn how to distinguish private from public issues, and this, again, requires that such participants be schooled in political science.

Suhm sees that Press Freedom calls for the political and social construction of an enlightened public. This also makes him require *information freedom* in the sense of public access to state matters – which had not at all been part of Danish Press Freedom. Unlike the otherwise much more restricted Swedish press freedom of 1766, which had opened access to a large swathe of government and administration documents, state matters in Denmark-Norway were still, during Press Freedom, secret *affaires* not accessible to public scrutiny. Suhm directly calls for the publication of detailed public statistics regarding economy, customs, demography – an idea which should be realized only after the democratic 1849 constitution and only really with the annual publication of a Danish Yearbook of Statistics from 1896. Suhm concludes his brief essay by nesting Press Freedom in his conception of Enlightened Absolutism with a utilitarian argument: nothing could be “merrier for true patriots than the idea that their honest and free-spoken thoughts may gain access to the throne itself, where truth but only rarely may appear, and there find reward from a father of the land who meticulously reflects and put into practice useful proposals, mildly disregards the wrong and bold proposals, and silently ignores the hazardous and harmful proposals.”

This jubilatory piece called forth a pair of counter-pamphlets in the first among many germinating debates about the new Press Freedom. One of Suhm’s friends, the law professor Peder Kofod Ancher was the first to respond, if anonymously.¹⁰² He went directly on the counter-attack: “I would never know what have moved you to celebrate press, or as you call it, writing freedom, particularly in our times, as wickedness and cheek have reached their highest peak. Now, to give everybody the freedom to write all that he wants, that is to give a furious person a sword in his hand” (3–4). To Ancher, there is no difference between a wounding weapon and a wounding expression. He does not distinguish utterances from actions. He does admit, though, that there are countries where censorship is too harsh, for “great spirits [...] are an independent people, who will not let themselves be forced. But does it follow from

102 [Peder Kofoed Ancher], *Et Brev til Forfatteren af de kiøbenhavnſke Samlinger, angaaende Skrive-Friheden*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771.

this that the freedom to write should be completely self-determined and unrestricted?”. Ancher means *no*, he judges that “ungodly, outrageous, rebellious, defamatory writings” must be prohibited and that the actual surges of Press Freedom Writings are, with very few exceptions, but “shabby, despicable, shameful stuff” (7).

Here, Kofod Ancher is the progenitor of a long tradition, alive among Danish historians far into the twentieth century, to dismiss the majority of the Press Freedom Writings as so poor and disgusting as to merit no consideration at all. Ancher’s argument is that it might be correct, as Suhm contends, that bad writings will perish by themselves, but that does not hold for “evil” writings, for they flatter evil tendencies in readers which is why they will live on: “People in general do not seek the true but rather the pleasant, they read for entertainment rather than learning” (13). On top of this comes that Ancher, as a law professor, finds that it is actually possible to articulate a clear legal distinction between bad and good writings in order to prohibit the former – as against Suhm’s contention that rooting out bad ones will inevitably destroy good ones as well: “Should it not be possible to contain abuse without tearing down the whole dike and thereby give evil its free course?” Ancher admits that even if such prohibition might affect some good writings as well, it should be preferred to total freedom, so he takes the choice of censorship with eyes open, so to speak. It is a lesser evil that some good writings do not appear than it is with open access to all evil writings, he claims. On this basis, Ancher finds that abuse of Press Freedom must be legally defined: to argue against religion, against government, against morality should be “carefully determined”, a task he finds “could, without difficulty, be accomplished” (26).

It was regrettable that Ancher did not complete this allegedly easy task, the next debater ironically remarked. The high-ranking university official Benjamin Sporon republished, in May, the whole of Ancher’s pamphlet intertwined with his own counter-arguments.¹⁰³ Sporon came to the defense of Suhm, adding a couple of new arguments: “You can rest assured, Mr. Author, that it is not so dangerous that some may *write what they want*, as you say, than it is that others might *do what they want*, without anybody daring or being able to give any information against it”. To Sporon, the ability of Press Freedom to reveal secret or criminal actions outweighs, by far, the appearance of bad writings. Suhm himself did not come back with a response to Ancher nor to Sporon. It is a curious fact that Suhm who, more than anybody, celebrated public strife, only rarely answered his critics.

The opposed viewpoints of the two friends Suhm and Ancher are intimately connected to their views of the absolutist state as a whole. Suhm had argued that Freedom to Write would give everyone possibility to show himself just like he is – and that censorship, on the contrary, would lead to a non-transparent public sphere of

103 [B. G. Sporon], *Et Brev til Forfatteren af de Kiøbenhavnske Samlinger, angaaende Skrive-Friheden, Paa nye trykt med Bemærkninger til Forsvar for Skrive-Friheden*, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (31 May 1771).

self-censorship, hypocrisy, lies. To this, Ancher objects that “it is shameful, for oneself and for others, even for the whole of the nation, that the true profile of evil writers can appear” – it would be better to contain the shame by not allowing this embarrassing sight at all. To Suhm, by contrast, the public sphere was a free space, in which every participant was responsible but for himself – to Ancher, the public sphere formed part of the national state, organically construed, so that shameful utterances would immediately shame the country as a whole. To Suhm, the state contained different estates, groups, and voices, and an important political purpose of Press Freedom was to facilitate the ongoing expression and strife between such forces in a peaceful manner. To Ancher, the existence of such differences in the state was rather a disgraceful disease to be cured, a symptom of a deeper shortcomings of the absolute state, which, in the meantime, should be concealed from foreign observers. Suhm, unlike Martin Brun, never giving up on Press Freedom, continuously revised his overall theory of the public sphere, as we shall see below.

Press Freedom Self-Organizing

The learned exchange between Suhm, Ancher, and Sporon during the spring of 1771 proved only the beginning of a constant preoccupation with Press Freedom itself, which would continue through the whole period. Many new authors celebrated the new-won freedom, but others began to question it. Was the freedom too wide-ranging? Should Press Freedom be restricted in certain ways? Which new norms should be developed for behaving in the new public sphere? And what about the personal responsibilities of the writers? Writers began attacking each other’s use of the new freedom – warning that excessive use might soon be taken as occasion for dismantling the new freedom again. Debaters began self-monitoring conditions of the new public sphere. That debate, unlike most other Press Freedom debates, proved to be never-ending. Invigorated, dampened, shifting, pulsating after changing political events and conditions, the free debate of Press Freedom itself, about its character, demands and conditions, seemingly had come there to stay, as an indication that the ongoing self-reflection of Press Freedom about its own limits, ways, and purposes simply forms a central part and ongoing striving for self-organization of Press Freedom itself.

Also in other respects, the new public sphere began a remarkable process of self-organization. Debates with answers, responses, comments quickly began to develop, branching out in new sub-debates covering still new thematic territory. Pre-print censorship had, to a large degree, prevented debates from originating. Not only did it keep the word to a small elite of learned authors, but the long and slow process of reading, refusing, proposing changes, before eventually imprimatur might be granted, effectively prevented any quick back-and-forth conversation to take place. Now, a pamphlet of the typical Press Freedom size of 16, 24, 32, 40, or 48 pages could be printed in a matter of days, sold cheaply, and speedy debates could

self-organize in a hitherto unforeseen tempo. Already by New Year 1770 to 1771, one could, as a matter of course, refer to the existence of the new ontological category of *debates*, e. g. “the Philopatreas debate”. To an eighteenth-century audience this fast development of public debates was astonishing and completely unprecedented. No governing instance, neither political, clerical nor civil, nor any single printshop, editor, or author were responsible for the sudden growth of debates; they rather formed an emerging effect of new limit conditions allowing many collaborating free actors to, taken together, constitute a new public sphere. The fact that it was suddenly possible to identify a number of debates with swift organization, the Brewer Feud, the Moralism debate of Brun and Biering, Philopatreas, the Shoebrush Debate, the Lottery Debate, the Whoring Debate, the Deathbed Feud, the Scribe Argument, and so on, constitutes a hasty self-organization of the new public sphere as such. This new opinion-forming is also co-constituted by pamphlet debates jumping into newspapers and periodicals as well as by a level of oral exchanges, and information and ideas flew back and forth between oral and written levels to result in circulating gossip and rumors acquiring a new nervous speed. This ended up resulting in the dramatic change of popular perception of Struensee himself through 1771 (Chapter 9).

Self-organization also governed the establishment of a surprising degree of agreement about the very existence of the new category of Press Freedom Writings. Luxdorff gave his private collection that very title; he seems spontaneously to have found that it was easy to distinguish which new publications were now made possible because of the September 14 legislation. New review periodicals saw the light of day in early 1771, consecrating themselves to reviewing the new Press Freedom Writings, also recognizing the new category. One of them *Fortegnelsen*, appearing roughly every second week (*Fortegnelsen* meaning “The Inventory”, beginning as of 18 February 1771), survived all three Press Freedom years, and there is a surprising degree of overlap between its selection of writings and that of Luxdorff’s Collection. The public seemed to know and agree upon what a Press Freedom Writing was. Also, after the 1772 coup, new initiatives strove to track the flood of post-coup writings appearing, such as *Critisk Journal* and *Aften-Posten*. In March 1771, one of Struensee’s officials, H.P. Sturz, recognized this self-organizing quality of the new Press Freedom sphere and picked, in a German pamphlet for free trade, a metaphor taken from ancient atomic theory to describe it:

In the meantime, press freedom has given rise to an advantageous fermentation in the nation. To me, this whole noise of spirits, as if awakening from a slumber, forms a pleasant spectacle. It seems to me, just like in the nature of Lucretius, as a swirl of atoms, scurrying in all directions, but then quickly assembling to fly in circles, then sinking deep towards the ground, now and then sending a blinding light out of dark chaos. – We must await which kind of world is going to result from this.¹⁰⁴

104 [H. P. Sturz], *Gespräche zweyer Müssiggänger. Erstes Stück*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (18 March 1772), 22.

Sturz saw that the advantageous results from Press Freedom developed in surprising structures and patterns in a self-organizing spectacle which could not be predicted.

“The Golden Age of the Press”

The overall mood during the spring of 1771 was jubilatory, even festive. One pamphleteer spoke about “The Golden Age of the Press”, and gradually, a new economy was emerging. Small print shops in central Copenhagen were expanding, and a number of newly minted authors were able to earn a considerable income from publishing, if not simply live from it. During the spring of 1771, an increasing number of new debates, new pamphlets, new experiments was the main picture, accompanied all of the time by a celebration of the new-found freedom. Struensee’s central role in the new government was only slowly becoming known during the spring of 1771, and most thanksgivings for Press Freedom were addressed to the King rather than to his physician.

So was the case, for instance, with the most famous international reaction. At home in Ferney close to the Swiss border, none less than Voltaire penned a long poem in late 1770, dated 15 January 1771, celebrating Danish-Norwegian Press Freedom and the young Danish king behind it, Christian VII. The connection between the philosopher and the King had long roots. Voltaire had not been present in Paris in 1768 when the King had, on his own behalf, organized a meeting with a veritable parnas of French Enlightenment philosophers (see Chapter 2), but already in 1766, the recently crowned King had sent 1,000 rix-dollars to the philosopher as a token of support to his struggle for religious toleration in the “Sirven Affair”.¹⁰⁵ Briefly after the introduction of Press Freedom, the following news story could be read in *Adresseavisen*: “Paris, October 15. His Majesty the King of Dannemark has honored Mr. d’Alembert with a letter and shipped to him 200 Louisdors to the statue of Mr. Voltaire. This gentleman has spent 14 days with Mr. v. Voltaire”. On the next page, this elaboration follows: “It is now thought that the statue of Voltaire will be placed in a garden or at an estate where some kind of Temple for the Muses or an Academy will be erected”.¹⁰⁶ The Danish public could be in no doubt about the will of the new Struensee government to further extend the royal connection to the philosopher. In January 1771, the court received Voltaire’s welcome praise to Press Freedom and the King, and the poem swiftly appeared for pamphlet sale both in a reprint of the French original and in a clumsy Danish prose translation.¹⁰⁷ Voltaire was well-

¹⁰⁵ Christian VII in Paris: see Langen 2010. The connection Christian VII-Voltaire: see Hertel 1997.

¹⁰⁶ *Adresseavisen*, 30 October 1770.

¹⁰⁷ Voltaire, “Epitre à Sa Majesté le Roy de Dannemarck. Sur la liberté de la presse accordée dans ses Etats”, Copenhagen: Pierre Steinmann, 1771 (Feb 18 1771); Voltaire, “Hr. F. A. d. Voltaires Brev til Hans Majestæt Kongen af Danmark angaaende den udi hans Stater forundte Tryk-Frihed. Tilligemed nogle Afhandlinger af beslegtet Indhold”, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (8 March 1771).

known in Denmark, primarily as a playwright and satirist, maybe less so as a political commentator.¹⁰⁸ Voltaire wrote, among much else,¹⁰⁹

Few kings transgress, like you, the limits
Which nature has prescribed their powers:
You give the rights to man and you permit to think.
Sermons, novels, physics, odes, history, opera,
Everyone may write all – and whistle he who wants!
You won't allow, great King, tolerant and just,
That freedom degrades into debauchery;
And that is also the wish of all with reason:
To conserve good customs, they support;
If guilty you can be of your expressions,
Should one therefore prohibit speech?
An egghead in the slums composes a satire,
Does that reduce my right to think and write?
Do punish the abuse; but do permit the use.

Voltaire, in fact, did not go nearly as far as the Danish King and his favorite. The French satirist finds that the Danish King will know how to punish excessive satires and slander and thus – as against Suhm – claims that it is an easy or in any case feasible task to distinguish use from abuse of Press Freedom. Voltaire was currently enraged with the appearance of the anonymous, materialist volume *Système de la nature* (by d'Holbach) the year before, and in his eulogy to the Danish King, he welcomes the sad fate of this work. The book had been prohibited in France, and Voltaire applauds how it then “fell quickly back into dust”. All in all, Voltaire himself proved considerably more modest than the new Danish Freedom he eulogized. In the same Danish pamphlet publication were also translated Voltaire's argument for Press Freedom from his *Dictionnaire Philosophique* of 1764 and his small parody about the terrible dangers of reading from 1765, as well as David Hume's small note on Freedom of the Press, the first translation of Hume into Danish.

Voltaire would be counterargued in other pamphlets later in 1771, and already in the mostly celebratory spring, when many authors saluted the new Freedom, skeptical voices against the actual effects of Press Freedom began appearing. The anonymous *Letter about some of the Writings having Appeared since Press Freedom* claims that if Voltaire saw the actual results of Danish Press Freedom, he would immediately retract his celebration of the Danish King.¹¹⁰ The verdict of the author is harsh: the dream of a future of better writings is vain. The enlightened public will soon be bored by “impractical proposals, defamatory pasquils and meaningless rubbish”, while the unenlightened will, at some point, have their “untimely passion for read-

¹⁰⁸ See Hertel, 1997.

¹⁰⁹ Translated from Voltaire 1833, 290–299.

¹¹⁰ [anonymous], *Brev om nogle af de siden Trykke-Friheden udkomne Skrifter*, no place or printer indicated, 1771.

ing” fulfilled, at least for economic reasons – and then the stream of publications will shrink for lack of demand. The author reviews a number of the mostly read pamphlets – generally negatively. But the author willy-nilly displays an interesting property of the growing Press Freedom scene: already at this point, a canon of the most important publications is emerging. Bagge, Philopatreas and its replies, Philodanus, the Shoebrush pamphlets, the state debt pamphlets. Also, a certain qualitative distinction is appearing: the author exclaims with all signs of disgust that he will not at all discuss certain squalid products, such as pamphlets by Martin Brun and Junior Philopatreas. A canon of such alleged low-class untouchables is appearing all the same, as when the author mentions Brun’s *Ole the Smith* and *Jeppe the Watchman* among those he will *not* mention.

During the spring of 1771, it also became increasingly clear that a number of writings took advantage of the new liberty to launch rude personal attacks. Only rarely, names were called explicitly, but the person attacked was described in detail to a degree so that many if not all readers would be able to identify the target. That was the case, e. g., with mayor Nissen in the Shoe Brush debate (Chapter 7). A pamphlet called *The Beast of Gevaudan* took a current event in the South of France where a large, puma-like beast reportedly killed a number of locals, as a metaphor for field marshal Saint-Germain and his alleged bloody onslaught of the Danish-Norwegian army on the pretext of reforms during the 1760s.¹¹¹ This French-speaking Gevaudan Beast had been accompanied by a local fox in order to guide him around in unknown Danish territory – an easily decodable image of general Gähler – and when the fox was pacified, he was replaced by a “very crafty and cautious marten”, that is, general Rantzau. The marten was later caught and sent away, but the anonymous author senses certain signs that the sneaky old fox is back. This was an easily decodable attack on the political party behind the current Struensee government, and it was indeed correct that Gähler the fox was now back in power in top of the army, as Struensee’s leading state official and political partner. Later the same year, even the beast of Gevaudan himself, Saint-Germain, would be called back to Copenhagen, even if he did not get around to organize new events before the fall of Struensee soon after, which would lead to his third and final ejection from the realm. In the spring of 1771, the Gevaudan pamphlet showed that Press Freedom could also turn against the new government itself. Similar attacks can be found in other pamphlets ridiculing Pontius Pilatus as an image of a civil servant accepting bribes, or a Billy goat as the picture of a social climber who is transformed into a suppressive monkey as soon as he reaches the top. Here, however, the exact top officials attacked are harder to identify today, even if they are described to some detail.¹¹² Such pamphlets

111 [anonymous], *Det Gevaudanske Dyr*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (19 March 1771).

112 Such as the anonymous *Den forvandlede Gedebuk*, The Hague (?), no printer indicated, 1771 (3 April 1771); and F. C. Scheffer’s *Pilati Livs- og Levnetsbeskrivelse*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (13 May 1771).

constituted a first harbinger of the attacks on Struensee which should intensify over summer (see Chapter 9).

One of the first to modify his unbridled enthusiasm for Press Freedom in the light of the increase of anonymous libel, was Suhm. In his secret comments to political developments, he said that the purpose of what he referred to as “the Struensee conspiracy” in introducing Press Freedom had really been to “get out those writings they liked, and present only those for the King, and claim that they represented the voice of the nation; the others they would keep silent about, and they also thought they would not be many” – that is, to fool the King to accept their radical policies.¹¹³ Suhm remarks that they did not succeed with this plan, for developments showed they were unable to prevent writings against themselves. He even went so far as to imply that the Struensee government “had some hired hacks at hand, among them Bie of some talent, but of huge evil, who was used to deceive people in the most nefarious way.” Bie and other, early, critical pamphleteers should thus be paid influence agents for Struensee, a rumor not backed by sources, but which should continue to circulate during the Press Freedom Period.

Publicly, however, Suhm voiced more principled concerns. In No. 2 of his *Collections* during summer 1771, an essay on “Mixed Thoughts” addresses the issue of moral claims versus moral actions.¹¹⁴ Suhm speculates that those who write much about morality very often practice those morals pretty badly, often even worse than those who do not mention morality at all (155). He who speaks the most about morality thinks of himself as better than others for that very reason, fooling himself to believe he strictly follows morality, only because he mentions it all of the time. He thinks he possesses a privilege on virtue and should, for that reason, be honored by all. Suhm finds this is a central source of spiritual vanity among Christians. This self-righteous, hypocritical social type Suhm now localizes among current Press Freedom pamphleteers: “Fools and robbers complain about fools and robbers”. This revised, gloomy picture of Press Freedom is underlined when Suhm continues to say that as he first praised Freedom to Write – as he continues to do – libelous pamphlets had not yet appeared: “They attack persons, and for such attacks authors even in the free England are sometimes punished, and printers there are obliged to name authors. At least nobody can prohibit anyone from persecuting such printers and authors using the law of the land. Freedom to write does not abolish good order, civility, decency, and mores.” (156).

¹¹³ Suhm 1918, 48.

¹¹⁴ P. F. Suhm, “Blandede Tanker”, in *Samlinger* vol. 1 no. 2, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (1 July 1771).

not without also potentially re-opening all of the tougher paragraphs of publication restrictions from the Danish Law of 1683.

The Fall of 1771

If the spring of 1771 had had a clear Voltairean flavor, the fall of the same year brought out counterarguments against him as well against his favorite genre of satire. The *Treatise on exaggerated Satires or concealed Pasquils* appeared in Danish anonymously but was really authored by the Prussian King, Frederick the Great.¹¹⁵ It is well known that Frederick and Voltaire cultivated a close friendship, including arguments and falling-outs, but even if Voltaire did not support full Press Freedom as in Denmark-Norway, he would never accept the Prussian monarch's close-to-total rejection of satire which he found useful only in long-gone eras of real despots and tyrants, that is, before the sixteenth century. Even more directly turned against Voltaire was the satirical *A Writing from the Devil to Mr. Voltaire*, also published anonymously – originally a pamphlet from 1762 by the Frenchman Claude-Marie Giraud, in which Voltaire was mock-celebrated as the best ally of the Devil and praised as his strongest force aimed against religion.¹¹⁶ A harsh Christian complaint over Press Freedom appeared under the title of *A Strange View Seen over Copenhagen*¹¹⁷, claiming that “[t]he Freedom to Write has undermined the dam of decency, and the depraved taste of a curious nation has destroyed it completely”. The conclusion holds local Danish Voltaire copycats responsible: “Let us hasten hither, to come to the rescue of innocence which has fled into the arms of the true Christian; let us hide its modesty from the viceful glances of our sybaritic Voltaires!” (15). It remains uncertain, however, whether the anonymous pamphlet is indeed a sincere Christian complaint, or rather a writer's attempt to capitalize on the local market of Christian pamphlet buyers, or even a parody of Christian criticism of Press Freedom.¹¹⁸

Another critical discussion of Press Freedom took the producers' viewpoint rather than that of the readers: *An insignificant Conversation between a Writer and a Publisher, at the Occasion of the Chitchat published in the Papers on the Freedom to*

115 [Frederick the Great], *Afhandling om overdrevne Satirer eller indklædte Skandskrifter*, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (6 September 1771).

116 [C. M. Giraud], *En Skrivelse fra Diævelen til Hr. Voltaire*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771.

117 [Martin Brun], *Et merkværdigt Syn over Kiøbenhavn, i Følge med den Allegoriske Drøm*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterleverske, 1771 (14 August 1771).

118 There are indications that the anonymous pamphlets may have been authored by Martin Brun in which case it is difficult to see it as a sincerely meant complaint. Not much later, Brun excelled in servicing different market segments with different viewpoints, so if he authored the pamphlet, it might be an attempt to cater for local Christian demands, or even a parody of a Christian protest against Press Freedom.

Write.¹¹⁹ The two dialogue partners complain that under present conditions, both of them face an economic incitement to produce bad rather than good publications. Times have changed, traditional writings are no longer cherished at the coffee-tables of ladies – one among many references in the Press Freedom Writings to a widespread female readership in Denmark-Norway. But the taste of the ladies is quickly shifting, now they are reading the new political pamphlets with all their Greek “phile” pseudonyms. Now, they “phile from all sides and crooks; it is and will be only philery. Philopatreias Senior as well as Junior, badness old and young, everything after the new and bad taste, now a Philodanus, then a Philatlethes, now a Philocacias, then a Philocosmus. Yes, it was and remained for a time nothing but *phile-phile-phile-pomse* [...]” (7). The regretful publisher ridicules the Press Freedom current of proliferating “Phile-”debaters, and it seems as if he finds himself forced to publish such writings to maintain his earnings. It has served his economy well, though, and has even given him the economic muscle to publish a few really useful things as well.

The author and the publisher agree that they are now caught between two enemies: one is the traditional, rich publishing-houses servicing a popular market of trivia and the other the new Press Freedom market of raging political pamphlet debates. The middle road of serious quality literature suffers from this literary crossfire, according to this pamphlet. So, this author does not at all agree with Suhm’s optimism as to the growth of good and useful writings.

Some pamphlet voices attacked those who had written abject and shameful things, for they were responsible for the new restrictions;¹²⁰ others were even more somber and derided Press Freedom Writings as a whole as an invasive cancer.¹²¹ A philosophy student named Rasmussen even argued that those responsible had but acted out of selfishness, and should thank the King they had not been imprisoned for that was what they deserved.¹²² An increasing number of Press Freedom writers did not really like Press Freedom at all. After the restrictions on Press Freedom of 7 October 1771, brooding pamphleteers faced an additional concern: to determine whose carelessness, licentiousness or evil had prompted the regrettable fall of full freedom.

Debates about Press Freedom would acquire a completely different character after the January 1772 coup, now anxious, strained, and fearful (see Chapter 14). As we

119 [anonymous], *En ubetydelig Samtale imellem en Skribent og en Forlægger, i Anledning af den i Aviserne fremsatte Snik-Snak om Skrive-Friheden, under Artiklen fra Kiøbenhavn og Stokholm*, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 1771 (6 September 1771).

120 [anonymous], *De danske Skrivers Skiebne ved Skrivefrihedens Indskrænkelse, skreven af Philomathes den 10 October 1771*, Copenhagen: J.R. Thiele, 1771 (29 October 1771).

121 Gustophilus, *Velment og nødsaget Erindring til de Danske Fruentimmer*, no place or printer, 1771 (9 October 1771).

122 Hans Georg Rasmussen, *Betænkninger over de danske Skrivers Arbeide*, Copenhagen: J.R. Thiele, 1771.

know, Suhm continued his support to and even fight for Press Freedom long after its formal disappearance through 1773, and the theory of the public sphere which began to develop in his “Collections” nos. 1 to 2 were further refined in no. 3 in April 1772, three months after the coup. Initially, his view of the Press Freedom period is now considerably darkened: “The multitude of writings kills each other. The good ones sink to the bottom with the mediocre ones, with the bad ones, while the very worst sometimes float on top, because they are the lightest. Very learned writings are for the few only”.¹²³ Suhm’s old defense based on the gradual disappearance of evil writings are considerably modified after the experience of 18 months of the realities of Press Freedom. Now, it is rather the good writings which sink, reaching few readers only, while the worst keep floating due to their easy accessibility. Suhm is close to accepting the premises of his opponent Kofod Ancher’s counterarguments from early 1771. Still, even given these admissions, Suhm stuck to his overall optimism as to Press Freedom, summing up his public sphere theory by the one-liner that “all things are best investigated by conflicting viewpoints” (229).

123 P. F. Suhm, *Samlinger*, no. 3, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1772 (27 April 1772), 227.

5 Economy and Good Government

New Economic Thought during Press Freedom

Economic issues were central to the debates during Press Freedom, and the economic debate spread to a whole series of topics not previously debated due to censorship. Since mid-century, economics was developing into a modern science, but Press Freedom made the economic debate take an acute political turn. A new political economic discussion took shape while the established borderline between the economy of civil society and the economy of state and government was transgressed. Up to now, the finances and policies of the absolutist state and government had been a matter of secrecy, but Press Freedom made it possible to speculate on state revenues and expenditures and critically comment on the economic policies of the government. This new discussion often arose out of problems of daily life. The high prices of bread and food provoked questions: were monopolies or speculation in the grain trade causing shortage? Such speculation led to more general, upsetting questions about whether the nation was in economic decline and how the situation could be turned into growth and prosperity. Would a beneficial growth of population be the result of liberating the peasants in the countryside? Or would more freedom lead to social unrest and economic disaster? Would the new state lottery lead to a shortage of labor and industriousness? Now, it became possible to make proposals for the government's customs policy and regulation of trade, and the large foreign debt became a hot topic: was it due to bad governance? And what, by contrast, would good governance be like? In this chapter, we examine the debates on these issues in the light of their more cautious precursors from the period before the sudden political turn.

Economy and Politics. The Legacy of the 1755 Declaration

Economics – as a science, as well as a topic – had become modern in the limited public created after 1755, when the government sought, on several intellectual fronts, to strengthen the absolutist state (see Chapter 2). Several of the writers of the expanding economic debate during the Press Freedom Period had participated in the narrower and state-monitored public debate in the years after 1755.

A call for treatises to be authored on all sorts of topics pertaining to the common good had, as mentioned, been issued from the government on the King's birthday in 1755. The treatises should be mailed to Prime Minister A. G. Moltke, and the “most useful of them” would be printed without regard to personal standing and without cost to the author. The government thus launched a limited public debate on the common good and lent its support to the communication of economic knowledge on a larger scale than had previously been the case. It seems likely that the appeal of

1755 was, in fact, a reason behind the growth in public debate of the 1750 and 1760s.¹²⁴ At no time prior to the liberation of the press in 1770, such a quantity of economic literature had been published as in the years 1756, 1757, and 1758.¹²⁵ In accordance with the international orientation of ministers A. G. Moltke and J. H. E. Bernstorff after the appeal of 1755, the German economist Johann Gottlob von Justi was called from the University of Göttingen to the administration of Copenhagen as an advisor in economic affairs 1757 to 1758.¹²⁶

Several journals were published after the appeal, but the greatest achievement was the state-financed *Oeconomic Magazine for Denmark and Norway*, which launched publication in late 1757.¹²⁷ In the shape of a yearbook, it published responses to the general call for tracts on economic topics. The magazine attracted the best authors, because it occupied a semi-official position on the market, offering awards for the best contributions every year. It was edited by pietist theology professor and vice-chancellor of the University of Copenhagen Erik Pontoppidan, and eight large volumes came out before his death in 1764, primarily containing papers on practical economic issues.

In 1759, Erik Pontoppidan himself added the book *Eutropii Philadelphi: Economic Balance or Personal Suggestions concerning Denmark's Natural and Civil Wealth to the Happiness of its Citizens*.¹²⁸ Pontoppidan wrote anonymously as “Eutropius Philadelphus” – meaning the brother-loving good-mannered. This signaled the combination of a pietism inspired from Halle with enlightenment ideas, and he thus fused pietist social amelioration with political economics. He defined economics as a concept covering two fields. On the one hand “*Oeconomia Publica*”, that is “*Oeconomia Cameralis*”, or the public use of wealth; on the other hand, “*Civil Economy*”, that is “*Private Economy*” (“Den private Oeconomie og Huusholdning”). Public economy was not suitable for public discussion, however. Public economy was the private domain of the King, but discussion of civil economy could enlighten the public about the private economic conditions of citizens and the country. This seminal distinction between public and private economy was dissolved by Press Freedom. After 1770, *Oeconomia Publica* was suddenly up for open debate.

Peder Kofod Ancher, professor of law at the University of Copenhagen, criticized unlimited Press Freedom (see Chapter 4) but he also participated in the debate on state debt in 1771. In 1759, he had written a long introduction to the Danish edition of J. F. Melon's 1734 *Political Essay on Commerce*. Here, Kofod Ancher summarized

¹²⁴ Maliks 2011, 184–199 and 206–226.

¹²⁵ Kjærgaard 1977.

¹²⁶ Christensen 1996, 532–34. The theoretical importance of Justi in Denmark: Bisgaard 1902, 24–30.

¹²⁷ *Danmarks og Norges Oeconomiske Magazin*, I–VIII, Copenhagen 1757–1764.

¹²⁸ Eutropius Philadelphus [Erik Pontoppidan], *Oeconomiske Balance eller uforgribelige Overslag paa Dannemarks naturlige og borgerlige Formue til at gjøre sine Indbyggere lykkelige*, Copenhagen 1759.

the principal cameralistic, mercantilist theories concerning commerce, but he also stressed that restraints were contrary to the spirit of commerce because liberty improves trade, and so Melon counts as an early inspirator of the physiocrats. Anyway, liberty was framed by the interests of the state.¹²⁹

The vicar Otto Diderich Lütken became a prominent conservative voice during the Press Freedom Period on topics like the conditions of the peasants and lotteries. In 1760, he had published *Inquiries concerning the general Economy of the State*.¹³⁰ According to Lütken, the discourse on economics dealt with questions of how to procure general wealth. To attain growth of national wealth, the government should stimulate the production of food as well as the production of commodities necessary for continuing such production. Different kinds of “luxury” should be prevented or outright forbidden, while other kinds of commerce and manufacture were in need of government support. If manufactures in Denmark were to compete on the market, no restrictions on imports were to be imposed. The government instead ought to temporarily subsidize new manufactures.

The issue of the proper size of the population was the most important question in O. D. Lütken’s volume. On this issue, he opposed the opinion of his brother Frederik Lütken, among others, who held that growth of the population was key to the wealth of a nation. In his view, growth in production would cause an increase in the population indeed, while growth of population, in itself, would not necessarily improve anything. A policy aiming at unlimited growth of population might create poverty or reduce the wealth of the nation and result, consequently, in harmful effects for commerce. His point of view was unusual at the time. The improvement of agriculture was a favorite theme of discussion, and it was a commonly accepted opinion that the contemporary living conditions of peasants constituted obstacles to the growth of population and, more generally, to progress. O. D. Lütken did not mention his sources of inspiration, but in his work he discussed, criticized, and opposed the theories of government adviser von Justi.¹³¹

A year after the general appeal was issued, the above-mentioned Frederik Lütken, a former officer and at the time an inspector of customs, began to publish his *Oeconomic Thoughts for deeper Reflection*.¹³² Nine small volumes appeared from 1756 to 1761 and were translated into German: *Oeconomische Gedanken zu weiteren Nachdenken eröffnet* (1757–1759). Frederik Lütken was mainly interested in questions con-

129 J. F. Melon: *Essai politique sur la commerce*, 1734. Kofod Ancher’s introduction was titled *On the Utility of Commerce in Civil Society (Om Handelens Nytte for Borgerlige Stater)*, see Riising 1956, 101–102.

130 Otto Diderich Lütken’s *Undersøgninger angaaende Statens almindelige Oeconomi*, 1–2, Copenhagen 1760.

131 Johann Gottlob von Justi, *Staatswirtschaft oder systematische Abhandlung aller ökonomischen und Cameralwirtschaften*, 1–2, Leipzig 1755.

132 F. Lütken, *Oeconomiske Tanker til høiere Efter-Tanke* I–IX, Copenhagen 1755–61. On Frederik Lütken see: Bisgaard 1902, 46–50; and Erik Oxenbøll 1977, 47.

cerning the growth of population and manufactures. His writings were, in a way, hymns to human labor, and in his view, the increase of labor was the cause of increasing wealth in England, which to Lütken was the Promised Land.¹³³ In Frederik Lütken's case, however, one finds an open demonstration of the effects of censorship. In the first volume of Lütken's economic thoughts, Chapter 6 on customs was denied publication by the censors. And the last volume, of 1761, began with an empty page except for the text: "1. Chapter is omitted". Frederik Lütken had transgressed the discussion of the economics of civil society and written about customs, which was his previous field of office. Customs policy was the domain of king and government, however, and his chapters were censored. Professors at the University of Copenhagen administered censorship and in Lütken's case, it was Professor Kofod Ancher who had to give the author his "friendly advice" before the book could receive its *imprimatur*, permission to print. The censorship of Frederik Lütken demonstrates the nature of the limited, government-controlled economic debate between 1755 and 1770. After Press Freedom was introduced, issues of customs would jump to a central place in economic discussions. They took their beginning in the debate triggered by the already-mentioned Jacob Christian Bie in the guise of the pamphleteer *Philopatris*.

Jacob Christian Bie – Poet, Provocateur and Pamphleteer

Jacob Christian Bie was born in Trondheim in 1738. He was educated as a lawyer in Copenhagen in 1764, but he wanted to live as a poet and author and published industriously between 1758 and 1774. Press Freedom presented Bie with new opportunities, which he was among the very first to exploit.

Bie had no office or funding from the patrons of the literary world. He tried to make a living from his pen by writing and publishing weeklies and poetic fables. In 1765 he had published the weekly *Novitianus* while at the same time making his debut as a poet under his own name in the popular fable genre of the time with *Original Moral Fables*.¹³⁴ From the very outset, he was controversial.

Bie dealt, in his fable "The Beaver", with a topical scandal at the court in Copenhagen. The Norwegian Count Christian Conrad Danneskiold-Laurvig, with libertine inclinations, had abducted the young actress Mette Marie Rose from The Royal Theater and kept her in hiding in his city mansion. After indignant protests from her father, another royal actor, Laurvig was forced by the King to set her free. In "The Beaver", Bie took Laurvig's side against Minister of State A.G. Moltke, the court, and the King, whom he incautiously accused of hypocrisy. The *Moral Fables* had been approved by the censor with C. G. Kratzenstein's *imprimatur* – perhaps because Bie

¹³³ See particularly the chapter "Om nyttens af Arbeidet" ("On the utility of Labour"), second part, 1757, 33.

¹³⁴ Jacob Christian Bie, *Originale Danske Moralske Fabler i bunden Stil*, Copenhagen 1765.

had dedicated them to his wife Ann Margaretha Kratzenstein – but it helped just as much. The book was seized, and it subsequently circulated in handwritten copies.¹³⁵

What was written about scandals at court was politically controversial. This applied to the literature about Louis XV's court in France, as it applied to Frederik V's court in Copenhagen.¹³⁶ Bie's fable spread rumors of hypocrisy and immorality at court, and his punishment was harsh. He was to be incarcerated indefinitely on the small Baltic prison island Christiansø. Bie, however, managed to escape abroad and was able to return to Copenhagen with impunity after Frederik V's death the following year. Now, in 1766, he took up writing for the weekly *Skjaldtidende* at the Address Office, which also published his monthly magazine *Den poetiske Nouvellist* in 1767, where he continued to challenge the limits of the public sphere.¹³⁷ He praised England's freedom of writing and printing: "What have you, England! driven to such a height? / [...] / Because you always enjoyed Freedom of writing and printing!"¹³⁸

Philopatreas – the First Big Press Freedom Debate

In December 1770, Bie made his first appearance in the Press Freedom Period with the pamphlet *Philopatrea's Remarks, On the dear Times and Decay of Trade, On the Courts of Justice, and On the Revenues of the Clergy*.¹³⁹ Under the patriotic pseudonym: lover of his fatherland (Philopatreas), he discussed contemporary economic greed and inequality, injustices in the judiciary, and the laziness and incompetence of priests. We already touched upon his attacks on noble interference in politics. Philopatrea's down-to-earth, disrespectful, and at times amusing critique, which constantly called for debate, granted the pamphlet a long history of influence that surpassed any other single pamphlet in the early months of Press Freedom.

The most-read newspaper in Copenhagen *Adresseavisen* (The Address Paper) published excerpts from Bie's pamphlet on its front page in no less than two issues in mid-December 1770. A pamphlet could not achieve greater publicity. In the beginning, anonymity was real, and no one knew who might hide behind "Philopatreas". Rumors in Copenhagen were sure that supporters of the new Struensee government were behind the pamphlet.

135 "The Beaver" – "Om Bæveren" *ibid.* 31–33. The handwritten copy in The Royal Library: Ny Kongl. Saml. 1042, 8.

136 Darnton 1995.

137 That is, *Skaldic Times*, and *The Poetic Novelist*, respectively.

138 *Den Poetiske Nouvellist*, 1767, 20.

139 [J. C. Bie], *Philopatreas trende Anmærkninger. 1 Om de dyre Tider og Handelens Svaghed. 2 Om Rettergang. 3 Om Geistlighedens Indkomster*, Sorø: Lindgren/J. G. Rothe, 1770 (11 December 1770). An English translation was published in the West Indian colonial city St. Croix (now Virgin Islands) in 1771: [J. C. Bie], *Philopatrea's Remarks, I. On the Dear Times, and Decay of Trade. II. On the Courts of Justice. III. On the Revenues of the Clergy*, St. Croix: Daniel Thibou, 1771. Citations in this chapter are drawn from the St. Croix edition.



Fig. 13: From [J. C. Bie] *Philopatreas trende Anmærkninger*, Sorø 1770: Lindgren/ J. G. Rothe. © Royal Danish Library.

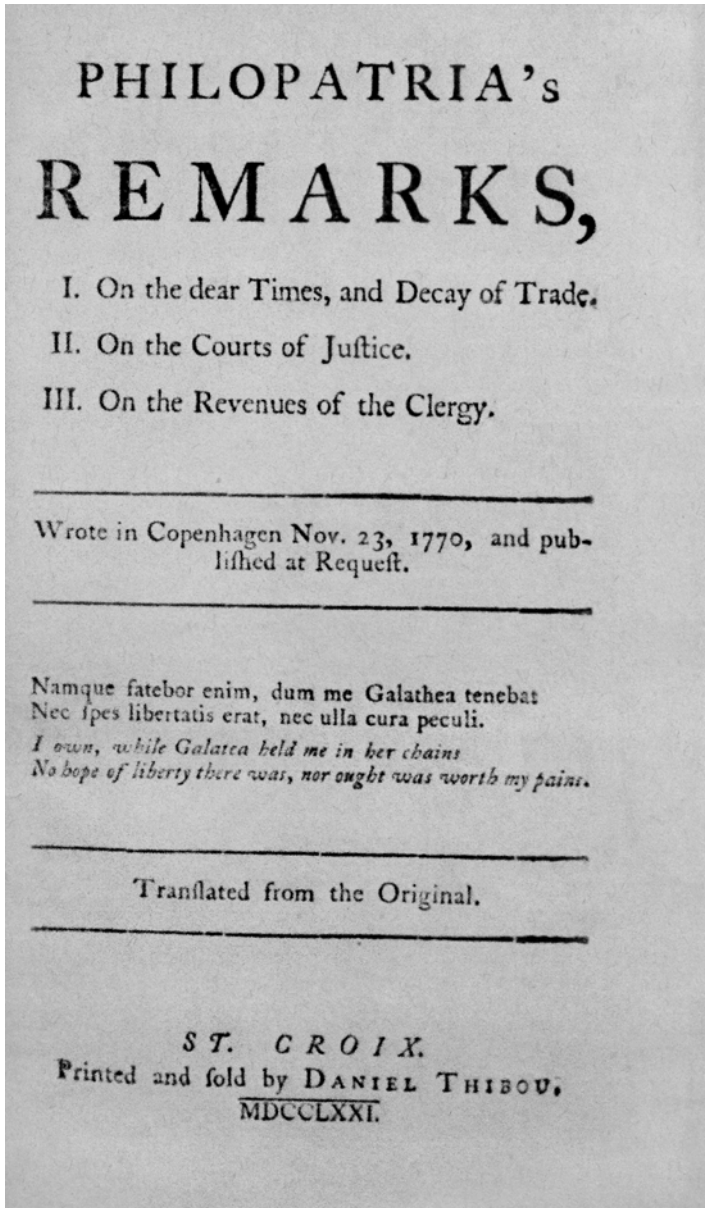


Fig. 14: From [J. C. Bie] *Philopatris's Remarks*, St. Croix 1771: Daniel Thibou. © Royal Danish Library. The largest debate during Press Freedom was triggered by the appearance of J. C. Bie under the pen name of "Philopatris" in a 1770 pamphlet with three challenging attacks on grain-producing landowners, lawyers, and priests. Rumors had it that Bie was financially supported as a propagandist for the new government. The reputation of his pamphlet reached the Danish West Indies where it – as the sole example of Press Freedom Writing – was translated into English and published in St. Croix in 1771.

In line with the legacy of the limited publicity before Press Freedom, ‘economy’ was the first topic Bie discussed as *Philopatreaias*. He had written about economic issues before and in his *Original Moral Fables* one fable was simply called “Economy”.¹⁴⁰ The fable attacked hypocrisy in the economic debate. ‘Economy’ was presented in the figure of a woman who studied nature and society alike. In a town, she visited a bookstore, and she rejoiced that every other book on the title page shouted *Economy, Economy!* Knowledge of economics was bought for gold. But outside the bookstore and the world of books, it was different. Here, she met the state in the shape of a sick man who had been deceived by financial advisors who thought only of self-interest, and she had to write a prescription in order to cure selfishness. In his new shape of *Philopatreaias*, Bie took things further and made his critique political, suggesting a recipe aimed at the government of the nation.

Philopatreaia’s first remark was entitled *On the dear Times and Decay of Trade*. In the preface, patriotic rhetoric flourished, utility, truth, patriotism, and the common good merging into a higher entity, while selfishness was subject to hatred: “Hatred is as inseparable from patriotism as truth ... the selfish believe, they have a right to enrich themselves at the public cost, so they hate him who attacks them in those advantages, which through long practice they have been taught to regard as just”.¹⁴¹

It was precisely ‘self-interest’ or selfishness that was behind the dear times and the high prices of grain. Bie found the fundamental cause of the problem among the large landowners who, at the same time, had too much influence in the country’s government. *Philopatreaias* did not back down from directly attacking members of the government: “It fares indeed wretched badly with every branch of trade in a country, when they who are too powerful, have their fingers therein; for then are permissions and prohibitions shaped to their own interests, and the publick may go the D....l”. The weightiest cause of the time of high prices was, according to Bie, “that those who own the greatest possessions, have long had too much influence in the government of this country. [...] Ministers ought to be ministers, and tradesmen, tradesmen; otherwise the first are all in all, the last, beggars: this is one of the principal causes to the immoderate height of the prices of grain.”¹⁴² This was a stinging criticism of the State Council in the very month in which the new Struensee government was finally dismantling it.

What if some of the landowners would be ruined by falling prices of grain? Only a bad surgeon, Bie argued, would not cut off a little limb to save the whole body, but he assured those who had acquired lands at the highest prices that their ruin could easily be prevented if they divided their possessions into small lots and sold them: “purchasers will not be wanting; thereby they will not suffer, and the lands will be incomparably better cultivated. For a peasant of any prudence who tills his land

140 J. C. Bie, *Originale*, 1765, 38–43.

141 *Philopatreaia’s Remarks*, 3.

142 *Philopatreaia’s Remarks*, 6.

himself, reaps more from every ton of hard corn, than a proprietor, who sees with other eyes, and often sees but very little, because he has too much to oversee". A larger production associated with the creation of granaries could stabilize the price of grain.¹⁴³

Bie turned to the discussion of trade, and asked: What makes Amsterdam flourishing, opulent and powerful? In Amsterdam, the ships stood like a forest on the water, while the Port of Copenhagen in comparison looked like a desert. He found the reason: Trade is too restricted; duties are too burdensome; and the manner of collecting them totally wrong. The solution was free trade, and Philopatreas prayed that it would please the King to allow the free import of grain and other goods. He concluded: "In short; break up, as far as possible, all monopolies, lower the duties on all necessities, and give a free trade; so will the prices of everything fall, population and public welfare increase, and the therewith intimately connected strength of the King remarkably flourish".¹⁴⁴ With Philopatreas, free-trade liberalism acquired a strong voice in early Press Freedom.

Bie's last two Remarks were, like the first, composed over the theme of self-interest versus patriotism, and the second remark dealt with the courts of justice. Selfishness was associated with wealth, and he accused the judiciary of preventing the poor from achieving justice. It was especially the lawyers who distorted the proceedings. The lawyers' economic interest prolonged the handling of cases with endless procurator tricks and the art of turning black into white: "Costs are increased, and time prolonged. The richer sort, who can bear this, they keep the field [...] Hence it comes, that a poor man must often suffer injustice, because his adversary is rich, and that he dares not assert his right".¹⁴⁵ Legislation was not the problem, however, but process itself: "We have a law, the best, the most upright, and that improved by the ordinances of the wisest of Kings; but the mode of process is much too costly and perplexed with intrigues and precedents". Bie called for a reform that should make it possible to conduct proceedings without economic ruin and legal distortion. Lawyers were to become consultants who advised plaintiffs for cheap fees.¹⁴⁶

In Philopatrea's third remark, the incomes of the clergy came under attack. The income of a vicar was not at all commensurate with his work. So, "The clergy ought to have a fixed salary." This proposal of a prescribed payment was followed by a massive attack on the clergy. On Bie's critique of religion and the Philopatreas debate concerning Religion, see Chapter 6.

143 *Philopatrea's Remarks*, 7.

144 *Philopatrea's Remarks*, 11.

145 *Philopatrea's Remarks*, 13.

146 *Philopatrea's Remarks*, 16.

Philopatreias Continued and Abandoned

Bie published no less than three further anonymous pamphlets during December-January 1770 to 1771, following up on the success of his first breakthrough pamphlet. While Bie worked as “Philopatreias” with publisher J. G. Rothe, he wrote as “Anti-Philopatreias” against his own pamphlet for the publisher and printer J. R. Thiele. Already on 24 December, 1770, *Anti-Philopatreias’ Three Remarks* were for sale.¹⁴⁷

This masquerade was not Bie’s own invention. It was modelled on the English *Spectator* tradition, which had been introduced by Jørgen Riis in Denmark in 1744 to 1745 with his *Danish Spectator* and *Danish Anti-Spectator*. Jørgen Riis’ social critique and attacks on the clergy were an important forerunner of Bie. In his new disguise, Bie was able to comment further on the economy and the courts of justice by satirically ridiculing the opposite viewpoint, defending the rights of priests to grow like fattening calves, just like he ridiculed the new current of pamphlets (including his own): they were no comets but mere falling stars.

In *Philopatreia’s first Sequel* he continued with four new remarks: *On Trade, On the Military, On the Examination of Witnesses, and On the Rise of the Sciences*.¹⁴⁸ In the last remark, England was again Bie’s ideal model. In England, the sciences flourished, and qualifications created honor and careers. The message was that Press Freedom and good government paved the way for the development of the sciences and the nation.

Bie promised several further sequels to *Philopatreias* but instead, in January 1771, he suddenly chose to leave the role of *Philopatreias* behind with the pamphlet *Philopatreias’ Palinodie or Poenitentze Sermon*.¹⁴⁹ *Palinodie* and *Poenitentze* mean revocation and repentance. Bie tried to quell the pamphlet storm he had occasioned by now revealing the character *Philopatreias* and his pamphlets as a satire, a mere joke. He had only published it to make money, he now claimed. He felt exposed and he was afraid of the consequences of his attack on the church and the clergy which continued calling forth a stream of counter-pamphlets. And what was worse: a pending case of blasphemy was threatening him. In July 1769, he had given a sermon in the village church of Hvidovre outside Copenhagen. On the surface, he gave a correct sermon, but it contained ambiguities open to sexual double-entendre. Bie was accused of blasphemy in the summer of 1771, and he was sentenced to six years in prison.

147 [J. C. Bie], *Anti-Philopatreias trende Anmærkninger 1. Om de dyre Tider og Handelens Svaghed, 2. Om Rettergang, 3. Om Geistlighedens Indkomster*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1770 (24 December 1770).

148 [J. C. Bie], *Philopatreias første Fortsættelse, indeholdende fire Anmærkninger. 1. Om handelen. 2. Om Krigsstanden. 3. Om Tingsvidners Førelse. 4. Om Videnskabernes Opkomst*, Copenhagen: J. G. Rothes forlag/Børsen, 1771 (11 January 1771).

149 [J. C. Bie], *Philopatreias alvortige Palinodie eller Poenitentze-Prædiken over hans trende Anmærkninger*, no place or printer, 1771 (4 February 1771).

With his *Palinodie*, Bie tried to terminate the debate he had triggered, but without success. The Philopatreas debate continued to grow unabashed. It was not until after Struensee's fall and execution, however, that a satire on Philopatreas was published in April 1772.¹⁵⁰

Philodanus versus Philopatreas

A thorough discussion of Jacob Christian Bie's pamphlet on economy and free trade was announced in *Adresseavisen* already on 21 December 1770: *Philodani Examination of Philopatrea's Remarks*. It was only ten days after Bie's Philopatreas had been announced. Within a few days, the pseudonym Philodanus – Lover of Denmark – had written a large pamphlet against Bie's first remark on trade. Just two weeks later, a sequel followed, discussing the remarks about the courts of justice and the incomes of the clergy. The rapid and thorough response of Philodanus was decisive for triggering the development of the ensuing Philopatreas debate.

Philodanus came from the royal court in the anonymous shape of the theologian Ove Guldberg, who was a teacher for the heir presumptive, Hereditary Prince Frederik. During 1771, Guldberg ascended to Cabinet Secretary to the Prince. He was Bie's first critic and the only one Bie mentioned with respect, even fear. His fright of Philodanus suggests that Bie was aware that the criticism came from a circle at court which was opposed to Struensee's contemporary reforms.

Guldberg presented political alternatives to Bie's critique. When Bie attacked the egoism of the great proprietors as the cause of high prices, Guldberg blamed the bank in Copenhagen for issuing too many banknotes. Monetary policy was thus central to Guldberg's way of thinking: there were too many circulating banknotes, and like the Spanish silver from America, excessive currency created inflation. High prices could be balanced by reducing the quantity of banknotes. While Bie called for free trade as a solution to the weakness of commerce, Guldberg criticized the monopoly of colonial trade companies and called for a freer trade, but not free trade. In the discussion of Philopatreas' critique of the courts of law, Guldberg admitted that Bie was right: there might be judges who, for their unfair handling of cases, deserved punishment. Guldberg agreed that lawyers tended to prolong lawsuits to increase salaries. But instead of completely abolishing lawyers, like Bie, Guldberg suggested alternative legal reforms: he requested better remuneration of lower court judges, so skilled lawyers would apply for such positions and become independent of their wealthy clients. Good, honorable judges would stop the misbehavior of lawyers.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ [anonymous], *Tre Forslage og Planer til det Geistlige Reformations-Verk, som ikke kom i Stand i Struensees Tid*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772.

¹⁵¹ [Ove Guldberg], *Philodani Undersøgelse af Philopatreas Anmærkninger. 1ste Hefte*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1770 (21 December 1770).



Fig. 15: Before Ove Guldberg became the central figure of the post-coup government during 1772–1773 and took part in the dismantling of Press Freedom, he had himself been intensely active in Press Freedom debates, e. g., under the pen name of Philodanus. The bust of Guldberg from around 1772 testifies to the intellectual house teacher’s swift ascension to political power in the second half of the Press Freedom Period. *Ove Guldberg*, bust by Luigi di Guiseppa Grossi, ca. 1772. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Kit Weiss.

Philocosmus versus Philodanus

Ove Guldberg’s reaction to Bie’s thoughts on free trade led the secretary of the Royal Danish Agricultural Society, the above-mentioned Christian Martfelt, to enter the debate. Ove Guldberg had written his not so small pamphlet against Bie in a hurry. Now, Martfelt authored no less than 459 pages of political economics as a rejoinder to Guldberg’s 60 pages – the single most voluminous Press Freedom Writing. Martfelt wrote under the pen name of “Philocosmus”, Lover of the World: *Philocosmi Remarks on Several Important Political Matters occasioned by Philodani Enquiry*.¹⁵² The book was published in May 1771, printed in “The Golden Age of the Press,” as stated on the title page.

¹⁵² [Christian Martfelt], *Philocosmi Betænkninger over adskillige vigtige Politiske Materier i anledning af Philodani Undersøgelse*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (21 May 1771).



Fig. 16: Martfelt's meticulously elaborate answer to Guldberg on state economics had, as its title copper, "I decide about Debt and elevate the State". In the center of the picture, an allegorical figure with a Janus head glances back and forth. On his head, he wears a rich sheaf of grain with the balance of justice. In his left hand a writing titled "New Customs and Duties Rules 1772", that is, the new set of laws which should be passed by Christian VII from whose altar smoke is ascending as a sign of blessing from the Old Testament deity. In his right hand, a shining key symbolizes the new law as a promise of future wealth. Against him leans a quicksilver barometer, around him are seen merchant ships, a plough, the staff of Asclepius, and a handful of fish as signs of science, trade, agriculture, health, and fishery. Bottom line: the new legislation will lead to fertility, healthy economy, and justice. In a certain sense, the figure symbolizes Martfelt himself who demands, in his booklength pamphlet, a new taxation policy to the improvement of state finances. From [Chr. Martfelt] *Philocosmi Betænkninger*. © Royal Danish Library.

Martfelt chose to appear as a cosmopolitan in contrast to Guldberg's national patriotism, and he stressed the necessity of information and knowledge of international economic and political conditions. Martfelt had traveled in the Netherlands, England, and Ireland, from where he kept extensive travel journals and a network of contacts. After returning home in 1768, he had used his network in the establishment of the Royal Danish Agricultural Society 1769 to 1770.¹⁵³

Agriculture in England and Dutch trade served as ideals for Martfelt, but the political context of economic success was crucial as well. In republics, the path to political insight was open through publicity, while in a monarchy, the road to knowledge was closed with secret councils and lack of public discussions, and it was not possible to be trained in political economics at the University of Copenhagen. During his discussion of Dutch customs policy, Martfelt provocatively concluded: "I wish one would become a Republican in this, in order to support and maintain the monarchical Throne".¹⁵⁴

Martfelt completely rejected Bie's Philopatris, but at the same time he agreed with Bie that proprietors of land had too much influence in government and did contribute to the high prices. He mocked Guldberg as a stranger to the economy and trade of the country. Similarly, Martfelt was in line with Bie on the issue of publicity concerning customs policy. Customs became a cornerstone of the scheme for trade that Martfelt unfolded in the second part of his book. His "Plan for the Trade" summed up the previous many pages in no less than 90 brief bullet points.¹⁵⁵ There were two fundamental principles in Martfelt's plan: government determination of the price of grain by import as well as export, and the introduction of a new customs and consumption policy ("consumption", that is, consumption taxes). Martfelt believed that the price of grain should be decided by law so that the economy became independent of fluctuations in the market. Article 4 of his plan stated that the price of import and export of grain was to be determined by taking its average price between 1710 and 1739, compared with between 1740 and 1769, which were periods of different physical and political nature for the state. It was unclear how exactly the import price – dependent upon the supply and requirements of foreign companies – could be legally enforced in this way, but to Martfelt it was clear that a fixed grain price was the cornerstone of economic balance.

Once the task of the price of grain was settled, the positive effects of the new customs and consumer policy would strengthen the state. Customs should not depend on government needs nor greed for revenue alone, as this might ruin trade. It was better to increase revenue through taxes on consumption. Duties on raw materials for manufacturing and crafts were to be reduced, while consumption taxes should be placed solely on the last link of production: finished consumer goods.

153 Hertel 1919, 76–80; Christensen 1996, 136–139.

154 [Christian Martfelt], *Philocosmi Betænkninger*, 84.

155 [Christian Martfelt], *Philocosmi Betænkninger*, 367–429.

Lower tariffs would strengthen domestic production and create better conditions for the manufactories. At the same time, increased consumer taxation would enable the control of expenditure and contribute to the fight against opulence, an issue which not only worried Martfelt but was on the minds of many other writers, such as Suhm or Brun. Martfelt used his experience from England and Holland in arguing these ideas, which lacked in detail what the proposals had in rhetorical impact.

The first article of his scheme for trade proposed professionalization of government administration. University-trained officials should be employed in the departments of government administration when they were gradually educated in politics – that is, after the necessary modernization of the University of Copenhagen. Business schools and vocational education were to be established. Statistics on economy and population developments should be prepared regularly. Martfelt's ideas were anti-aristocratic: the nobility should have absolutely nothing to do with trade projects, and it should not be involved in company trade and supplies for manufactories. Martfelt feared too much aristocratic influence on the monarchy because the interests of the nobility were not those of the common good.

In his final summary list, economic proposals followed each other without any overall theoretical plan. Martfelt aimed for a new development, but he involved many traditional means and solutions. Special industries should be monopolized in various towns: thus, wool manufactories had built Leyden, and the city of Harlem's development was created by silk production. Wise and prudent guilds should manage such monopolized industries.

In the Royal Danish Agricultural Society, Martfelt was occupied with questions of agricultural improvement, but strangely, rural economy was poorly represented in his general doctrine of political economics. Martfelt was more concerned with the determination of the price of grain than with grain production itself.

Martfelt's Failure and Fall

Martfelt left the role of Philocosmus in August 1771 and began using his own name. He now suggested that a new *Royal Commission for the Reformation of Economy* should carry out his policy.¹⁵⁶ The ecclesiastical Reformation had proved a blessing for the country, Martfelt claimed, and he believed that a political reformation of the economy was as necessary as the Reformation of the church, because many contemporary political conditions could be compared to the clerical abuses in the pre-Reformation past. Press Freedom contributed to this new reformation, but Christian VII could accelerate the political reformation needed by creating such a Royal Commis-

¹⁵⁶ Christian Martfelt, *Forslag til en Kongelig Reformations-Kommission i Hensigt at forfatte en retskaffen varig Plan for Æconomie-Kommerse- og Finantsvæsenet i Danmark*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (12 August 1771).

sion. It should consist of no less than three and no more than seven persons, and it should not include members of the government and the administration, but rather consist of modern “politicians”, that is, by disinterested intellectuals known to the public.

Martfelt summed up the 90 articles from Philocosmus’ scheme for the trade in 43 proposals for the Commission. He set out a timetable for the Commission’s work: which issues needed to be addressed immediately and which might wait. Not surprising, the fixing of grain prices, customs, and consumer tax legislation were among the most urgent cases. Martfelt’s suggestions were well received by the critics of the journal *Lærde Efterretninger* (*Learned News*), and the *Kritisk Journal*. The reviewer of *Fortegnelsen* found no need to refer to the proposal at all because he could not imagine that anyone who wished anything good for the nation would have left the proposal unread.

Martfelt’s Royal Commission for the Reformation of Economy, however, was never realized. His proposal was translated into German in August 1771, but the Struensee government did not respond to his proposal. After the fall of Struensee, however, Martfelt was employed in the new government administration. He became a member of the Department of Economy and Commerce in January 1773; here, Martfelt worked to realize parts of his trading plan, not least the issues of consumption taxes and the fight against “opulence”.

But Martfelt was fired by his superiors.¹⁵⁷ His dismissal in the summer of 1774 was most likely connected with Martfelt’s strong views on grain prices, grain trade, and especially their immediate effects on Norwegian policies. From September 1773, the Department worked on plans concerning Danish grain sale to Norway. The result was a ban on the import of foreign grain to the southern regions of Norway, as the Norwegian market there was of great importance for Danish grain exports. The criticisms that Philopatreas as well as Philocosmus had raised regarding the ‘self-interest’ and detrimental influence of the large landowners in the government’s trade policy were to the point concerning this new ordinance on Norway, Martfelt claimed. He now set out to criticize the policies of the Department and the government in a booklength argument. He was dismissed on 10 June, and he had the book printed immediately after, with a dedication to the Crown Prince dated 30 June 1774. It was only reviewed, however, in *Learned News* ten years later in 1784 and became a subject of discussion only in 1785.

The reason was that the book was, in July 1774, suppressed by Ove Guldberg, who was busy cementing his powers in the Cabinet and directly threatened Martfelt with punishment if he published the book. Martfelt, in the shape of Philocosmus, had praised Press Freedom but he was now silenced by an act of personal censorship. Ove Guldberg had, through 1773 to 1774 acquired a central position in the Cabinet and would not accept that the government’s economic policy was undermined

¹⁵⁷ Holm 1890–1912, vol. V.2, 437, 469–470 and 492–496.

by alternative proposals. A rumor that Martfelt was also behind a 1773 pamphlet defending the exiled Queen Matilda in Celle hardly helped his case (see Chapter 13). Guldberg now decisively put an end to the free debate of state economy, which had been initiated by Jakob Christian Bie and the *Philopatris* debate four years earlier.

Junior Philopatris – from the West Indies to Antisemitism

The public debate about past delusions and current abuses of power by both government and local authorities, initiated by Jakob Christian Bie, continued not only among government officials and intellectuals. It grew a popular if not populist branch with *Junior Philopatris*, presenting himself as a younger version of the pseudonym rising to fame over the turn of 1770 to 1771. With *Junior Philopatris*, we are decidedly in Grub Street. Various topics from the economic and intellectual debate became, in his pen, a form of popular economy in the print culture of Press Freedom. Behind the pseudonym stood the writer Søren Rosenlund, who had acted as lawyer in the Danish West Indies, but now lived, after returning from the colony, in poverty in Copenhagen. During his stay on the island of St. Croix in the West Indies from 1764 to 1766, he had developed the idea that the Danish King should actively colonize Crabben Island, located between St. Croix and Puerto Rico and belonging to the West Indies under the Danish King. In Copenhagen, Rosenlund authored a proposal to the government for this colonization plan. In his view, such a settlement would create large revenues, and he fantasized about streams of gold from the West Indies to Copenhagen.¹⁵⁸ Søren Rosenlund took these economic fantasies further when Press Freedom offered him a new opportunity to make a living as a writer.

Jakob Christian Bie's *Philopatris* had opened his eyes to the opportunities of Press Freedom. In the wake of Bie's breakthrough, he swiftly wrote *Junior Philopatris's first Part* and had it published in January 1771.¹⁵⁹ The pamphlet consisted of five remarks that commented on and supplemented Bie's three remarks. Rosenlund's remarks were composed with the recurring theme: Comparison of the old and the new Denmark. The comparison between then and now was a history of decay, where the economic balance had been better in Denmark of old, before the destructive influence of the trade from the German states and before the modern monetary system. Søren Rosenlund agreed with Ove Guldberg's *Philodanus* regarding the harmfulness of paper money and his criticisms of the bank in Copenhagen. Junior

158 National Archives, 365. Generaltoldkammeret – ældre del. Vestindisk-Guineisk Renteskrivertor, 555a, Søren Rosenlund, "Allerunderdanigst Forslag til Crabben Eylands Optagelse... 6. Junii 1767".

159 [Søren Rosenlund], *Junior Philopatris første Deel, fem Anmærkninger*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterleverske, 1771 (21 January 1771).

Philopatreas did not follow Philopatrea's demands for free trade in his first remark about the high prices and trade, because Denmark had experienced enough destructive free trade under the Hanseatic regime in former times.

Rosenlund's second pamphlet discussed why Denmark's manufactories went bankrupt and what could be done to help trade in Copenhagen.¹⁶⁰ Why didn't Denmark have flourishing manufactories as in England? The reason, according to Junior Philopatreas, was that foreign producers appropriated the king's money and left the country, while Danish producers were despised by the government. The question of the cause of high prices of firewood was the topic in the *Junior* pamphlet that created the most debate. The winter of 1770 to 1771 was extremely cold, and the rocketing price of firewood was a current everyday financial problem. While Bie's criticism of the high prices of bread had focused on grain speculation of the nobility, Rosenlund accused the municipal authorities in Copenhagen of fraud with the prices of firewood.

His reviewers felt he must be either drunk or crazy because his style was incoherent, rambling, and confusing.¹⁶¹ With a reception like that, one may wonder that he was able to publish a booklet every second week through the spring of 1771. Evidently, readers did not share the established critique of Junior Philopatreas. His oral style in which one topic was quickly giving place to another was appealing to the new popular readerships created by Press Freedom.

In the booklet *Det danske Ophir* he returned, in the summer of 1771, to his starting point from 1767: the proposal for colonization of Crabben Island.¹⁶² Ophir was, in the biblical tradition, the name of King Solomon's Mines, and in Rosenlund's economic vision the West Indies would make Denmark as rich as Spain had been.

Søren Rosenlund's participation in the Philopatreas debate defended his pseudonymous namesake and role model, Bie. But there were also differences. Bie had presented opulent landowners, greedy lawyers, and lazy priests as enemies of society. Søren Rosenlund created his own imagined enemies, which became central to several of his writings. Xenophobia and anti-Semitism were his basic elements.

Among the imagined enemies he constructed, *The Revelation of the Plots of the Jews* took the lead.¹⁶³ Rosenlund attacked a local Jewish goldsmith for violating the regulations of the goldsmiths' guild in Copenhagen. On this basis, he developed, over three booklets, a conspiracy theory in which Jews in general were accused of usury and fraud and eventually of all the economic misfortunes of the monarchy. The driving force in *The Revelation of the Plots of the Jews* was Rosenlund's rage against Jews. He was unable to corroborate his anti-Semitism, but the accusations

160 [Søren Rosenlund], *Junior Philopatreas fire Anmærkninger*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (28 January 1771).

161 Jacob Baden in *Kritisk Journal; Fortegnelsen* vol. 1, no. 22.

162 [Søren Rosenlund], *Det danske Ophir*, no place or printer, 1771 (16 July 1771).

163 [Søren Rosenlund], *Jødernes Rænkens Aabenbaring*, no. 1–3, no place or printer, 1771 (18 March 1771).

grew exponentially from script to script. In the first booklet, the accusations were basically about the alleged theft of Jews and their abuse of privileges within the guild system, especially in the goldsmiths' guild. In the second booklet, Jews were to be forbidden to buy houses and farms. In the end, Jews became harmful to trade, crafts, learned professions, the government, and for the country as such. Reviewers distanced themselves from Rosenlund's accusations, but his general contempt and insult of Jews proved not to be an issue for pamphlet debate.

The unlimited freedom of the press created the condition for *Junior Philopatreias*. Suddenly, it was possible for Rosenlund to write about anything that might attract attention, and the hack writer had direct access to the press. From January to April 1771, he published a new pamphlet every second week. But the unlimited freedom to ridicule and defame in the press also put an end to Junior Philopatreias. The doctor Peter Christian Abildgaard published, under the pseudonym of *Rosentorne*, a series of funny satires, which were merciless travesties of Søren Rosenlund's pamphlets and their style.¹⁶⁴ His pseudonym "Rose Thorns" discreetly indicated that he knew of *Junior's* true identity as Rosenlund, meaning "Rose Grove". Abildgaard was soon joined by others ridiculing *Junior Philopatreias*. Søren Rosenlund was not affected by censorship or editorial gate keeping. His rogue economics was struck by satire and the implicit threat of breaking his anonymity. Thus, unlimited freedom of the press was the framework for the greatness as well as for the fall of *Junior Philopatreias*.

Freedom and Slavery of the Peasants

Press Freedom added a new, political dimension to the existing discussions of improvement of the rural economy. The discussion of agricultural improvement had begun after the 1755 invitation continued and was, from 1770, institutionalized in the Royal Danish Agricultural Society. Issues of crops, agricultural machinery and systems of cultivation were examined in debate and in dissertations. But a very central question concerned the rights of the landowners over peasants and their labor.

164 Rosentorne's three pamphlets ridiculing Junior Philopatreias: [P. C. Abildgaard], *Et velmeent Brev og [...] paa den almindelige Fornufts Vegne af Rosentorne*, no place or printer, 1771 (12 March 1771); [P. C. Abildgaard], *Junior Philopatreias Besvarelse til Beelzebul Fukssvanser, som svigagtelig og saare underfundelig kalder sig Rosentorne*, no place or printer, 1771 (25 March 1771); and [P. C. Abildgaard], *En Sandfærdig og tilforladelig Beretning om Junior Philopatreias Død og paafulgte Begravelse. Samt Beskrivelse over hans Parade-Seng og en Samling af Vers og Gravskrifter som i adskillige Sprog ere forfærdigede. Tilligemed en Liig-Tale, som blev holt ved hans Begravelse af Mag. Klerkerup [...] Rosentorne. Kollekølle*, no printer indicated, 1771 (8 April 1771). Junior Philopatreias' brief reply to Rosentorne: [Søren Rosenlund]: *Tienstlig Giensvar til den unge Pasqvillant Rosentorne kaldet*, no place or printer, 1771 (19 March 1771).

The peasants' obligation to work for the proprietors, the so-called *hoveri* (villeinage or corvée), had generally been expanding in the second half of the eighteenth century. Demand for labor was increasing for proprietors because general economic growth led to growing demand for agricultural commodities. Growing production, in turn, required an increase in the villeinage of the peasants on the estates. The question was if there were to be a limit to *hoveri*, to corvée, to forced labor?

At the same time, the peasants were subject to state legislation on military service, which bound the peasants to remain at the estate where they were born: the so-called *Stavnsbaand* (adscription). Landowners were obliged to enlist soldiers for the military. To secure manpower for the militia and labor force for the estates, the adscription was introduced in 1733, preventing peasants from migrating to seek other means of living. It was not abolished until 1788, and during the Press Freedom Period, male laborers between four and 40 years-old could not legally leave the manor house with which they were employed.

The combination of military legislation and the proprietors' rights to peasant labor had not been subject to public debate and criticism until Press Freedom created the opportunity to analyze and criticize peasant conditions. That opportunity was seized by the anonymous author of a pamphlet with the concise title *Brief Considerations on the Abolition of the Hoveri*.¹⁶⁵ The pamphlet was among the very first writings to be published after the introduction of Press Freedom. It was advertised for sale in Copenhagen at the beginning of October 1770, but it was printed in Aalborg in Jutland, far from the center of Press Freedom in Copenhagen. The pamphlet raised a debate in Copenhagen, which was answered at the printing house in Aalborg. It was an atypical development, just as it was unusual for a debate to address conditions that did not have the city or state as a main subject.

The author took his point of departure in Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des loix*, which was published in Danish translation during early Press Freedom, in 1770 to 1771.¹⁶⁶ In book 15 of the work, one could read Montesquieu's ironic consideration *Of the Slavery of Negroes*, which was quoted in the pamphlet on the abolition of the peasants' corvée: Slavery was possible only if God had not given blacks a soul. The discussion of forced labor service of the peasants in Denmark made the anonymous author associate to the slavery of the blacks in the colonies. In the pamphlet, he argued for the complete abolition forced labor service of the peasants to the landowners. Their physical work was to be replaced by a rent payment in cash. When implemented, Denmark would be able to compare itself to England, which was the author's ideal. And in the author's description of the actual state of affairs,

165 [anonymous], *Korte Betragtninger over Hoveriets Afskaffelse i Danmark*, Aalborg: Holzberg, 1770 (9 October 1770).

166 Montesquieu, *Om Lovenes Natur og Aarsag*, part 1–2, Copenhagen, 1770, part 3, Copenhagen, 1771.

the conditions of Danish peasants were described as slavery and compared to the Danish West Indies with slaves toiling on sugar plantations.

The pamphlet was well received by the reviewer of the *Kritisk Journal* in Copenhagen, who supported the criticism of the excessive corvée at Danish manor houses.¹⁶⁷ But the pamphlet would provoke a fierce debate in both Aalborg and Copenhagen. In Aalborg, an anonymous proprietor defended his rights over the peasants and accused the pamphleteer of attempting to create a rift between peasants and landowners. Who had given him the right to call the peasants slaves and the landowners tyrants? From the age of four, the peasants were servants owned by the landowner. The proprietors had acquired their rights over peasants along with their duty to provide soldiers and pay taxes to the state.¹⁶⁸

The author of the pamphlet on the abolition of the corvée replied, in a new pamphlet, that the government had, with Press Freedom, encouraged patriots to write about obstacles to the common good. True patriots were to promote the common good, and the pamphleteer did so by telling the truth, calling the proprietors tyrants and the wretched peasant slaves.¹⁶⁹ In Copenhagen, an anonymous writer also responded to the debate. He considered the pamphlet from Aalborg an irresponsible abuse of Press Freedom. It would be a disaster for the country if the corvée and the *Stavnsbaand* adscription were canceled. It would change the entire state and the economy of the whole country would collapse. Liberated peasants would seek the life of the city or leave the country altogether. The state would lose work force and the countryside would become desolate.¹⁷⁰

The backcloth to the fierce debate was that Struensee's government was simultaneously working on a reform of the peasantry's corvée or forced labor service. Economist and botanist G. C. Oeder became the leading impetus behind a law of 20 February 1771, which set new limits on the extent of the forced labor service by providing an objective measure of the amount of labor involved instead of leaving it to the whim of the individual estate owner.

As part of the economic reform policy already from 1755, G. C. Oeder had been invited to Denmark by the government to lead the work on the publication of a major botanical work: the *Flora Danica*. Botany and economics were closely related topics in the eighteenth century because of the agricultural and economic potentials of botanical research, and Oeder developed into an economist. In 1769, he wrote a short and clear treatise on the necessity of fundamental political-economic reforms of the rural community. The publication was anonymously published in Frankfurt &

167 Probably Jacob Baden; *Kritisk Journal*, 1770, 47, 369–370.

168 [anonymous], *Patriotiske Tanker udi Anledning af et Skrift kaldet: Korte Betragtninger over Hoveriets Afskaffelse i Danmark*, Aalborg: J. P. Holzberg, 1771 (8 April 1771).

169 Eleutherius, *Korte Betragtninger over de saa kaldede patriotiske Tanker*, Aalborg: J. P. Holzberg, 1771 (2 October 1771).

170 [anonymous], *Tanker ved at igiennemlæse Betragtningen over Hoveriets Afskaffelse i Danmark*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (28 January 1771).

Leipzig, but Oeder's role as the author was known in the Danish government. He enjoyed Minister J. H. E. Bernstorff's protection, however, and at the end of 1769, a translation was published in Copenhagen: *How Freedom and Property could be provided to the Peasantry*.¹⁷¹

Oeder addressed the question of freedom and property as an arithmetic problem – as a purely theoretical question without mentioning specific countries. Only theoretically, before the introduction Press Freedom, he would discuss “despotism among landowners”. It was Oeder's central view that the best agricultural system would exist in a state where the land was divided into lots cultivated by the peasants. They were to possess their land as private property, and they should pay relevant duties and taxes in cash rather than in labor or naturalia. Oeder described the development from slavery and forced labor duties to freedom and property in historical stages. His political project consisted of shortening the historical development from the actual condition of the *corvée* to the ideal stage: “Ownership of the farm against taxes to the landowner without *corvée*, and with complete civil liberty.” The prince was to pave the way by fixing the *corvée*.

This was exactly what Oeder was furthering in the Land Commission with the law of 20 February 1771. Oeder was the architect behind Struensee's new legislation, and his historical vision of freedom and property was now on the political agenda. The Danish version of Oeder's book was advertised in *Adresseavisen* as written by “Finants Rath Oeder” on 11 March 1771, and soon the book became the subject of another Press Freedom debate.

The above-mentioned vicar and economist O. D. Lütken became Oeder's notable opponent in the debate. Lütken had written economic treatises in the period after 1755; particularly important was his aforementioned book from 1761 on the development of the population. In early 1771, he attacked Oeder in a pamphlet, arguing that liberation of the peasants was unthinkable, abolition of the *corvée* was an impossibility, and even its limitation was harmful.¹⁷² Lütken's arguments followed his economic theory of population. The abolition of forced labor service would not give rise to growth of the population, production, and prosperity. On the contrary, the peasants would work less if they were not forced by the *corvée*. The peasants would also become stubborn and get rebellious ideas – uprisings as in England and Ireland could be the result.

At the end of the pamphlet, Lütken took the reader on a journey into the future after the abolition of the *corvée*. As a result of Oeder's vision, beggars will fill the

171 [G. C. Oeder], *Betænkning over det Spørgsmaal: Hvorledes Frihed og Eiendom kunde forskaffes Bondestanden i de Lande, hvor de fattes begge Dele*, translated from German by Barthold Johan Lodde. Copenhagen: Schubothe, 1769; announced 13 February 1770, and again on 26 November 1770.

172 [O. D. Lütken], *Anmærkning over et ved Lodde oversat Skrift, under Titul: Betænkningen hvorledes Frihed og Eyendom kunne forskaffes Bondestanden, med et dertil føyet Anhang*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771

roads and “all things are found to be in such a perverted and confused state that it cannot continue for long”. Lütken agreed with the dystopia that the anonymous critic of the Aalborg pamphlet had put forward. Peasants would invade the city and the countryside would become barren.

Oeder responded to Lütken’s attack in a German pamphlet *Zusätze zu dem Bedenken über die Frage: wie dem Bauernstande Freyheit und Eigenthum [...]* of 1771, in which he explained further his concepts of liberty and property.¹⁷³ The property he was talking about was the relevant rural estate only and not property in general. But civil liberties were universal. Oeder repeated his strong concept of civil liberty from the original pamphlet, and liberty was rarely defined more explicitly during Press Freedom:¹⁷⁴

Civil liberty is an expression that I often use and will therefore briefly explain what concept I have thereby. I hereby understand the freedom of everyone to promote and enjoy his prosperity, to the best of his knowledge, in any way that can exist with the maintenance of the society under whose protection he lives. [...] Whether one is poor or rich, we could all be free, and I regard this freedom as the right of anyone to be born.

The farmer was not free because he was tied to his homestead and unable to seek happiness for himself. In his response, Oeder left all caution behind. Thanks to Press Freedom, he could now freely compare conditions in Denmark-Norway and Sleswick-Holstein, and especially the estate system and the landowners in the Duchies received a harsh assessment. The situation of the peasants in Sleswick-Holstein was on a very low stage in the development towards freedom because they were completely subject to landowners: the peasant was “Knecht des Gutsherrn”. The peasants in Denmark were in a better condition after the recent regulation of forced labor service, while the condition of peasants in England was an ideal: “In Britain, labor services (Frohndienste) and all kinds of personal inferiority are abolished by parliamentary acts” (95). *Zusätze* ended with demands for the partition of the big estates and the complete abolition of the *Stavnsbaand* adscription. The precondition for free contractual relations was the introduction of personal liberty.

Oeder’s book was met with great enthusiasm in the republic of letters. In 1769, the Danish “Society for the Improvement of the Beautiful and Useful Sciences” had launched a competition on the prize subject “On the Happiness of the Farmer in the Enjoyment of Freedom and Property”.¹⁷⁵ The prize was won by a poem submitted by the Norwegian Hans Bull in competition with the Danish author Charlotte Dorothea

173 [G. C. Oeder], *Zusätze zu dem Bedenken über die Frage: Wie dem Bauernstande Freyheit und Eigenthum in den Ländern, wo ihm beydes fehlet, verschaffet werden könne?*, Frankfurt und Leipzig, no printer indicated, 1771 (11 September 1771).

174 [G. C. Oeder], *Betænkning*, 1769, 55.

175 The society had been organized in 1759 under the Danish title of “Selskabet til de skønne og nyttige Videnskabers Forfremmelse” and, as of 1761, they published a (roughly) annual book including, among other writings, selected answers to the Society’s prize questions.

Biehl. Both poems were published by the Society in 1771. Hans Bull praised the independent Norwegian farmer in patriotic terms. Charlotte Dorothea Biehl dedicated her poem *On Freedom and Property* to the historian P. F. Suhm, who had inspired her to “paint freely the hard violence, / which throws down in slavery the farmer”.¹⁷⁶



Fig. 17: The author and playwright Charlotte Dorothea Biehl became part of the debate on the *corvée* with her poem “On Liberty and Property” of 1771, criticizing “the hard violence/ which suppresses peasants into slavery”. Later, she produced in retrospect a particularly harsh judgment of the coup-plotters of January 17 1772. *Charlotte Dorothea Biehl*, miniature by Cornelius Høyer, ca. 1775. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Hans Petersen.

Suhm, as we heard, gave the discussion of the oppression of the peasants a historical dimension. In 1771, he described the peasants as free citizens in the early Middle Ages before they came under the power and oppression of the lords, as he wrote in his *Collections*: “The word farmer was, in those days, an honorable name [...] They were to be regarded as our lords, only that they were many more in number, and had, in certain ways, manorial rights in that they, along with the nobility and the more distinguished, selected and confirmed our kings”.¹⁷⁷ Forced labor service of the peasants was not part of the ancient constitution and could and should be abolished (see Chapter 3 on “ancient constitutionalism”).

¹⁷⁶ Charlotte Dorothea Biehl, “Om Frihed og Eiendom”, *Forsøg i de skønne og nyttige Videnskaber*, V, 1771, 161–173.

¹⁷⁷ P. F. Suhm, *Samlinger* 1. vol. 2, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (1 July 1771), 98.

The debate between Oeder and Lütken continued in the *Magazin for Patriotiske Skribentere*, where they discussed the effects of the limitation of the corvée.¹⁷⁸ Several writers joined the peasant discussion in the *Magazine*, but the two entrenched main positions in the public did not change during Press Freedom. On one side stood a liberal, intellectual, urban public supporting, in general terms, the peasants and demanded freedom from forced labor service and adscription. On the other side stood the landowners' vested interests in the peasants allied with the fear of many citizens that social chaos and disaster would be the result of radical liberating reform. It was city intellectuals against country noblemen. At the political level, however, the pendulum swung back in favor of proprietor interest under the new government after the fall of Struensee. A new law of 12 August 1773 overthrew Struensee's and Oeder's partial emancipation of peasants from 1771. Under the 1773 law, the corvée was once again determined according to local regulations and traditions.

Lottery and Gambling

A lottery was introduced at Copenhagen City Hall on 18 July 1771 and quickly became talk of the town. Even before the new lottery was a reality, a patriotic discussion about the general economic consequences of the lottery broke out. Lotteries as such were nothing new.¹⁷⁹ During the eighteenth century, individuals or associations had been allowed to set up lotteries to raise money for specific purposes. But the new lottery was different. The revenue did not go to a specific purpose or to the support of a charitable institution, but to a private leaseholder and to shareholders, while the state would receive a fixed annual amount for the license.

The initiative came from one Georg Ditlev Frederik Koës, a former glazier from Sleswick who had lived in Berlin for some years and made a living as a banker. He had discovered that many foreigners – including Danish subjects – had lottery tickets in the Prussian state lottery, and he wrote to the Danish King with a proposal to establish a lottery in Denmark, so that His Majesty's subjects did not gamble away their money in a foreign lottery. The idea of establishing a lottery was thus not Struensee's invention, but he negotiated further with Koës, approving his scheme and supporting the implementation. Struensee, however, wanted the lottery to be run as a joint stock company, with stakeholders among the King's subjects – with one exception, namely himself.¹⁸⁰ Koës was given the exclusive right to run the Royal Danish Lottery for six years against an annual payment to the state, and stakeholders

178 *Magazin for patriotiske Skribentere, hvori politiske, moralske og historiske Materier uden Bekostning indføres*. Published from January 1771.

179 See Miers 2004, Brenner 1990, Duckley 1986.

180 Struensee ordered 47 stocks in the lottery and payed 4,700 rix-dollars in cash to Koës, while promising to pay the remaining 18,800 rix-dollars – which he never got around to do.

were invited to buy shares. The whole business was to consist of three lotteries in Copenhagen, Altona and – in time – Wandsbeck in Holstein.

The lottery could be played with bets from eight shillings to several hundred rix-dollars. The smallest bet of eight shillings enabled people with modest incomes to play in the lottery: in 1771 a laborer would earn 24 shillings a day during the summer months, while a pound of coarse rye bread cost about 1½ shillings. The first to mention the lottery during Press Freedom was the optimistic and encouraging anonymous booklet *Thoughts on the Privileged Lottery for the General Benefit of the Country* already in March 1771.¹⁸¹ One could easily get the idea that it was a commissioned work or even a marketing teaser. The author described “all the usefulness” that the lottery would do in the future when millions of rix-dollars would flow to the treasury. With the revenue of the lottery, it would be possible to provide for the poor at no expense to the inhabitants of the city. It was also important that the money spent remained in the country. But soon it was evident that such support of the lottery did not stand alone. From the very beginning, the critique of the lottery opened a debate that would outlive the end of Press Freedom.

The economist O. D. Lütken immediately authored the counter-pamphlet: *Proof that the Progress of Lotteries is the Fall of Europe and the Destruction of States*.¹⁸² The disastrous predictions about the results of liberation of the peasants, which Lütken had prophesied in the discussion of the peasants’ forced labor service, faded in comparison with his fears pertaining to the lottery. Not only would the lottery bring about the downfall of Denmark, but the whole of Europe was to decline. The downfall of Europe would be caused by the advancement that lotteries had made through the eighteenth century. Lottery was a foolish Southern European invention, which the Nordic countries now imitated, a self-inflicted torment worse than cattle plague, indeed, the lottery was no less than “the very worst invention ever created in the world”. The lottery threatened European civilization. Europe’s privileged position in the world was due to “industry, working with hand and with head”, while other continents had spent their time on “games and laziness”. The European states were built on diligence and industriousness, but with the staging of blind lottery happiness as desirable, the belief in industriousness that was the basis of prosperity of the nation was undermined. The lottery would destroy the population, and Lütken trembled with “fear and anxiety” for the future. He saw with horror a scenario in which the lotteries undermined European mentality. Diligence had been neglected and the leading position which Europe had acquired through hard work had been destabilized.

181 [anonymous], *Tanker over det alleene Privilegerede Lotterie til Landets almindelige Nytte, fattige Børns Opdragelse, og det fattige Væsens bestandige Underholdning i Kiøbenhavn*, Copenhagen: A. H. Godiches Efterleverske, 1771 (8 March 1771).

182 [O. D. Lütken], *Beviis at Lotteriers Fremgang er Europæ Fald og Staternes Ødelæggelse*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1771 (20 May 1771).

Lütken knew where to place the responsibility for the future disasters. The introduction of the lottery was due to the “recommendation by one bad-benevolent minister” – that is, Struensee. But the European lottery was overall an “invention of the Jewish cabale”. Lütken did not refrain from invoking the anti-Semitism widespread at the time. Jews were not infrequently associated with misfortunes and exploitation of Christians, so it was an obvious step at the time for Lütken to associate the lottery with Jews. And in common sense, Jews could not be patriots. In addition, it was apparently predominantly Jews who had, as middlemen, sold lottery tickets to the foreign lotteries.¹⁸³ Lütken was not the only voice who claimed a relationship between Jews and the lottery. In another anonymous text, a Jew tried to lure men from the city to buy lottery tickets. Fortunately, a clever student interfered in the Jew’s endeavor and managed to convince the citizens that they should not buy.¹⁸⁴

The fatal influence of the lottery on the common people was a central concern of his criticism. Lütken stated in his pamphlet that fortunately peasants did not yet participate in the lottery (11). If they got a lottery ticket and won a prize, they would all leave the countryside and run to the collectors. The same reasoning is found in *Causes for the Lottery’s Deportation from All Kingdoms and Countries*, where it was presented in detail how great the damage would be when – not if – the common people in the countryside and in the city would take part in the lottery. Sailors and soldiers would become criminals, journeymen and apprentices would steal tools and materials from their masters, and the peasants would fall into large debts. After a few years, the proprietors would not be able to pay dues and taxes to the king because the peasants became impoverished.¹⁸⁵

The social and psychological consequences of the lottery were also addressed in the publication *Patriotic Thoughts on Occasion of the Lottery. Written on the 1st of March by Philoplebis*.¹⁸⁶ On his travels, the author had seen the unfortunate mental influence of lotteries and gambling on the players, to which was added their bodily weakness. Gamblers no longer had their free will and were making themselves the “unhappiest and most worthless People in the State”. The writer drew a portrait of the gradual deroute of a gambler and concluded that lotteries led to “fraud and blasphemies, to drinking, swearing and lying”.

On 18 April, the lottery began in Altona, and on 11 July, the first drawing in Copenhagen took place at the City Hall on Gammeltorv. Despite the warnings of writers, many citizens of Copenhagen took the game to heart. A contemporary observer

183 [O. D. Lütken], *Beviis at Lotteriens Fremgang er Europæ Fald og Staternes Ødelæggelse*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1771 (20 May 1771) 14.

184 [anonymous], *Almuens Øine opklarede i Anledning af den Daarlighed at vove sine Penge*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1771 (21 May 1771).

185 [J. F. Baumgarten], *Aarsager til Tall-Lotteriernes Forvisning af alle Riger og Lande*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1771 (15 March 1771).

186 [anonymous], *Patriotiske Tanker i Anledning af Tal-Lotteriet Skrevet den 1ste Martii af Philoplebis*, Copenhagen: J. G. Rothe, nr.8 paa Børsen, 1771 (18 March 1771).

wrote that Copenhageners became obsessed with a kind of lottery rage. According to the writer, the lottery addiction lasted until the autumn of 1771, when “the reasonable” began to realize that one could only lose by playing in the lottery and therefore refrained from playing. But “the simple common people” continued to squander “their own and often the money of others in this unfortunate lottery, from which it now seems almost impossible to pull them away”.¹⁸⁷



Fig. 18: One of the many losers in the lottery tears asunder his ticket in desperation, stamping his feet on the pieces. In the background, his family complains of starvation, while the house cat is more capable of taking care of her progeny. *The miserable Lotto Player (Den ulykkelige Lotto-Spiller/ Le malheureux Joyeur de Lotto)*, anonymous copper, n. d. © Royal Danish Library.

After the fall of Struensee in early 1772, the critics were free to place the responsibility for the misfortunes of the lottery: It was all Struensee’s fault. The tyrant had in-

¹⁸⁷ Bruun 1901, 372.

deed fallen – but the lottery continued as before. Several voices tried to persuade the new government to stop the lottery, but it would not give up a good revenue. On the contrary, the government wanted to get its hands on the profit that had hitherto accrued to Koës and the shareholders. On 13 April 1773, the state repurchased the rights to operate the lottery from Koës for an astronomical amount. Koës was awarded a title as Financial Councilor, and thanks to his profit he bought land property and a country estate. For patriotic writers, it was not difficult to spot the reason behind the lottery project: self-interest.

The dystopian ideas about the corruption of gamblers and the downfall of state and nation continued after the fall of Struensee. A pamphlet from 1773 took an economic-patriotic perspective, in which the author claimed that the lottery had deprived thousands of citizens of their welfare and led to suicide, while crafts, production, trade and growth suffered.¹⁸⁸ With the criticism of the lottery, patriots did not respond to delusions and faults of the past. On the contrary, they turned against the delusions and mistakes of a modern age and the consequences for the society in the future. This pamphlet, however, made authorities intervene. Nikolaus Friborg's anonymous piece was one of the first victims of the new restrictions of Press Freedom in the fall of 1773, as it was prohibited by police director Fædder and the Hereditary Prince and subsequently confiscated. Friborg had called lottery profits "blood money", and the State Council did not favor ridicule of its newly-acquired source of revenue. With state ownership, open discussion of the lottery was no longer welcome.¹⁸⁹

The National Debt – Economy and Constitution

Under the government of Frederik V, the national debt had grown from around 2.3 million to almost 18 million rix-dollars, which was the size of the debt in December 1770. State revenue did not correspond to expenditure, although an extra poll tax had been levied since 1762. When Struensee and his associates close to the King dissolved the State Council in December 1770, they set up a new commission called the Secret Conference, the aim of which was to control state finances and reduce the state debt. The conference worked until the month of June 1771, and Struensee requested a written report from each member, among whom new appointees like Gähler and Rantzau.¹⁹⁰

In February 1771, an anonymous publication cut the Gordian knot of national debt. It bore the title: *Report on whether a Descendant in Government is bound to pay*

188 [Nikolaus Friborg], *Til Kongen! Om Tallotteriets onde Følger i de Danske Stater*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1773, 7.

189 The confiscation of Friborg's pamphlet, see Holm 1890–1912, vol. V, 1, 161.

190 Holm 1890–1912, vol. IV.2.1, 159–163.

*the Debt of his Predecessor.*¹⁹¹ Who might be the author? Several guessed Count Rantzau as the responsible, implying that the pamphlet might be a test by the new government to check public opinion on the canceling of debt. Rantzau was a member of the council, but the Report did not stem from the Secret Conference. Behind the pamphlet was Jens Reimert Schumacher who, as administrator of the extra tax, was acutely aware of the debt problems of the government. In his contribution to Press Freedom, he demanded a radical new economic policy.

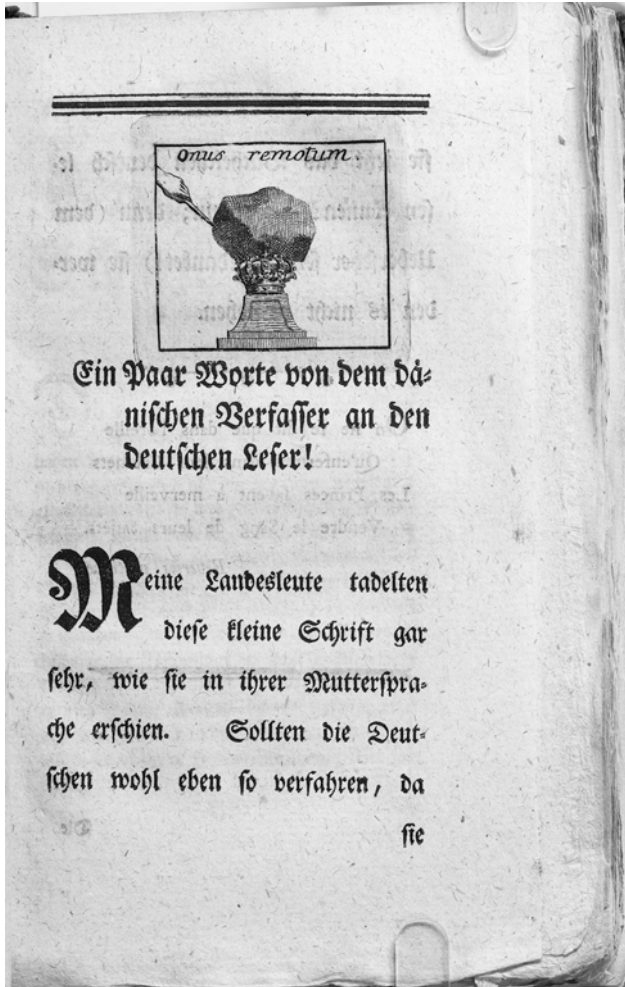


Fig. 19: In the German version of Schumacher's pamphlet against the payment of state debts, the symbolism is hard to miss with the title "Onus remotum" – the burden removed. A divine pen tips a

191 [Jens Reimert Schumacher], *Betænkning hvorvidt en Efterkommere i Regierungen er forbunden at betale sin Formands Giæld*, Copenhagen: Mummes Boglade nr. 5 paa Børsen, 1771 (18 February 1771).

heavy rock away from the crown. The burden – state debt – is being cleared away by Press Freedom. From [Schumacher] *Bedenken wieferne der Nachfolger in der Regierung pflichtig ist die Schulden seines Vorwesers zu bezahlen* © Royal Danish Library.

The basic assumption in the Report was the enlightenment idea that it was the purpose of the state to create happiness for all of the people. That assumption was the reason behind the question in the title. When the people were in fact unhappy and plagued by distress, misery had to be investigated and challenged. When a new regent took up his post in a situation with heavy taxes exhausting the welfare of the monarchy, it would raise the question of debate: “whether that duty extends to a Regent to pay the debt of his ancestors”. The Report described the debt created by the state as the result of the cost of luxury and bad government. A cameralist or mercantilist economic way of thinking was prevalent in Schumacher’s pamphlet: The difference between domestic debt and foreign debt was central to his argument. By the payment of domestic debt, money remained in the country and contributed to the income of the citizens, while money was lost by the payment of a foreign debt.

The loans of the former government had not been necessary to save the state from ruin. Only such a reason could justify raising foreign debt. When the debt was incurred to enrich selfish ministers, to carry out dubious projects or to satisfy bad ambitions, the regent had violated his rights. Schumacher thus concluded that Christian VII had no obligation to pay the national debt because that debt was not legitimate but a result of earlier abuse of power. As the new regent, the King was not bound by the errors of the old government but obliged, instead, to rule for the well of the people. The law of nature set limits to the power a man could exercise, and the regent had to obey the law of nature. It was not the right of the sovereign “to separate the subjects from all that they own, to pledge, sell, or behead them” (15). A king was “entrusted with the most important office in the State, namely, the office of overseeing and governing everything for the common good”. Schumacher intertwined his attack with current political theories of opinion-guided absolutism, which had taken, in Denmark, its distinctive form in Jens Schielderup Sneedorff’s dissertation from the Academy in Sorø: *On civil Government 1757*.¹⁹² Monarchy was the best form of government to secure the common good, that is, if the king took advice from the public.

When Schumacher argued the thesis that the state debt of the old government was not an obligation of the new government, he provocatively proposed that the table should be cleared for a new policy. The second part of the pamphlet consisted of a “Proposal of Means by which the Public Debt can best be Paid”. He reviewed the budget of the government in six points to find possible ways and savings that would help improve the finances of the state. Taxation was a good solution to the payment of domestic debt when the tax was imposed on importation of splendor and luxury.

¹⁹² J. S. Sneedorff, *Om den Borgerlige Regiering*, Sorø, 1757.

The wealthy had to pay the most. Personal income tax was reduced by Schumacher in favor of progressive taxation on the expenditure of the wealthy.

Agrarian reforms and other economic reforms ought to strengthen crafts and manufactures to increase exports and reduce imports. Schumacher proposed that parts of the foreign debt could be ‘imported’ and exchanged for investment and thus become part of domestic economic circulation. Thus, the sharp attack on the abuse of power of the past ended with a brighter political-economic vision for the future.

The reception of the pamphlet was naturally focused on the provocative refusal to pay the national debt. In his review in the *Kritisk Journal*, Jakob Baden at first felt convinced by Schumacher’s pamphlet. But then he felt “a secret unwillingness to give his opinion applause”. If the advice of the pamphlet was followed, Baden feared that it would open the door to autocratic tyranny and arbitrary government. Often-times, a prince did not realize what was in the best interests of the state: “But how often can he, fascinated by a cunning favorite, believe that it is for the good of the State, that which is for its perdition? Is it not to teach a prince what Machiavelli taught him: that he should not keep his word when keeping his word would hurt him?”¹⁹³

Professor of Law at the University of Copenhagen, Peder Kofod Ancher, published an anonymous answer to the anonymous Report, thus emphasizing the importance of the pamphlet in the new public debate. He struck the core of the general political perspective of the debate by asking the question: who can judge whether the king’s use of power is useful or harmful? Kofod Ancher answered himself: an absolute king “is perfectly entitled to use his power to his own will”.¹⁹⁴ It would be dangerous to delegate this power of decision to others. In short: Jacob Baden accused Schumacher’s attack on the old government as being Machiavellian, while Kofod Ancher emphasized and defended the legitimate despotic potential of absolutism. Economic policy was subject to discussion in a situation where the old government had been dissolved and no one knew yet what the new government would bring. In this situation, Ove Guldberg joined the debate. He wrote nothing less than a whole state novel: *Azan, or the Prince freed from Debt*.¹⁹⁵

In this novel, Guldberg created a fictional scene in which he could discuss the economic problems of the monarchy and present his political solution. In Guldberg’s fiction, Azan was a young king who had taken over the throne from his father. By his death, the old King had left Azan a debt that corresponded to the total income of the kingdom for three years. Some of Azan’s advisers discouraged him from paying the debts of his father because he was not personally responsible for the policy of the

¹⁹³ *Kritisk Journal*, 1771, no. 12–13, 96.

¹⁹⁴ [Peder Kofod Ancher], *Erindringer imod den nylig udgivne Betænkning, hvorvidt en Efterkommere i Regjeringen er forbunden at betale sin Formands Giæld*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (22 March 1771), 13.

¹⁹⁵ [Ove Guldberg], *Azan, eller den fra Giæld udfriede Fyrste*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (15 May 1771).

late King. The situation required the summoning of an assembly. At the gathering, a representative of the people expressed the view from Schumacher's pamphlet in the novel: the new King was not bound by his father's debts. The popular representative believed that the people had the right to refuse to pay a devastating debt and thus set a limit to the despotism and abuse of power of the absolute monarchy. Faced with this position at the council, a representative of the King articulated the political theory of absolutism: the people had transferred unrestricted powers to the King, as enshrined in the constitution [*Lex Regia*, the Royal Law]. The King had the right of the people over the people. People and Prince had incurred the debt together, and although it was the result of failed policies, the people had to accept it. The old King was dead, but the people and the royal power were immortal. The new King was the head of the people who thus had to accept payment of their national debt.

In the novel, the representative of the people bowed to the political theory of absolute monarchy. In his fiction, Guldberg admitted the Press Freedom debate on state debt to be useful for political discussion: the spokesman of the people had the possibility to make clear his criticism but during the debate, he had to realize the necessity of paying the national debt.

Schumacher's discussion of the national debt and Guldberg's state novel contained an echo of the enlightened environment that had been established at the Academy in Sorø in the middle of the eighteenth century. Jens Schiølerup Sneedorff had been the central representative of the reception of European enlightenment at the Academy. At the centenary of absolute monarchy in 1760, he said that he belonged to "the only people who have given themselves unrestricted monarchs", but in return, "our unrestricted monarch had made all the people his advisors".¹⁹⁶ This notion of an absolutism based in public opinion was now tested by Press Freedom. Ove Guldberg, also formerly at the Academy of Sorø, judged that public opinion was important, whatever he might think of its claims. He strove with great energy to influence the formation of the public opinion with his anonymous contributions to debates during Press Freedom – until he himself became a leading force in its abolishment after the 1772 coup.

Perspectives of Political Economics

The economic debate during Press Freedom was, first and foremost, a sharp political break with what had been allowed to discuss in the past. From an economic theoretical perspective, the debate was based mostly on established economic thinking,

¹⁹⁶ Jens Schiølerup Sneedorff, *Samtlige Skrifter*, 1775–1777, VII, 504.

with German *Camerawissenschaft*, led by Johann Gottlob von Justi, as the most important inspiration.¹⁹⁷

During the Press Freedom Period, the economic debate inevitably led to discussions about legislation and good government. The discussion of national debt quickly became an inquiry into the form of government, natural law, and political reform. The discussion of the corvée and the conditions of the peasants led to demands for civil liberty. Questions about the lottery sparked a discussion about morality and civilization. The liberty of economic issues to be publicly explored, in short, triggered political perspectives that soon came to overshadow economy itself.

The primary economic debate of Press Freedom, to sum up, took place between Jakob Christian Bie, Ove Guldberg, and Christian Martfelt. It was complemented by the discussion between O. D. Lütken and G. C. Oeder. In economic discussions, they met no competition. In the spring of 1771, the printer Thiele had attempted to launch a journal, *Den danske Oeconomus* – The Danish Economist – in the wake of the Philopatris debate.¹⁹⁸ The articles were anonymously authored by one “E.” and discussed high prices, distillation and liquor trade, guilds and poorhouses, though without adding much new to the debate. The book-printer gave up, and the unknown author E. handed over his second volume to another book-printer, but without success.

Christian Martfelt summarized and concluded the debate initiated by Bie and Guldberg. He created his own original version of what he called cameral science, or “political mechanics”. In the conclusion of his ‘Plan for the Trade’, he explained that the plan should govern the state as an economic machine in which “Politics is the Great Wheel, and the Regent, or his wise Laws, is the Driving Wheel”. Martfelt defined politics as the science to make proportional all the physical and moral parts of the state in order to achieve “the greatest relative advantages of most citizens in the state and see them and the state in safe possession of a good fortune”.¹⁹⁹

As mentioned, Martfelt had gained practical and theoretical experience on his travels in Holland and England. But his writings reveal few traces of the new current of French economic thinking that was reaching Denmark during the Press Freedom Period. Knowledge of the French economists who later became known as the Physiocrats spread only slowly in Europe along with the spread of the great *Encyclopédie* through the 1760 and 1770s. So, in 1772, the “economistes” were presented in Copenhagen by the Swiss printer and booktrader Claude Philibert. He was the editor of the francophone Copenhagen magazine *Choix de nouveaux opuscules* which was to reap

197 J. G. von Justi, 1755. During his time in Copenhagen von Justi published: *Vollständige Abhandlung von denen Manufacturen und Fabriken*, 1–2, Copenhagen and Leipzig 1758–61, followed by *Gesammelte Politische und Finanzschriften*, 1–3, Copenhagen and Leipzig 1761–1764.

198 *Den danske Oeconomus*, 1–2, Copenhagen, 1771.

199 [Christian Martfelt], *Philocosmi Betænkninger*, 430–431.

the fruits of Press Freedom.²⁰⁰ He published the large article *Les Moyens d'arreter la misère publique* – on the means to stop public misery – in his magazine in August 1772.²⁰¹ The author was the German economist Johann August Schlettwein, who also introduced French physiocratism in the German states with this article, printed in Frankfurt and Karlsruhe the same year.²⁰² The version from Karlsruhe was reprinted by Philibert, and the subscribers, comprising court officials, civil servants and the Copenhagen bourgeoisie, could read here about the commodity-producing peasants as “la classe productive”, who with the “produit net” laid the foundation for prosperity against the ruling misery of “la classe sterile”. According to Schlettwein, the current economic crisis would create “les révolutions les plus éclatantes dans la politique”, if economic policy was not changed.

Philibert’s French magazine did not stand alone. The new, radical economic theory was presented in a Danish translation by the German physician – and one of Struensee’s friends from Altona – Johann Albert Heinrich Reimarus with his paper on *Die wichtige Frage von der freyen Aus und Einfuhr des Getreides*, the important question as to the free im- and export of grains.²⁰³ It was published in Danish in Copenhagen in August 1772 with free trade as the central message and François Quesnay as its key source. Thus, during the latter part of Press Freedom, breaking news in economic theories were presented in Denmark. The history of the effects of this new economics, however, belongs to the period after Press Freedom.

200 *Choix de nouveaux opuscules, sur toutes des sujets intéressantes & amusans; par une société danoise*, 1–5, Copenhagen, 1771–72. The list of subscribers – including Struensee – see volume 1, xiii–xviii.

201 *Choix*, V, 1772, 17–71.

202 Tribe 1988, 127.

203 J. H. A. Reimarus, *Det vigtige Spørsmaal om Kornets frie Ud- og Indførsel, undersøgt efter Naturen og Historien*, Translated by P. T. W[andall], Copenhagen: F. C. Godiche, 1772 (14 February 1772).

6 Church and Religion in a Free Public Sphere

New Anti-Clerical Strategies

Until Press Freedom was declared on 14 September 1770, censorship was administered by the Academic Council of the University of Copenhagen, at the time the sole university of Denmark-Norway.²⁰⁴ Control over publications thus fell to the learned society, incarnated in the University Council. Faculty structure of the university still adhered to the traditional ranking with theology as the leading faculty, followed by law, medicine, and philosophy, in that order. Thus, theology professors at the university were the leading figures in the Council processing manuscripts for publication. They ensured the Church's firm if indirect control of the public sphere, and central state institutions like the two Chancelleries, Danish and German, respectively, also followed theological advice when prosecuting offenders of the restrictions on publication, as was evident in the Georg Schade case of 1761. Schade had published a huge deist treatise on reincarnation in Altona, which was condemned by city authorities in the independent twin city of Hamburg, when Schade tried to market his book there. The city council of Hamburg also reported the case to the Danish authorities in Copenhagen. They reacted by ordering the arrest of Schade in Altona and banishing him for life to the tiny islet of Christiansø in the Baltic Sea south of Sweden. This took place by decree from the government in Copenhagen, without a court case, and Schade remained banished years later when Press Freedom was announced, even if his punishment had been reduced to confinement on the larger island of Bornholm.²⁰⁵

Press Freedom, however, suddenly introduced hitherto unknown possibilities for discussing religious ideas and institutions in the open. This did not, however, imply that Freedom of Religion was introduced. The state Lutheran church practiced forced infant baptism for all new-born subjects (all the way up to the democratic constitution of 1849), with small exemptions for Jewish and Huguenot minorities in Copenhagen and a few other larger towns. The century before had seen strong state campaigns against so-called Crypto-Calvinism and Crypto-Catholicism in the realm, and practice of Catholicism in particular was considered a severe heresy with punishments all the way up to execution.²⁰⁶

But all of a sudden, with Press Freedom many issues of clergy, church and religion could be discussed openly. Luxdorph himself contended that only one single

204 There was a university in Kiel since 1665, but that belonged to the Gottorp parts of Holstein, ruled by Holstein dukes, and not part of the Danish king's realm. It only became part of Danish Holstein in 1773.

205 See Georg Schade, *Die unwandelbare und ewige Religion*, Stuttgart: 1999 (1760). On the Schade case, see Mulsov 1998. See also Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2016, 128 on.

206 See Lausten 2004; Rian 2014, 363 on, 370 on.

anti-religious pamphlet against Lutheran dogma really appeared during the Press Freedom period, even if it had been, Luxdorph claims, the intention of the Struensee government to encourage such criticism. The one piece of anti-religious writing to which Luxdorph referred was the Holsatian Count von Schmettau's series of *Blätter* (Leaves or Pages) a conclusion later echoed by the influential nineteenth-century theologian and poet N. F. S. Grundtvig. Here, however, it is important to emphasize that direct attack on theological dogma like von Schmettau's was far from the only new way of challenging and discussing state Lutheranism and its church in Press Freedom Writings. A number of other important factors pertaining to church and religion were activated, such as the distinction between forced belief vs. freedom of religion. The state church had, ever since the 1536 Danish Reformation, striven to shape or even force the belief of the king's subjects by a series of different means,²⁰⁷ which is why claims for freedom of faith would immediately constitute attacks on the privileged position of the Lutheran state church, if not necessarily attacking Lutheran dogma directly.

A related distinction is that between the state church and its dogma on the one hand and marginal, Christian sectarians, dissidents, and heretics of different sorts on the other hand. Recently, radical pietists had constituted a challenge to the Danish state church, as did other sorts of enthusiasts and mystics, such as the Herrnhut sectarians. Finally, all such sorts of skepticism or criticism against the state church and its dogma and position could find articulation also through much more delimited or precise attacks on selected aspects of the church: particular dogma, individual clerics, institutional details of church organization, etc. It may be hard to discern when such a piece of particular criticism is really intended as focusing on an explicit detail or whether it is rather intended to be read, implicitly, as a metonymy for larger and more sweeping complaints or challenges of church and religion in general. Indeed, Christian defenses against Press Freedom Writings of this sort often plays out exactly this argument: that a criticism of some clerical detail must be suspected of being really a masked and dangerous attack on church and religion as such, if not an outright outburst of atheism. All of these anti-clerical strategies mentioned can be found at work in the Press Freedom Writings.

Philopatreas' Attack on the Clergy and its Incomes

A strong example of a precise criticism which came to be interpreted as a broader attack can be found in the very first large debate of the Press Freedom Period, the above-mentioned *Philopatreas* debate. "Philopatreas" (Greek: Lover of the Father-

²⁰⁷ Including forced infant baptism, confirmation as the prerequisite for legal rights to own property, etc., examination in the catechism as prerequisite to confirmation, forced church attendance, forced participation in the Eucharist, etc.

land) was the pseudonym chosen by the already well-known if not infamous writer, the Norwegian Jacob Christian Bie.²⁰⁸ The three remarks of his *Philopatreas* pamphlet targeted the nobility for keeping flour prices too high, the lawyers for artificially dragging out processes to drive up salaries, and finally the clergy for earning too much. The priests ought to have a fixed salary only, *Philopatreas* claimed. They should stop burdening the poor with extra payments for weddings and funerals and all the other official tasks properly belonging to their office. This concrete proposal for a change in the structure of pastoral duties, Bie accompanied by a massive attack on the clerical estate. Maybe the clergy should not be poor, such as the disciples of Jesus had been, but it should be possible for Danish priests to fulfil their duties without being dressed in silk and without the personal possession of horses, carriages, and lackeys. Some priests, he added, were no better than usurers with their speculation in interest:

It is not said that a Priest shall live in extravagance: our tables teach us far otherwise. The disciples of our Lord were poor, were meek, were diligent; their successors ought to be also. [...] Affluence begets indolence, a desire of pleasures, and oftentimes pride; [...] The revenues of the clergy are too great a drawback on the publick increase [...]. Would all the Jews, who are the agents for the priests of market-towns, but speak the truth, we should then come to know many usurers in holy orders.²⁰⁹

The number of priests should be diminished, and “were the revenues of the Clergy but docked a little, assuredly we should find more learned, though fewer double-chin’ed Priests”.²¹⁰ Finally, Bie attacked the clerical robe. Did this sophisticated dress code not taste too much of Catholicism? What if the Lutheran clergy dressed more modestly, like the Reformed priests?

Bie did not hesitate to parodically answer his own proposals in a new pamphlet under the opposite pen name of “Anti-*Philopatreas*”, now ironically defending the economic status of the clergy. Did not the priests deserve rewards, did they not deserve to grow like fattening calves? Simultaneously, he continued *Philopatreas*’ argument in a new pamphlet with new attacks on trade, on the military, on witnesses and on the sciences – and finally, he decided to leave the debate by declaring all his pamphlets for mere jokes.²¹¹ This, however, didn’t stop the debate Bie had ignited, and the issue of the clergy and its income which he had raised, proved to be the most combustible of all.

208 [J. C. Bie], *Philopatreas trendte Anmærkninger*.

209 Quoted from the English version of *Philopatreas trendte Anmærkninger*, 18.

210 Quoted from the English version of *Philopatreas trendte Anmærkninger*, 20.

211 [J. C. Bie], *Anti-Philopatreas trendte Anmærkninger* 1. *Om de dyre Tider og Handelens Svaghed*, 2. *Om Rettergang*, 3. *Om Geistlighedens Indkomster*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1770 (24 December 1770). [J. C. Bie], *Philopatreas første Fortsættelse, indeholdende fire Anmærkninger*. 1. *Om handelen*. 2. *Om Krigsstanden*. 3. *Om Tingsvidners Førelse*. 4. *Om Videnskabernes Opkomst*, Copenhagen: J. G. Rothes forlag/Børsen. 11 January 1771. [J. C. Bie], *Philopatreas alvorlige Palinodie*.

Among his critics was the theologian Ove Guldberg, house teacher and soon Cabinet Secretary at Queen Dowager Juliana Maria's small court. We heard about how he published several pamphlets under the name of "Philodanus" (Lover of Denmark), and in his second booklet, he defended the clergy as seen from the viewpoint of its utility for the state.²¹² As a theologian, Guldberg supported a cautious version of theological rationalism, but surprisingly, his defense of the clergy was political and social, rather than theological. State officials, in general, should be there in order to improve and maintain state security, happiness, and honor. No state could exist at all without religion, Guldberg contended, and he challenged freethinkers to name but one state without religion and morality which had not perished. That was the reason why the Reformation King Christian III had originally decided to give the clergy their present status as an estate of state officials, useful and never stubborn, never deviant or dangerous for the state, according to Guldberg. It was a wise political move to make the clergy a part of the state, he claimed. Simultaneously, priests were given farms to cultivate in order to make them role models for the peasants to emulate.

Guldberg's utility argument on behalf of the clergy was presented calmly and reasonably, but other debaters proved more aggressive. The anonymous F***g (probably the industrialist P. A. Pflueg) had a fit of rage exactly when it came to Philopatreas' treatment of the clergy.²¹³ When Bie attacked priests for becoming capitalists by means of their six-monthly tithe payments and even for being usurers employing Jews as middlemen, F***g found that such a claim called for police action against Bie. This, in turn, prompted editor of the literary periodical *Kritisk Journal* Jacob Baden to try to calm down F***g: Press Freedom should be maintained, and instead of threatening other authors with the police, one should muster serious arguments against contested claims and contribute to the dissolution of prejudices, which would, in the end, also be to the benefit of priests. In Baden's view, the utility of the clergy was primarily to be found in their function as the state's overseers and monitors of congregations, to remind subjects of their obligations, and to keep possible sedition in reins. The theologian F. C. Scheffer added that the central role of priests in any republic must be the dissemination of virtue in the population and he went on to paint the typical priest in colors completely opposite to those of Bie: a dutiful, hardworking official refusing to indulge in secular interests.²¹⁴ Other theological critics of Bie played the more aggressive atheistic card: his real intention behind Philopatreas was really not church policies at all, but to demonstrate and spread his own indifference to religion.

212 [O. Guldberg], *Philodani Undersøgelse af Philopatreas Anmærkninger. I. Om Rettergangen. II. Om Geistlighedens Indkomster. Ildet og sidste Hefte*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (7 January 1771).

213 [F. A. Pflueg], *Om Philopatreas trende Anmærkninger. I et Brev til en Høi Herre fra F***g*, Copenhagen: H. J. Graae, 1770 (24 December 1770).

214 F. C. Scheffer, *Tanker om Geistligheden i en Stat. Ved Fr. Chr. Scheffer*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterleverske, 1771 (18 March 1771).

All in all, Bie had concentrated his criticism on the salary of the clergy, but discussion quickly broadened to the social utility of the clergy. Simultaneously, rumors began to spread that Bie's publishing activity was really a harbinger for anticlerical political initiatives from the new, supposedly anticlerical or even atheist government. It had already canceled a number of Christian holidays – what would be next, a reform of tithes payments? Was *Philopatreias* a probe to test whether other social groups would be ready to step up to protect the clergy if such a reform was introduced? Bie's proposal of a fixed salary, in any case, was increasingly taken serious by pamphleteers like Laurids Jæger and Baden who argued that such an idea might contribute to mitigate the large differences of priestly income in rich and poor church congregations and to emancipate priests from agricultural labor.²¹⁵ Others, such as J. A. Dyssel, claimed that such a new structure would completely reduce the clergy to beggars and would destroy their important role as agricultural trendsetters spreading inspiration of new cultivation methods.²¹⁶ This debate continued all through the golden year of Press Freedom 1771.

Those debaters, however, who attacked *Philopatreias* for using the clergy's salary as a mere pretext for a broader attack on church and religion as a whole, may have been aware that a court case was being prepared against Bie exactly during his time as an active pamphleteer in the winter of 1770 to 1771. A couple of months before Press Freedom, Bie had given a sermon in the village church of Hvidovre outside of Copenhagen on 6 July 1769. The local dean and schoolmaster had allowed Bie to preach on the Song of Solomon 3.1. "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth, but I found him not". On the surface, Bie gave a correct sermon, but the version found in State Council Minister Otto Thott's papers makes it possible to read the sermon as both comic and frivolous.²¹⁷ Based on Luther's comparison between the relation of Christ to his church and the relation of a groom to his bride, Bie had compared the two sacraments of the church with the bride's two breasts, and unsubstantiated rumors had it that he had continued to initiate prayers for a number of named prostitutes from Copenhagen. In any case, during the summer of 1771, the verdict fell, and Bie was sentenced to no less than six years of imprisonment. Later, the sentence was prolonged to life after the addition of another case concerning a practical joke with the bookprinter Thiele in which Bie had copied the King's signature in a mock privilege. It is hard not to get the suspicion that such severe punish-

215 The first of Jæger's many anonymous pamphlets: *Et kritisk Brev til Philopatreias, om Geistlighedens Indkomster, i Anledning af hans Tredie Anmærkning. [...] Fra Philodaneias*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (8 February 1771); Baden, *Svar til Philopatreia angaaende de Geistliges Indkomster, af Philalethes*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (11 January 1771).

216 J. A. Dyssel, *Pro Memoria til Philopatreias fra Mag. Johann Arnd Dyssel. Den Kongelige nye Opfostrings-Stiftelse til Bedste. Sandby i Lolland d. 5. Jan. 1771*, Copenhagen: A. H. Godiches Efterleverske, 1771 (23 January 1771).

217 Bie's sermon in the church of Hvidovre, 6 July 1769, Royal Library: Thott Collection, 410, quarto.

ments for what appear to be little more than two rude jokes also served as a public condemnation of Bie's ignition of the Philopatreas debate and the novel, open debate about priests and their salaries which inevitably spread to the much more delicate question of the overall utility of clergy and church as such.

Count von Schmettau's Deism and the Case against Him

More theologically informed criticism of the Lutheran state church also appeared during Press Freedom. The Holsatian Count Woldemar von Schmettau had been a central figure in the top of the Danish-Norwegian army in the 1760s but had resigned as chief commandant of Norway in 1767 after disagreements with the Danish Chancellery and the French army chief Saint-Germain and his ambitious military reform plans. Withdrawn to his estate in Plön in hilly Eastern Holstein, Schmettau devoted his retirement to sophisticating his knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebraic in order to be able to attack the priesthood on their own scholarly turf. He had observed that a standard defense line of theologians against criticism was to ridicule the attacker's lack of linguistic knowledge, arguably barring the attacker from really understanding sublime theological detail. Clearly encouraged by the declaration of Press Freedom, Schmettau laid out, in a series of five issues of his periodical *Blätter (Leaves written for the Love of Truth)* during 1771, his severe attacks not only on a host of contemporary theologians and their Bible interpretation, but also on the Bible text itself.²¹⁸ He considered Scripture full of contradictions, inconsistencies, odd details, and human inventions, and he chastised theologians for trying to hide such errors behind far-fetched interpretations. Against this, he demanded freedom of research in the theological faculties. Theologians should, like scholars in other fields, be prepared to accept the liberty to investigate religious matters apart from any pre-given list of dogmas. For instance, referring to the saying that "Ezekiel's sandwiches are not the most tasty", Schmettau attacked a number of theological interpretations of Ezekiel 4.12, in which the Lord imposes, via the sayings of the prophet, the Israelites to eat nothing but bread prepared with human excrement during the 390 days when they await the fall of Jerusalem.²¹⁹ Schmettau discusses a number of theological attempts to explain away this unappetizing story – in Michaëlis, T. C. Lilienthal, F. C. Lange, Gottfried Less, P. A. Boysen, etc. – by saying, for example, that human excrement is just a metaphor for ill-tasting barley-cakes, or that the bread itself should not contain excrement but just be baked on a fire from dried human dung, etc. Argu-

²¹⁸ [Woldemar von Schmettau], *Blätter, aus Liebe zur Wahrheit geschrieben*, 1–5 (Nos. 1–3, Plön: Werth; Nos. 4–5, Lübeck, no printer indicated).

²¹⁹ Ezekiel 4.12 was a standard discussion point in the Enlightenment and had been ridiculed by Voltaire among others. Schmettau was evidently an admirer of Voltaire, and it seems probable he got the idea from him.

ing that Hebraic “baking” etymologically means “kneading a substance”, Schmettau finds that Ezekiel really demanded the Israelites to mix human excrement into the dough of their bread and that the twisted explanations of the theologians thus deviate from their Lutheran obligation to stay true to Scripture.



Fig. 20: The most thorough critique of State Church Lutheranism during Press Freedom was probably the Holsatian General Count Schmettau whose pamphlets, however, were hardly for sale in Copenhagen, rather being printed for private distribution in Holstein and the North of Germany. This did not prevent the government from prohibiting Schmettau’s publications because of their natural religion and deist claims that both the Bible and its protestant interpreters were ripe with superstition. *W. H. von Schmettau*, painting by Peder Als, 1766–67. © Akademiraadet, The Royal Academy of Arts, Copenhagen, photo: Frida Gregersen.

Schmettau’s point is not to seriously claim his own interpretation as the truth about what happened outside of Jerusalem, rather to illustrate the far-fetched nature of theological beating around the bush, and his arguments are hard to read without sensing the bubbling of an underlying irony on Schmettau’s part. In five consecutive issues of his *Blätter*, he went on further to the New Testament, attacking again a series of inconsistencies and pointing to the then provocative fact that the four Evangelists were not eyewitnesses and wrote their accounts long after the events. Schmettau goes directly into the core of Christian belief when he observes that the Bible offers no proof that resurrection really took place. There were no witnesses, nobody touched the allegedly resurrected person, and the most reasonable explana-

tion is that the resurrected Christ was but a phantasy projection on part of his believers. Schmettau himself seems to have been a sort of deist, believing in a natural god without incarnation in Christ, seemingly inspired by the British Deists, particularly Anthony Collins.²²⁰ Real, divine revelation to Schmettau consists in two things only: reason and creation. They are the two holy gifts from Schmettau's god which are at the disposal of humans. Those who demand miracles in order to believe are like kids who prefer toys to the real thing. The core of the New Testament is really moral wisdom stolen from ancient Greek philosophers, and the main purpose of religion should be to inculcate, in believers, ideas of how to live a good and moral worldly life: by admitting that the happiness of our fellow man is as important as our own, and that all rational beings should strive in common for the public good. Schmettau's line of argument seems to be inspired by Spinoza's *Tractatus* which followed the same trajectory: bible criticism, rejection of miracles ending in a social-utility theory of religion.²²¹

In the course of these Enlightenment deist developments, Schmettau had claimed, in his *Blätter* no. 3, that the narratives of Joseph, Maria, and the angel Gabriel in the New Testament were but a series of novels, that is, that immaculate conception was another mythical story. It was just some intelligent Jew who had let his poetic imagination run wild based on the single Old Testament saying "Behold, a virgin has conceived" (Isaiah 7.14). That proposition of Schmettau's caught the eye of Superintendent (that is, Bishop) Adam Struensee of Rendsburg when he traveled his diocese for inspection during the summer 1771, and he filed a complaint December 1st over the first three issues of the *Blätter*. This holds the special irony that Adam was none other than the father of J. F. Struensee, at the same time approaching the end of his short and intense rule in the royal Cabinet in Copenhagen. So, Adam effectively set out to fight his own son's Press Freedom legislation by opening a legal case against Schmettau's *Blätter*.²²² This had the immediate effect that further publication was prohibited, and Schmettau had to move the printing of the remaining two issues of *Blätter* from Plön to Lübeck, outside of the reach of Danish authorities. Even then, no. 5 of the series ends abruptly, and it is clear from typesetting that Schmettau's plan had been to continue the series with a no. 6 and probably even fur-

220 Schmettau names, in the passing, a handful of freethinker inspirators, such as Fontenelle, Shaftesbury, Voltaire, Edelmann, Helvétius, and Anthony Collins. The latter assumed the nickname of "freethinker" and was, among the early eighteenth-century British deists (Blount, Tindal, Toland, etc.), the most cited in the Press Freedom period.

221 Spinoza: *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Hamburg [really Amsterdam] 1670

222 This was made possible by the restrictions on Free Speech introduced by the Struensee government 7 October 1771 because of provocative September pamphlets (see Chapter 9). The restrictions did not mention protection of religion against Press Freedom but rather focused upon libel and pasquils, but it remained unclear how much of Press legislations of the Danish 1683 Law was now reactivated, so Adam Struensee and the administration may initially have taken it as a test case of where the new limits were. Quickly, of course, political developments strengthened the case after the coup of 17 January 1772.

ther. No. 6 never saw daylight, however, maybe because of the considerable legal struggle into which Schmettau now found himself thrown. The case would last almost two years and was only settled in the spring of 1773. Authorities quickly realized that von Schmettau had also organized local prints of translations of Voltaire and a pamphlet on the Swiss mystic Martin Zadek, so suddenly they found themselves on the trail of a whole current of dangerous, illegal, freethinking material.²²³

In the meantime, it is astonishing to follow the byzantine network of clerical, legal, and governmental institutions involved in the attempt to punish von Schmettau from late 1771 and into 1773: the local Dean Quirinus Capsius in Plön, Superintendent Struensee in Rendsburg, the Konsistorium of Plön (a clerical court), the superior Konsistorium in Glückstadt, plus central Copenhagen authorities: the German Chancellery responsible for the Sleswick-Holstein duchies, the State Council, and the military leadership, the Generality.²²⁴ Briefly after the opening of the case, the Struensee government was overthrown in Copenhagen, and the intense activity in the case seemed to be further fueled by the new coup government's hesitation against or even dislike of Press Freedom. Resolutions, decisions, orders, and fines flew back and forth between these many instances, attempting to force Schmettau to admit guilt and accept the payment of a fine. During these drawn-out exchanges, legal threats grew from fines to large fines to the mentioning of severe possibilities like punishment for blasphemy, which would involve execution with torture. As Counts Struensee and Brandt suffered a similar punishment in April 1772 during this maze of legal argumentation, this would have served to underline the potential gravity of the matter to Count Schmettau.

Von Schmettau, however, proved a hard, self-confident, and well-argued opponent, sharp-witted and very conscious of his legal rights. The bookprinter Werth in Plön had only witnessed that he received the manuscripts from Schmettau, not that he was their actual author who consequently remained unknown. Schmettau had never offered the writings for sale in public, so they had never been published, alleging they were printed for his own private distribution only. The first issues of the *Blätter*, which Adam Struensee found in Plön, had been printed before the restrictions of Press Freedom 7 October 1771 (valid in the Duchies of Sleswick-Holstein from 18 October) so they were not covered by actual legislation. Schmettau belonged, as a general, under a military court, not a clerical court, and even apart from that, a clerical body like the Konsistorium had no right to process any secular cases but marriage issues. German states allowed for the publication of writings dis-

223 [Woldemar von Schmettau], *Orthodoxer höchsterbaulicher theologischer Beweis von der Gewiss zu erwartenden Erfüllung der wichtigen Weissagung des neuen Schweitzerischen kleinen Propheten Martin Zadeck*, Bergedorf, no printer indicated, 1770; [F. de Voltaire:] *Predigt der Pastor Bourn am Pfingst-Feste gehalten zu London 1768*, no place, printer nor year indicated; [F. de Voltaire:], *Rede des Preussischen Majors von Kayserling an die Katholischen Konföderirten zu Kaminiéz gehalten 1768. Aus dem Polnischen*, no place, printer nor year indicated.

224 The von Schmettau case, see Nyerup (ed.) 1791, 49–86; Birkner 2006.

cussing religion, then why not a Denmark with Press Freedom? If the law, as claimed by authorities, aimed to protect religion against attacks, then why did it not protect Schmettau's natural religion? The various state instances, so he claimed, played a double role of prosecutors and judges and thus did not offer any sort of fair process. The government had preempted the final decision by curtailing Schmettau's military state pension paid from Copenhagen, which he claimed they had no right to do, and he required his money back.

This intricate communication war between Schmettau's barrage of complaints and answers from the many different official instances involved lasted all through 1772, and only in the spring of 1773, the Danish and Holsatian authorities seemed to tire out. Schmettau's writings remained confiscated and prohibited, but any proper legal punishment of the general proved more difficult than expected. What is more, around the turn of the year 1772 to 1773, the post-coup government in Copenhagen had made its last efforts to reinstate pre-print censorship, and seemingly gave it up, probably because they observed that the current of Press Freedom Writings was dwindling anyway (see Chapter 14). The decisive argument for closing the Schmettau issue without a formal court case, however, seems to have been a wish to end the protracted process without arousing the public: by passing a verdict on von Schmettau, however well-deserved, the post-coup government would risk a public outcry and, on top of that, the danger that the court case would function as a virtual marketing campaign for Schmettau's writings in Copenhagen. Thus, it was considered, in the end, safer to let sleeping dogs lie. Colonel Köller of the army leadership, himself part of the coup group, seems to have influenced final government decisions in the case and let a little bird tell von Schmettau that he was off the hook. Von Schmettau now was free to pursue his exploration of deism, and he went on to acquire quite a reputation as a leading freethinker in the North German states during the 1770s and 1780s. Thus, he continued to write about natural theology, education, pedagogy, the emancipation of Jews, etc., publishing, among other things, a new series of writings called *Auch Fragmente* in Danish Altona between 1782 and 1784, referring to the "Fragmentenstreit" resulting from Lessing's controversial publications of fragments by the deceased theologian and freethinker Samuel Reimarus' secret deist writings. If anything, the protracted case against von Schmettau served to further ignite his desire to publish.

Even if Luxdorff took an intense interest in the Schmettau case (he possessed his own, heavily annotated copy of the *Blätter* and left a detailed account of the trajectory of the case against him), he did not include the *Blätter* in his collection of Press Freedom Writings. This probably indicates they were not circulating in Copenhagen; they were probably never sold anywhere, and apart from possible private correspondents among Schmettau's friends in Copenhagen, they did not influence the new public sphere at the time rapidly developing in Copenhagen. They indicate, however, the new limits to free speech which the post-coup government struggled to impose from 1772.

Does Hell Exist – and If So, How Long Does It Last?

Schmettau, however, was far from the only manifestation of Enlightenment deism in the Press Freedom period. In the Sermon Campaign after the 1772 coup (see Chapter 10) we find clerical warnings against deists lurking around in Copenhagen, and the busy pamphleteer Martin Brun displayed a strong fascination with deist and especially atheist viewpoints, indicating he was encountering such ideas among his fellow students in the Latin Quarter of central Copenhagen (see below).

A small feud – played out in bulky pamphlets – explicitly addressed deism in the new public sphere. In September 1771, a large, anonymous pamphlet appeared under the Danish title *The Doctrine of the Eternity of Hell subjected to Scrutiny, and its Terrible Implications proved by a Self-Thinker. Reflections on the Doctrine of Original Sin*.²²⁵ It is a thorough, learned, and logically constructed text contributing to an old, heretic discussion of whether Hell exists, and, if it does, whether the punishment of sinners there will be eternal or not. The pseudonym “A Self-Thinker” directly announces the unknown author as a freethinker.

Already the church father Origen had seen a problem in the tension between a benevolent and omniscient God and eternal punishment in Hell, which the majority of human beings was poised to suffer. In the seventeenth century, Leibniz and J. M. van Helmont had taken up discussion of the status of Hell, and in Holland, the very existence of Hell had been hotly debated ever since Balthasar Bekker and Frederik van Leenhoff voiced skepticism around 1700.²²⁶ In the Danish-Norwegian realm, the radical pietist Johann Konrad Dippel had claimed that Hell is an internal condition of the sinner rather than damnation to a certain locality.²²⁷ Such issues had not possible to debate openly in authoritarian Denmark, but in the Press Freedom Period those discussions sprung up. The basic argument of the Self-Thinker asks: what is the purpose of God’s activities? That purpose cannot be found in lifeless nature, but also not in God’s own honor, for in that case he would be dependent upon the appreciation of his creations, he would be a mere “being thirsty after vain recognition”. So, living creatures like ourselves are the only possible purpose of creation. And this purpose only succeeds if the life of those creatures holds more pleasant than unpleasant moments. Again and again, through the history of Christianity, however, human beings have fallen from their high destiny, even after the Flood, even after the appearance of Christ, even after the Reformation, even after the discovery of America which was just a pretext for the alleged Christians to commit a bloodbath

²²⁵ [anonymous], *Den lære om Helvedes Evighed prøvet, og dens skræksomme Følger viste af en Selvtænkende. Betænkning over den Lære om Arvesynden*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (6 September 1771).

²²⁶ Cf Israel 2001, 380–82; 411–413.

²²⁷ Dippel had been banished for life to Bornholm in 1719 but escaped after international pressure seven years later, see Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2016, 135 on.

on the natives. The author paints a somber and sad historical fate of Christendom, leading to the deist conclusion:

No, I do not think that virtue is tied to any country, just like eternal bliss should not be available for adherents of any single belief system alone, but I am much more completely convinced that everybody who will, can be virtuous, and that every virtuous person may hope for a blessed eternity. I only conclude that which I rightly believe to conclude, namely that as sins and delusions have, in the essential truths of natural religion, always prevailed over virtue and truth, or as the number of virtuous has always been lower than that of the sinners, then the number of blessed must be just as much less than that of the damned. (12)

But if that is the case, the amount of suffering in Hell by far surpasses the sum of bliss in Heaven, and this goes against the claimed purpose of creation.²²⁸ Atheists, at least, may console themselves by looking forward to the end of suffering in death, but believers face suffering in this life as well as a high probability of suffering in the next life. But if God is indeed almighty, why could he not convert and save the sinners even *after* death? Eternal Hell as we are taught about it, is not a proportional punishment for sins. The Self-Thinker is implicitly arguing from a proportionality conception of punishment, such as Cesare Beccaria had argued in his 1764 Enlightenment classic *Dei Delitti et delle Pene*.²²⁹ Thus, the word “eternal” in the Bible must rather mean “perfect”, the Self-Thinker concludes – God has measured a perfect, proportional, finite punishment suitable for the finite sins of each person in this life. Consequently, punishment in Hell must be finite. It must end at some point.

After this deconstruction of Eternal Hell, the Self-Thinker continues to the doctrine of Original Sin. If humans are really created evil, how could they, in divine punishment, be made responsible for sins committed? It is rather the weak intelligence of humans, given to them by God, which is responsible for sin. Human drives and tendencies have their base in sensuous presentations which, in themselves, are good but may be corrupted by education, bad examples, voluptuousness, or poverty. Love to oneself is, taken in isolation, good. But it must be tempered by sympathy for the happy or unhappy destiny of our fellow man. Thus, human beings are not, as the doctrine of Original Sin argues, completely corrupted from the outset, but may themselves take a long step in the direction of virtue, even if revelation is there to help it further on the way. From an orthodox Lutheran viewpoint, such claims would constitute the dreadful heresy of semi-Pelagianism, claiming that the individual had the ability to contribute to salvation. The Self-Thinker thus goes against the problematic doctrines of predestination in most Protestantism: it is not God’s pre-decision who shall be saved, and neither Original Sin in creation nor the Eternity of Hell after the last judgment are ultimate destinies of man.

228 Such a conclusion would actually follow from Luther’s idea that the fraction of believers to be saved is small, a tenth or maybe a thousandth, while the vast majority is evil and must go to Hell.

229 See Cesare Beccaria 1986, ch. 6: “Of the Proportions between Crime and Punishment”.



Fig. 21: Among the visual representations of the imprisoned Cabinet minister Struensee in the spring of 1772, there are several examples of devils taking care of him. Struensee had been striving for the royal crown, the text claims, and now the Devil is actually in the process of crowning Struensee, for “God does not put on him the Crown / But should he be crowned to his honor / and somebody be present there / the Devil himself must do it”. The literal belief in Hell and devils, however, was waning in the period, such as the Press Freedom debate on Hell witnessed. Was it not unjust to punish sinners with an infinite sojourn in the flames of Hell when they had committed the sins of a finite life only? *The Power of the Devil in the World (Diævelens Magt i Verden)*, anonymous woodcut, n. d. © Royal Danish Library.

Now, is the Self-Thinker a rationalist theologian, such as he appears in his pamphlet, a firm believer taking two further, natural steps in the ongoing self-cleansing of protestant Christianity by dissolving two remaining pieces of superstition from the core of correct belief based in Scripture? Or is his rationalism rather a theological cover for a far-reaching deist attack deep into the core of Christianity itself, just assumed to ensure that the Self-Thinker enjoys protection as a decent man of faith? It is not easy to decide in the absence of knowledge about the identity of the pseudonymous Self-Thinker, but it is pretty evident that in the text, two core Enlightenment ideas are discreetly smuggled in: the almost hedonist claim that the aim of creation is to maximize happiness, and the quasi-Rousseauist presumption that natural human beings are born good and only corrupted by circumstances. In that sense, it is a theological text with Enlightenment contraband.

The deist, serious or ironic, did not escape counterattacks. No less than two theologians published long, detailed answers to the Self-Thinker's attack on Eternal Hell and Original Sin. One pamphlet by Martin Peter Ohm quickly appeared under his initials "M. P. O.", the other by the newly examined theologian Henrik Ussing a few months later under his own name.²³⁰ M. P. O. argued that eternal punishment cannot be abolished without offending another of God's attributes, namely, his holiness. To save disbelieving sinners would be to defame his own holiness. God could not possibly force sinners into a condition in which they do not wish to be. Nobody has an excuse for sinning, for everyone has received the offer to become a believer, even the proudest and most reckless freethinker. The Self-Thinker is dangerous, for his laxness as to punishment will have terrible effects for virtue: it will tempt people to sin if they believe they have an extra shot at grace after death. As to Original Sin, M. P. O. admits it is a subject difficult to understand. Here, you must rest on revelation. An infidel simply cannot and will not subject himself to God's law – but simultaneously, M. P. O. claims the infidel actively rejects the offer to be helped out of his condition. M. P. O. thus vacillates between predestination of who is saved, on the one hand, and the free will of the individual to accept or reject God's offer, on the other.

The long debut text of the young Ussing – who should later develop into a beligerent figure involved in many strifes, penalties, and even banishment – is considerably clearer than M. P. O.'s orthodox call to Scripture.²³¹ Ussing spends 50 pages on each of the Self-Thinking's two issues, but he clearly isolates the two main hypotheses for attack: the utilitarianist assumption that the happiness of creatures is God's prime purpose, and the idea that inborn tendencies of humans are good. As to the

230 M. P. O. [Martin Peter Ohm], *Nødvendige Erindringer til Forfatteren af Skriftet om Helvedes Evighed og Arve-Synden ved en efter Skriften tænkende M. P. O.*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (14 October 1771); and Henrik Ussing, *Billige Tanker om Helvedes Evighed og Arvesynden i Anledning af en Selvtænkendes Skrift om disse Materier offentlig meddelte*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (15 April 1772).

231 Ussing, see DBL 1. ed. 1904; see also Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2016, 969.

former, the Eternity of Hell, God must indeed punish sins for the sake of His own honor, Scripture explicitly says so; as to the latter, the Self-Thinking's claim of abolishing Original Sin is nothing but a concealed defense of vices, for it rests on the erroneous idea that reason should be able to conquer will. It is not, and unpunished will would result in nothing but vice. In the middle of the text, however, Ussing leaves, for a moment, his arguing style and launches a direct, personal attack on the Self-Thinker: "Some places, it is as if the author will hide his intentions, but you need only a little thinking comparison to see that he does not seek anything but weakening the doctrine of Original Sin, yea, even to deny it completely, which also, as rude as it is, is not far from his other principles, and I wish he did not already have all too many learned brothers amongst us, who entertain and disseminate the Crypto-Socinian and wholly Naturalist religion, which sneak around us in darkness!" (47) Here, Ussing claims to look through the Self-Thinker's pious appearances and diagnoses him for what he finds he really is: a through-and-through naturalist, and a disguised Socinian (that is, an adherent of the sixteenth century Italian reformer Fausto Sozzini who had preached a strictly monotheist or unitarian Christianity, denying the divinity of Christ). Ussing claims that he has been driven to write this pamphlet because he has heard people in Copenhagen praising the Self-Thinker's pamphlet as a masterpiece, and even if Ussing does not flatter himself to be able to convince the Self-Thinker himself, he hopes to be able at least to address some of his acolytes.

The small feud over Hell reveals a number of interesting things. Now, under Press Freedom, openly professing deist and naturalist viewpoints in a cheap pamphlet everybody could buy was a distinct possibility of the new public sphere. Georg Schade was still imprisoned in Bornholm for his deism of ten years earlier; only the year after, he should be released on Struensee's initiative. But now, viewpoints similar to Schade's could be voiced publicly in Copenhagen with only the harmless danger of being counterattacked in writing by two pedantic theologians. Theological debate had traditionally been practiced, if at all, within the confines of academia, among the learned, and visible from outside only in few, expensive published works for a small, scholarly elite. Theology available for the masses in the market of cheap writings had assumed the shape of pedagogical catechisms, house postils, sermon publications, etc., disseminating standard, popularized views of the state church after meticulous censorship – not in any sense an open infight over theological positions such as we find in the debate over Hell.

Furthermore, the priestly reactions were a sign, among many, that most theologians were not satisfied with the new freedom, even if they themselves had to turn to pamphlet publication in order to counteract the infidel, now that theological censorship was abolished. Finally, the debate showed that the threatening local presence of Socinians, deists or even full naturalists, that is, atheists, lurking around in the shadows, seems to have been an established fact among Copenhagen clergy at the time. This probably reflects, in turn, that such 'learned brothers' actually existed

in real Copenhagen itself, even if we do not possess any more exact estimates of their numbers, ideas, or positions.

Parody of Pietism and Orthodox Lutheranism

The background of the theological landscape of Denmark-Norway in 1770 can be roughly described as follows. The seventeenth century had seen the development of a strong Lutheran orthodoxy, continually influenced by the traditionalization and judicial institutionalization of Lutheranism in Saxony. This implied a strong legal suppression of deviant faiths as seen from the point of view of state Lutheranism. During the seventeenth century, strong campaigns against so-called Crypto-Calvinism, Crypto-Catholicism, and witchcraft had been waged, just like court cases had been held against enthusiasts and mystics of different sorts. In bishop Jesper Brochmand's 1633 systematic dogmatics, he declared, addressing King Christian IV:

Ever since Your ascension to the throne [that is, 1588], You have striven for your subjects to think and speak alike about God and things divine, and You have pursued this aim with such a success that those who deviated in religious viewpoints now roam around as refugees, far from the realms and countries subjected to Your majesty.

To Brochmand, the result was close to mission accomplished.

The early eighteenth century, however, had seen the strong appearance of German pietism in Denmark-Norway. Its state-oriented version, originating in Halle, had been adopted by Kings Frederik IV and particularly Christian VI against protests of the orthodox Lutheran clerical elite, while more anti-institutional radical pietism, critical towards state and church alike, had grown to strong if often underground influence, particularly among German-speaking Copenhageners. After Christian VI's death in 1746, state pietism was waning, but still many priests and congregations in Denmark-Norway stuck to variants of pietist beliefs and practices. In the same period, after 1750, the new wave of rationalism, influenced by Leibniz and Christian Wolff, was on the rise, and in the Copenhagen of 1770 many younger, influential priests were rationalists of different stripes, emphasizing the co-existence and collaboration of reason and faith. Orthodox Lutheranism also remained in a number of strongholds and priests, spearheaded by theology professor Peder Holm, while pietism was taking its stand, among other places in the "Vajsenhus" Orphanage with its own church vis-a-vis the Town Hall on the central square of Nytorv. Moderate rationalism further profited from a boost after the 1772 coup, among other things through the repeated political campaigns using top clergy as their mouthpiece (see

Chapters 10 and 14), but both pietism and Lutheran orthodoxy remained present in the new, open religious discussions of Press Freedom pamphlets.²³²

As to pietism, the Orphanage priest Bengt Sverdrup published a protest writing against the Struensee government's plan to close down the Orphanage in order to use the building for a new business school instead.²³³ More interesting in Press Freedom contexts was a scathing attack on pietism by a descendent of a pietist family, the rabble-rousing pamphleteer Josias Bynch who had failed to pass theological exams in 1769. Among other provocative writings in the fall of 1771, he published *The hypocritical Shoemaker*, displaying a detailed satire of a pietist "conventicle".²³⁴ That was a self-organized meeting of pietist believers outside of the church, focusing on Bible reading and mutual strengthening of faith – much practiced by pietists but outlawed by the Danish 1741 legislation "Konventikelplakaten" (The Conventicle Ordinance, strictly regulating religious activity outside of the state church) in order to maintain the clergy's control over the contents of faith. Now, Bynch told the story of an infidel shoemaker confronted by believers at such an informal, illegal meeting, highlighting the special conversion techniques of the pietists. Bynch went in great detail about the special "angel grimaces" of pietist faces, their tearful ceremonies of self-criticism, and the particular use of a whining, sad voice, apt to call forth emotions. Bynch described how such tactics eventually worked on the shoemaker who burst into tears and yielded to faith, only to face a conversion period of pietist self-investigation, ransacking his own soul in order to reach a state of sufficient piety. Bynch's detailed if satirical description of such a "conventicle" meeting makes probable the rumor that his tailor father was himself a pietist, probably even the very character painted by the main clothmaker protagonist in the conversion scenery. The pamphlet was anonymous, but Bynch's aliases were increasingly broken in public, and we can see that in some of the 1772 attacks on Bynch that his anti-pietist pamphlet was conceived as blasphemist.²³⁵ So not only the dogma of state Lutheranism suffered attacks during Press Freedom, but also more sectarian pietist activities could become the target of public criticism.

232 Danish pietism and rationalist theologies, see Pedersen 1951 and Kornerup 1951; Lausten 2004; Reeh 2018. Radical pietism, see Schneider, 2007.

233 Bernt Sverdrup, *En sand Christens Forhold i henseende til Gudelige Løfter. Betragtet i en offentlig Tale... den XI. Octobris 1771 som en aarlig Erindrings Dag om det Kongelige Vaisen-Huuses Stiftelse ved Bernt Sverdrup, Stædets Præst.*, Copenhagen: A. H. Godiches efterleverske ved F. C. Godiche, 1772 (28 February 1772).

234 Mette Slævhæls [J. S. Bynch], *Den skinhellige Skoeflikker en Satire ved Mette Slævhæls*, Copenhagen: P. H. Höecke, 1771 (20 November 1771).

235 Explicitly so in a virtual special issue on Bynch of *Fortegnelsen* (vol 2, review no. 370) of October 1772.

Only a few weeks earlier, Bynch had exploited his talents for religious parody in a grotesque and amusing novel called *Eve's Nightgown*.²³⁶ The title refers to the gown Eve is said to have worn in Paradise, and life there is portrayed in a pretty alternative way. In the gardens, Adam and Eve are accompanied by a certain Melchisedek who is fascinated by the beautiful Eve and invites the reader to share his lustful thoughts when secretly watching her having intercourse with Adam through the foliage. As Adam is busy chasing other girls in the gardens, claiming to be a doctor taking them as his patients, Eve is not completely dismissive of Melchisedek's approaches but agrees to sit down conversing with him. He finds the wisest seduction strategy is to keep silent and let Eve do the talking. Now, the comments of the narrator on Eve's complaints over Adam become longer and longer and slowly, the paradisiac narration grinds to a halt. The narrator increasingly goes into comparing Eve's stories to contemporary conditions in Copenhagen, and so entertains the reader with lots of anecdotes about Copenhagen girls and love life in the city; some of them seem to bear the stamp of theology student Bynch's own intimate experiences skipping the studies of "Barbara" syllogisms for a girl of the same name. The conclusion suddenly cuts off this long stream of hearsay and admits that the narrator had not kept proper track of the events in Paradise, and, in an auto-fictive meta-comment, he scolds himself for the novel's bad composition. At the very end, however, it is revealed that there was indeed a reason for the strange composition with the main line of Paradise events being drowned out by urban hearsay. While the narrator was busy looking the other way, babbling about sex and the city, Melchisedek was actually successful in his seduction of Eve. Adam sneaked up to the two of them and discovered what was going on, and when Eve tried to escape Adam's beating through a thicket, the thorny branches pulled off her nightgown whose straps Melchisedek had loosened. Also, Melchisedek took the occasion to flee, and with him, he brought Eve's nightgown which has now been found at the new Assistens Cemetery outside of Copenhagen. In its pocket was Melchisedek's written account of what had been going on in Paradise – explaining the novel's strange subtitle, "the Fall in the pocket". With this entertaining and cleverly constructed novel, Bynch approached religion in a completely different way than serious theological attacks such as those of von Schmettau or the Self-Thinker. Here, Christianity is mocked by the alternative, licentious portrayal of conditions in Paradise before the Fall – which was not at all as innocent as assumed, rather, it was much like the never-ending erotic conflicts of modern city life. *Eve's Nightgown* was not at all serious criticism of theological dogma, but its light-hearted ridicule of the first book of the Bible may have reached a different and broader audience than serious dissections of church, clergy, and theology.

²³⁶ Galimathias [J. S. Bynch], *Vor Salig' Beste-Mamaes Evaes Natklokke med en nye Historie om Syndefaldet i Lommen sammenflirket af Galimathias*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (31 October 1771).

Old-fashioned, pre-pietist orthodox Lutheranism, on the other side, remained entrenched in parts of the theology faculty and the clergy, but also received a particularly strong voice during the Press Freedom Period in the unemployed theologian Christian Thura. Speaking on behalf of established faith and church was indeed his ideal, but it is doubtful that contemporary clerical elites were content with a defender of Thura's radical degree of furious aggression. He was a latecomer to the Philopatreas debate in March 1771 but upping the ante by a strong attack on the Struensee government's removal of a number of churchly holidays in the fall of 1770.²³⁷ That political move had roots long before the Struensee government, had been approved by both church and state authorities, and the arguments were three. Those holidays were but catholic remnants, their removal would strengthen the supply of work and heighten productivity, and the peasants were only spending those holidays drinking and playing bawdy games, anyway. Martin Brun, as we shall see, took the holiday canceling as the occasion for an elaborated, learned joke. Thura, on the contrary, based himself on rumors of Struensee's ungodliness and concluded that this abolishment of holidays was really an attack directed against the church, against religion, even against God himself. This reignited, in him, the old Lutheran idea that sinful behavior in the population would lead God to punish not only the actual sinners but the state as a whole. Thus, sin would constitute an acute political problem for the state. Thura presented that argument in an aggressive rhetoric, forecasting how God would now use rinderpest or similar disasters to punish state and population as a whole for the government's infidel behavior. This was dangerous area, for the final responsible for such government decisions, of course, was the sovereign King. Christian VII, and even if criticism of particular state policies were now tolerated, Thura went close to extending the attack to the King's person himself – that is, to lese-majesty. Thura seemed to know he was on thin ice, for he argued that now when the King had given freedom to ungodly writings such as *The Art of Governing*, it should also extend to righteous writings really aiming for the common best of all.²³⁸

During the summer of 1771, Thura was among those taking aim at Struensee for his relation to the Queen (see Chapter 9), and in late summer, Thura, now disguised as “Jeremiah”, again went even closer in the direction of offending his majesty himself. Here, Thura became probably the first to publicly imply the existence of problems pertaining to the King's mental health. Using the indirect form of a conditional, he asked: “[I]f he is so weak as to be unable to govern, then his weakness must subsist either in the body or in the mind; is the weakness in the mind, then he is unable

237 The nine holidays canceled were the third-days of the large festivals, Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun; Epiphany Jan. 6; Candlemas 2 February; Saint John's Day 24 June; Visitation 2 July; Michaelmas 29 September; and All Saints' Day 1 November.

238 The anonymous pamphlet attacked by Thura was really authored by the Prussian King Frederick the Great: *Politische Grundregler eller Konsten at regiere*, no place or printer, 15 February 1771 (German original 1766).

even to select a co-regent; thus the co-regent has no authority at all to govern or command". Thura's Old-Lutheran attack now became one of the first public occurrences of an insight which had been dawning in court circles since late 1760s: that Christian VII suffered from a certain "weakness of mind", if he was not downright insane.²³⁹ Thura's argument even allowed him to attack the King and his recently appointed Cabinet Minister, Struensee, in one and the same movement: a mad king cannot pass authority to anybody. Still, Thura escaped prosecution for now, maybe because of the fact that renowned historian Jacob Langebek from the Copenhagen learned elite – also anonymously – had expressed related attacks on the King and his co-regent in a pamphlet not long before, even if he stopped short of implying insanity (see Chapter 9). Thura's argument built on the theological idea that it was the obligation of the clergy to teach, admonish, even correct, criticize, and threaten King and government if they deviated from true religion. The King might be the formal head of the Lutheran state church, but being untrained in theology, he was obliged to accept expert advice from top clergy. This had been a contentious issue at several critical points ever since the Reformation when kings had refused to accept theological advice and even, in some cases, severely punished eager, politicizing theologians, such as the attack against top theologian Niels Hemmingsen for crypto-Calvinism in late sixteenth century or the cases against the Dybvad mathematicians, father and son, in the early seventeenth century. The kings' overbearing attitude towards critical theologians had, if anything, only grown with the introduction of absolutism in 1660.²⁴⁰

Thura, however, consumed by religious wrath, continued unabashed. He now announced a periodical called *The Patriotic Truth-Teller* to appear in the fall of 1771, but there was much truth to be told, and its first issue kept growing and was finally announced for sale only a whole year later, in September 1772, long after the 1772 coup, when political conditions had changed drastically and toleration of free speech was shrinking.²⁴¹ The *Truth-Teller* had now become a voluminous book, and Thura had but intensified his attacks on the King. He now claimed that even if being sovereign leader of the Danish-Norwegian church, the King remained subjected to the Lutheran Augsburg confession and thus, as a consequence, to clerical authority. He further claimed it was a grave error in the very foundation of absolutism, the *Lex Regia* of 1665, the royal constitution, that it made possible the crowning of unexperi-

239 Jeremias [Christian Thura], *Jeremiæ Brev imod den hykkelske Afgudspræst, som taler i Magazinet No. 73, skrevet til Forsvar for den redelige Sandsigere, til Opmuntring, Trøst og Troeskabs Bestyrkelse for de danske Israeliter, som endnu leve i Coujoneriets Fængsel i Babylon*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (25 September 1771).

240 On the Dybvads, see Fink-Jensen 2005; Stjernfelt 2020.

241 *Den Patriotiske Sandsiger* [C. Thura], *Den Patriotiske Sandsigers Første Deel. Indeholdende: Religionen, dens Sammenhæng med Regieringen, de geistlige Personer og Embeder, og de Anstalter, som sigter til at vedligeholde Religionen og at danne Geistlige*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (9 September 1772).

enced kings under 25 years of age. This was an unmistakable reference to King Christian who had ascended to the throne aged 16 in 1766 and still was 23 years only.

Furthermore, Thura implied that the poor of Copenhagen had the right to defend themselves even using pistols if rounded up by government programs against beggars. In short, he grossly offended the King and simultaneously called for open, violent sedition. The post-coup government would not tolerate such things and in September 1772, a court case was opened against Thura. Maybe he was also selected as a sort of scapegoat to sound the grand signal that Press Freedom was about to end – an isolated, extreme person without a network like Thura may have appeared as the perfect patsy. Prosecutors opted for the harshest treatment: decapitation with torture, like Brandt and Struensee earlier the same year, but the verdict of the commission in March 1773 was based on the perception that Thura had unintentionally, seduced by religious zeal, gotten himself into trouble. Indeed, his attacks on the King were really motivated in anger against the now fallen Struensee government, which the new elite agreed to shun. So, the compromise, realized as a pardon by the King, was a sentence of lifelong banishment of Christian Thura to the small Norwegian islet of Munkholm close to Trondhjem. Ironically, the single most severe sentence for a publication crime during the Press Freedom period thus befell a strongly orthodox Lutheran, celebrating Press Freedom but religiously raging against its originator Struensee and his protector the King.

Martin Brun – Spinoza, an Autobiography of Satan, and the Deathbed Feud

Ussing, in the above-mentioned Hell feud, feared deists and Socinians, sneaking around in the shades of the capital. Such presence of Enlightenment positions in the Copenhagen population can also be found in one of the most prolific pamphleteers, Martin Brun. He published at least 48 and probably around 60 to 70 writings in little more than two years from late 1770 to early 1773. He had a broad palette as an author, ranging from moralist short-stories, political essays, Struensee attacks, parodies, to comments on the coup and its effects, and much more, and we shall meet him time and time again in this book. Here, we shall focus upon his shifting involvement with priests and religion.

In Brun's noteworthy debut, in one of the very first Press Freedom Writings of 31 October 1770, his main target is loose women in Copenhagen, but he takes, in the passing, a stab at the clergy when the young female narrator Caroline, now in the capital, writes back to her old priest Pastor Fido in the provinces, reminding him about a certain sexual encounter "in the blue chamber on the stool by the bed" when she served as his maid. In Brun's free style where many subjects are often mixed and digressions are the rule rather than the exception, it is not rare to find attacks on church and priests, even if only rarely on religion as such. In one of

Brun's most famous early pamphlets with the baroque title of *Ole the Smith Apprentice's Complaints about Rice Porridge. By Him Self*, the immediate occasion is the governmental removal of a number of church holidays from the calendar a couple of months before.²⁴² For other observers, as we saw with the Orthodox Lutheran pamphleteer Christian Thura, this could be the occasion for severe attacks on the government or even the King for abandoning state obligations to religion. For Brun, however, it was the occasion for an elaborate joke: Ole used to eat the delicacy of rice porridge with his smith master every holiday evening, and now those occasions have become rarer. This fact prompts Ole to speculate: but is it not, in fact, an evil thing to eat rice which comes from the realms of infidel Turks? – maybe I become a Turk from doing so and thereby turn myself over to Satan? Well, Ole thinks, maybe this information about the origins of rice is wrong, he only heard it from a learned person, and they lie ever so often. Ole knows all about this sad condition of the learned, for

There has lived in Holland a frivolous Jew, who is also called learned. This loafer has wanted to convince people that the world had created itself, which was as damned a lie, as if I would convince people that my locks made themselves, and by their own power appeared before my eyes. This guy should have had the name of Spinach, or Spinos. A French fool who let himself be called Mette or Metrie, and who was even called terribly learned, has wanted to convince people that all humans were by themselves blown together of flying dust, which was the same as to say (to come back to our rice-porridge again) that a good helping of rice-porridge could run together by itself in a pot from all parts of the world, cook itself there and serve itself on the table with the best taste, with the best butter from the month of May, cinnamon, and sugar.

Brun's alter ego Ole is evidently puzzled with the possibility of a world created without the participation of a purposeful deity, and even if he rejects Spinoza and la Mettrie with their alleged atheism and materialism, he is sure, later in the same pamphlet, to embrace the Enlightenment mainstream which had been impossible in the absence of Press Freedom: "How much good the Freedom to Write has achieved is shown by the incomparable writings by Baile, Leibnitz, Voltaire, Montesquieu, le Clerc, Newton, Wolff, etc., whose superior works would have been, to unbearable damage, lost to the world if Freedom to Write had been stopped [...]" (14). Ole has quite an elaborate overview over Enlightenment authors for an eighteenth-century smith; his author Brun was an eternal student of philosophy, but it is hardly credible that Brun had picked up such knowledge in the teachings at the university of Copenhagen. Rather, Brun may have encountered such ideas in discussions with fellow students, with some of those rumored Copenhagen naturalists, or by his own studies.

242 [Martin Brun], *Ole Smedesvends Begrædelse over Rissengrød. Af Ham selv*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (18 January 1771). On Brun's preoccupation with Spinoza, see also Laursen 2000.

Brun's adherence to some deist version of the Enlightenment mainstream is apparent in many other pamphlets. In another, simultaneous political role-pamphlet, now with Jeppe the Watchman as his narrator, he even demands full freedom of religion.²⁴³ Still, Brun takes care never to explicitly portray himself as a freethinker, and even decidedly satirizes freethinking on some occasions. Brun, however, kept his curiosity vis-à-vis more radical strands of anti-religious Enlightenment which pop up in a number of other pamphlets. In a writing with the long title *The Greenlandic Professor's and really constituted Super-Land-Rabbi's Astronomically, Metaphysically, Morally, Politically, and Economically Well-Founded Observations over the Moon*,²⁴⁴ Brun poses, in the Enlightenment trope of seeing domestic things alienated through the eyes of a foreigner, as an observing Greenlander speculating over why there are so many erroneous assumptions circulating. He attacks a lot of fantasies, that the moon is made of green cheese, that god is partial, does not exist, or does not care about creation. Here, Judaism, atheism and deism are swiftly attacked in one stroke, and the Greenlander continues to complain about other circulating relativisms about God:

Epicurus holds that the deity has neither blessing nor banishment of virtues and vices; that God regards all human activity with complete indifference, and that, like a deserter he has run away from the whole of creation as soon as he finished putting the atoms into shape. Spinoza denied any deity, and some say the same about the mentioned Epicurus. Some made him spiritual, others made him material. And is it not a long time since R. believed it was an old, dignified man with a long beard. (6)

Deism and atheism are embedded in a satire against many current theological aberrations, but Brun's distance to them is relativized by another Greenlander visiting Copenhagen in *A Greenlander's Description of Copenhagen with a Reflection over the Santification of the Ten Commandments* some months later.²⁴⁵ Here, the Greenlander is a sort of anthropological observer visiting Copenhagen, very critical against the actual behavior of Copenhageners who seem not to understand at all the elementary directives of the commandments of their own wonderful Christian faith. Again, they rather run after intellectual fashions like the atomism and materialism of Epicurus and la Mettrie. Again, atheists are rumored in Copenhagen. Now Spinoza is mentioned for having tried to prove, in a thick and boring book in metaphysical Latin, that "all of nature is but one single substance and that all parts of nature were but so

243 [Martin Brun], *Jeppe Vægters Betragtninger over Staten og det almindelige Beste, samlede paa hans Natte-Vagt i Aaret 1771*, Copenhagen: Nr. 8 paa Børsen, 1771 (29 January 1771).

244 [Martin Brun], *Den Grønlandske Professors og virkelig constitueret Ober-Land-Rabbiners Astronomiske, Metaphysiske, Moralske, Politiske og Oeconomiske velgrundede Betragtninger over Maanen. Oversat af det Grønlandske i det Danske Sprog ved Peer Gronlandsfaher*, no place nor printer indicated; 1771 (22 April 1771).

245 [Martin Brun], *En Grønlænders Beskrivelse over Kiøbenhavn med Betænkning over de Ti Buds Helligholdelse*, Copenhagen: P. H. Höecke, 1771 (15 November 1771).

many modifications thereof, so that all what you saw in all of nature were equally great divinity, equally majestic, equally high, so that a writer and his pen were equally grand, both of them equal modifications of the whole of nature". Here, the Greenlander not only betrays considerably more insight in Spinoza's system than Ole the Smith, but he also goes the further step of actually admiring Copenhagen's Spinozists more than the city's Christian believers, for "from time to time, they even, with is the most curious, live better, and show more love for human beings than the rest, which pretend to believe and follow their heaven-sent book." Christian Copenhageners behave worse than both the Greek and the Jew, that is, Epicurus and Spinoza. Brun here recirculates the well-known anecdote about Spinoza as a meek and virtuous man, promoted by Bayle. Spinoza even refrained from revenge after religious bullies wounded him in the face, the Greenlander adds. Brun's fascination of a Baylean society of virtuous atheists reaches a high point here in the fall of 1771, but already a few months later, after the coup, he should considerably modify his radical leanings. After the coup, Ussing's and Brun's claimed population of atheists, deists, materialists, etc. in Copenhagen would be wise to keep a very low profile, with a new government supporting itself heavily on clerical collaboration.

Brun's overall position as a sort of home-made Enlightenment philosopher reaches a peak in a satire in which his experimentations with role texts took him to pick Satan himself as a narrator, writing his autobiography: *The Life and Times of Satan, originally brought to Print by Doctor Faust*.²⁴⁶ This tour-de-force of Brun allows him indirectly to indicate his own position by the negative of what Satan celebrates and attacks, respectively, during his long lifetime. Originally, of course, Satan was a fallen angel, driven out of Heaven. Confused and bitter, he metamorphosed into a snake in order to trigger the fall of Adam and Eve. In great speed, he now flew around the world in order to plant "infidelity, superstition, wickedness, voluptuousness, whoring, murder, drunkenness, arrogance, greediness, lust for bribery, to bend justice and give to unworthy subjects offices and employment". Here, Brun indirectly comments upon the "Shoe Brush" debate and legislation some months earlier (see Chapter 7). With all his intense activity, Satan managed to convince nations to adore him instead of the Almighty. After his sadly failed attempt to seduce Jesus in the desert, Satan reacts in anger by deciding to work to split the Christians, utilizing the Pope as his tool. It was also Satan who convinced Mohamed to believe he was a prophet, a role he played to perfection. He was illiterate, so Satan had to provide him with a helper in order to author the Coran. This was a great plot:

Many have seen me as a fool and a stupid devil, because I allowed Mohamed to subvert idolatry, convert Asians and Africans to the true God and by his Al-Coran to teach them many moral virtues; but Satan was no fool like you thought. I did all this (and this was my main purpose)

246 [Martin Brun], *Fandens Liv og Levnet første gang til Trykken befordret ved Doctor Faust*, Venedig [?], no printer indicated, 1771 (6 May 1771).

in order for Mohamedans not to reach true knowledge and the Redeemer, and thereby I won my greatest game. (10)

The whole of Islam is depicted as a Satanic plot to keep the continents of Asia and Africa away from learning about Jesus. Satan must admit, however, that both types of disbelievers, Jews and Muslims, may unfortunately escape him if they remain pure at heart. Here, Brun indirectly articulates a version of the Enlightenment idea that it is not a person's explicit religious confession which decides his or her moral status, rather intentions, deeds, and actions. Satan now saw himself close to final victory, supported by the Pope and Mohamed alike. Recently, however, the tide is turning against him, Saxons have defied Satan and the Pope, while the profundity of England and the knowledge of the French are fulfilling the work of the Saxons, he complains. Satan has been pushed back by Reformation and the Enlightenment which, by Brun, are construed as aspects of one and the same counter-Satanic movement. Currently, such Christian Enlightenment constitutes Satan's biggest problem: "When the Christians wrestle themselves free of the Pope, nothing hurts me more than to see this: that they grind and polish themselves in all other useful things and sciences; for growth in all useful sciences and practices enlighten religion more and more, and shape noble humans and true Christians, which sight is to me painful, pathetic, and dreadful" (11–12). Brun finds that an Enlightenment version of Christianity constitutes the real, current enemy of Satan, presently epitomized in the recent light lit in the North, that is, none other than King Christian VII.

So, through Satan, Brun manages to fuse his Enlightenment enthusiasm with royalism and a suitably adapted if vaguely depicted Christianity. Brun follows Satan's life and activities even down to details in present Copenhagen: Satan now despairs over the introduction of Press Freedom, but he finds, to his assurance, a single bright spot remaining in the review journal *Fortegnelsen* where Satan praises the ridicule which its reviewers pour over all the great writings now being published for the improvement of state matters. Satan embraces this particular Danish journal for its constant attack against well-meaning patriots. Here, it may be useful to recall that in a recent issue of *Fortegnelsen* some weeks earlier, no less than eight of Brun's diversity of pamphlets had seen devastating reviews. Brun's autobiography of Satan thus places the anonymous publishers and reviewers at *Fortegnelsen*, characters from the small publishing-printing networks of central Copenhagen, into a gloomy cosmological ancestry including no less than the Snake, Cain, the Pope, and Mohamed. Consequently, not much later, *Fortegnelsen* in its review of Satan's autobiography ridiculed "this poor and stupid pamphlet".

The genius of Satan's autobiography is to use Satan as a comic-book-like figure to distinguish friend and foe all the way down to particular actors in the small circles of Press Freedom Copenhagen. Brun is cautious to retain the name of Christianity for his favored anti-Satanic alliance of Saxony, England, and France, but at the same time he ensures that more Enlightenment than religion remains in that cocktail

where God and Jesus are but rarely mentioned. At the same time, the pamphlet demonstrates a period in which sincere belief in Satan in some circles has faded to a degree that he can now be used as a merely fictitious cartoon-like contrast for such purposes. The fact that such circles did not exhaust opinion in Copenhagen, however, is seen by the strong return of Satan after the coup in early 1772, not only in subsequent debates involving Brun, but particularly in the Sermon campaign and the theological coup interpretation of the coup government (see chapter 10).

As we heard, Brun also experimented with several quasi-democratic pamphlets, in which different artifacts debated (like a coffeepot, a teapot and a chamber pot, as symbols of different social groups), or an Enlightened prince ruled after consultation with many different groups and estates of his society. Despite eulogizing enlightened dialogue, however, Brun fared less well when being engulfed in his only real-life debate himself. In August 1771, he published a provocative pamphlet under the title *I am dying, come and give me Absolution*.²⁴⁷ In this anonymous pamphlet, Brun claimed to have knowledge of several concrete cases where Copenhagen priests had refused to attend the death bed of a believer at night. A lackey had turned back a messenger from the dying, the priest was tired, was at a dinner party, or had gone to bed. The pamphlet simply claimed that Copenhagen priests had become too wealthy and too lazy – thereby following up and concretizing claims already circulating in the *Philopatris* debate. Brun, however, personalized this attack line by claiming to know about several concrete cases of neglect of duty among Copenhagen clergy.

This gave rise to a wicked debate in *Adresseavisen* as well as in consecutive pamphlets during August-September 1771. The first commentator, on the front page of the paper, demanded the names of the four priests attacked and claimed about the anonymous Brun that “the zeal which he, first and last in the pamphlet, seems to show for religion, does not appear to be of the right sort and character”.²⁴⁸ Brun, in short, was attacked for lacking religion despite his professed piety, and he answered anonymously two days later defending his true zeal for religion, but rejects naming names not to make things worse, and admits it might have been the error of the priests’ lackeys rather than of the priests themselves, so maybe there was really one case only.²⁴⁹ He also admits that after the piece, many people have come to him with names of brave priests. Apart from a certain arrogance, Brun is close to backing down completely. This would not, however, close the debate. In the next issue of the paper, two more aggressive rejoinders followed.²⁵⁰ The first claimed that Brun was “creeping out of Satan’s Synagogue, darting his evil heart’s poisoned arrows under a glistening mask of godliness”: his criticism of specific Copenhagen priests was really

²⁴⁷ [Martin Brun], *Jeg ligger for Døden, kom og beret mig*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (14 August 1771).

²⁴⁸ *Adresseavisen*, no. 135, 19 August 1771.

²⁴⁹ *Adresseavisen*, no. 137, 21 August 1771.

²⁵⁰ *Adresseavisen*, nr. 138, 23 August 1771.

a disguised, satanic attack on religion as a whole. If he refused to name but one single priest, he would have to be publicly pronounced a liar. The second article was more moderate but found anonymous criticism wrong and still required that Brun name the single remaining lazy priest.

The debate, however, was completely overturned with the appearance of a new, 71-page pamphlet titled *The Wolf beneath the Sheep-Skin*.²⁵¹ Here, an anonymous, angry defender of Christianity not only considerably raises rhetorical stakes, but also threatens to reveal Brun's anonymity. Brun is an evil, foul human being, hiding under a skin of godliness. The writer attempts to appease himself, he admits that he, as an unlearned, has problems with controlling his moods, but cannot behave himself: Take away the sheep-skin! You are a mocking coward! Finally, the enraged Christian turns to revealing Brun's name and identity:

If you do not publicly renounce your attack against the city and its clergy, I shall name your name and shall prove it by law; for I know both your sweating brother, your printer, who must be ashamed of bringing such a piece to print and make himself a dog for the sake of a bone, – your address, yourself, pale-nose with the licked hair, in the BROWNgray coat, white stockings, black neckscarf; so do what I command you, or get out of the city; for no decent citizen can accept you.

The “sweating brother” referred to Brun's brother serving a prison sentence, and the word “brown”, in Danish “brun”, is rendered in larger typeface so as to give away Brun's identity. Today, such a behavior would be called “doxxing”: revealing personal information about a person as a sort of threat with the implicit horizon of violence: I know who you are, how you look, where you live!

This wicked pamphlet turned the debate in a new direction. A new piece, *A couple of words to the Coat and the Anti-Coat*,²⁵² addressed the level of debate appearing between the two protagonists who are now identified by their antagonistic relations to Brun's brown coat. The author finds The Coat's (Brun's) initial attack on the clergy careless but his counter-attacker, The Anti-Coat deplorable. The author disagrees with Brun's attack, but even more with the Anti-Coat, whose style of debate he condemns in a separate letter, comparing the Anti-Coat to the level of fishmongers, sailors, and soldiers (see Chapter 8). He should rather, like Montesquieu, have remained cool faced with his detractor. This author was trying to appease both sides of the debate from a moral high ground of reasonable deliberation, but even this peaceful intention attracted further ire. Another piece in *Adresseavisen* now attacked *this* author for not really being able to stick to his own cool piece of advice. The argu-

²⁵¹ [anonymous], *Ulven under Faare-Skindet*, no place and printer indicated, 1771 (10. September 1771).

²⁵² [anonymous], *Et Par ord til Frakken og Anti-Frakken, i Anledning af den udkomne Pjece Jeg ligger for Døden, kom og beret mig, hvoraf den ene letsindig har attaqveret Geistligheden, og den anden begrædelig forsvaret dem*, no place and printer indicated, 1771 (18 September 1771).

ment has now finally left deathbeds and priests far behind and only focuses on the tone of debate.

The Deathbed debate is interesting for its development far away from the initial empirical issue of whether some Copenhagen priests neglect their duties. Instead, it came to center upon the self-regulation of the new public sphere. Were anonymous attacks on specific social groups acceptable? Was criticism of the clergy really a mask for anti-religious positions? Which level of aggression was legitimate? Were threats (and actions) to reveal author identities acceptable? Were corrections of debate tonality themselves uttered in a suitable tone? Such ongoing self-regulations of a free public sphere appear spontaneously and pose important questions as to the type and quality of arguments and their stylistic clothing. It also indicates, however, a certain sterile possibility in such debates where the original matter-of-fact subject may vanish completely and authors rage over the rage of other authors and pride themselves of their own superior debating style rather than contributing to bringing forth further knowledge of the state of things discussed. The debate also showed an interesting feature in many feuds of the Press Freedom Period. Oftentimes, the most wicked debaters appear to be those leaping to the defense of religion rather than their assumedly evil, mocking, freethinking opponents. We saw a similar thing in the Hell debate, and some of the most outspoken and uninhibited of debaters like Christian Thura or Jacob Langebek were defenders of religion.

Brun, for his part, considerably dampened his attacks on church and clergy after the coup of January 1772. Now, he concentrated upon catering for the emerging hungry market for information on the two fallen counts Brandt and Struensee, and to a large degree he seems to have bought into the prevailing theological interpretation of the coup event as a true miracle of God (see Chapter 10). In late summer, he unexpectedly published a collection of poetry called *A Collection of Songs*, with a clear Christian, allegorical bent. Remarkably, Brun for once published under his own name, as if to be sure to inform the public about his recent religious turn.²⁵³ Later that year, we shall find him in an even more pious attitude, now surprisingly as a defender of the clergy against fellow pamphleteer Josias Bynch's attacks (see below). So, Brun as a person testifies to the observation that full free speech to a large degree stiffened, in practice, immediately after the January 1772 coup. All of the most daring pamphlets of Press Freedom lie before that political threshold, and attacks on religion in particular became rare – if not completely extinct – after that date.

253 Martin Brun, *En Samling af Sange over adskillige Materier som glemte Forsøg i de skønne og nyttige Videnskaber. Samlede ved Autor selv*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (2 September 1772).

Mystics, Enthusiasts, Visionaries, Prophets – a New Liberty for Nonstandard Believers

Freedom of debate pertaining to religious issues, however, not only became visible in clashes between enlightenment assailants and entrenched religion, in attacks, debates and defenses of clergy, church, and dogma. It also became evident in a maybe more overlooked fashion: in the pouring forth of new pamphlets with nonstandard religious visions, which would never have passed censorship by the Lutheran professors. Not all of those pamphlets may have been serious, and some of them may rather have been attempts to cynically seek a market among superstitious Copenhageners – but in all cases they testify to the existence of some degree of “alternative” religious expertise among Copenhagen pamphleteers if not the buyers of their writings. Such publications were not only deviations from the dogma of state Lutheranism, but many of them also would offend specific paragraphs of the Danish Law of 1683, according to which visions, prophecies, almanacs, that is, all ways of predicting the future, even weather forecasts, were illegal because offending a theological privilege on futurology. Those paragraphs had not prevented rare publications of *Salomo’s Wisdom* or *Sibylla’s Divination* in Denmark-Norway before Press Freedom, while a copy of the *Cyprianus* had been burned at the stake in Bergen in 1746. Nothing, however, like the sudden current of mysticism during Press Freedom had been seen before.

Thus, pamphlets came out translating and introducing the contemporary Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, a remote descendent of radical pietism and the inventor of spiritualism. The old Swiss peasant prophet Martin Zadek had died in 1769 to leave behind a sort of prophetic testament after the manner of Nostradamus where the future history of the world was outlined – which came out in two Copenhagen versions. Zadek particularly focused on the future demise of Turkey and Islam, and his prophecy went into amazing detail with Turks leaving the Balkans and fleeing to North Africa, and the destiny of many particular nations and even cities charted. Danish printers probably looked to the strange fact that Zadek saw a strong future role for Denmark which would become even stronger and spread its power in Asia and America, convert thousands of pagans, introducing the true religion in yet unknown Southern countries. A golden age of Christianity would last 200 years, according to Zadek, but after that, new heresies and sects would darken the evangelical light as a sign that the great Day of the Lord is near.

Zadek introduced a religious destiny in charting future developments of the known political world. Other pamphlets looked rather to the dreamlike or nightmarish allegorical mode of Revelation to describe the future with less connections to contemporary political geography. The old Norwegian peasant prophet Børge Olsen in several pamphlets – some of them written by Bie – prophesied sights seen in the heavens with mythological beings like the Bear and the Ram roaming around to frighten away the Golden Dragon with its number 666, large armies repeatedly

clashing, and Olsen’s predictions terminate in gnomic utterances, hard to interpret, like “A large sphere was tumbling around, it had names attached, soon some turned up, soon others, but in the meadows where it was turning, no grass would grow [...]”.²⁵⁴

Another old Norwegian was the really existing geriatric Christian Drakenberg whose name was used when publishing a prophecy which rather took the character of satirizing existing European conditions, for instance ridiculing a species of apes close to Iberia who had attempted to change themselves into humans, receiving female faces in the process: they became so convincingly-looking that all other nations now pay to learn their arts and spectacles – an easily decodable satire of the French nation and population.

Now, however, also a serious piece on weather forecasts for peasants and sailors could be published – the *Heavenly Weather-Calender*. It contained nothing about any more remote future events, neither serious nor comical, religious nor political, but consisted only of a long series of conditional weather predictions of the type “When the rays are visible before sunrise: rain and wind, or storm” (8). There was not much religion to be found here, but such writings had also been impossible to publish before Press Freedom out of protection of a clerical privilege on pronouncements about future events.

All in all, Press Freedom not only gave a new liberty to the publication of strange, religious mysticism and acid visions of different sorts which would have been rejected out of hand as galloping superstition by established Lutheran censors, but it also, more broadly, gave a new space to general religious and mystical imagination and reasoning about the future beyond the monitoring by state theological authority.

Attacking Clerical Communication Lines – Bynch’s “Homiletic Journal”

As mentioned, newly ignited religious discussion and debates shrunk both suddenly and considerably after the January 1772 coup, whose perpetrators saw the event as an exceptional case of divine interference directly into Danish politics. An interest-

²⁵⁴ These pamphlets: Emanuel Swedenborg: *Tre merkverdige Breve*, Copenhagen: Morten Halager, 1772 (18 February 1772); [anonymous], *Spaadom af den berømte Eremit Martin Zadeck angaaende hvad som skal skee i de tilkommende Tider*, Copenhagen: Nr. 8 paa Børsen, 1771 (4 January 1771); [anonymous], *Martin Zadecks forunderlige og merkverdige Spaadom*, no place or printer, 1771 (8 January 1771); [J. C. Bie], *Den 124 Aars gamle Norske Bondes Børge Olsens Syn om forunderlige Tildragelser og Tanker om høie Hemmeligheder*, Copenhagen: Nr. 8 paa Børsen, 1771 (January 1771); [anonymous], *Den Danske gamle Nordmand Christian Jacobsen Drackenbergs adskillige Syner og underlige Hændelser*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (18 February 1771); Henrik Tonning, *Himmelsk Væjr-calender*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1775.

ing and convoluted exception was the periodical *Homiletic Journal* coming out towards the end of the year. Simultaneously, that event constituted the end of Josias Bynch's short, tumultuous career as a pamphleteer (cf. above). After his provocative debut in the fall of 1771 with pamphlets attacking the Queen's relation to Struensee, but also against issues such as access conditions to royal masquerades, restrictions to alcohol consumption, and pietist conversion meetings, he became a scapegoat for the coup government through 1772 after a rude attack on the King in the days just before the coup. Serving two weeks in jail in July for political pamphlets, Bynch saw insult added to injury as he became the target of a pamphlet controversy in late summer, but surprisingly he rose again, as arrogant as ever, to publish his *Homiletic Journal* in November 1772.²⁵⁵

The idea was inspired by Denmark's first journal with theatre reviews, the *Dramatic Journal* which had triggered the Theatre Feud the year before (see Chapter 9): why not make serious, detailed reviews of the public events which were the weekly sermons in Copenhagen churches every Sunday? A failed theology student and experienced pamphleteer, Bynch found himself capable of reviewing sermons for their theological, liturgical, aesthetic, and rhetorical aspects alike. With surprising aplomb he declared, in a long preface to the first issue of the periodical, that his intention was to criticize God's spokesman the priest from the point of view of God himself. So, every Sunday, he appeared at church services morning and evening equipped with pen and notebook, and the following Wednesday or Friday, the journal would appear, with one or two thorough reviews.

His liturgical criterion was the classic idea that there should be a thematic line connecting three phases of the service: the initial prayer, the entrance speech, and the sermon, so that the former should prepare the listener to the wisdom taught in the latter. His rhetorical criterion focused on pronunciation, clarity, and volume of the preacher's voice, on the degree of passion in articulation. His aesthetic criterion was complex, uniting ideas that the priest should appeal not only to imagination but also reason in addressing his congregation with the principle that the sermon should not be a dry list of points but rather a synthesis of ideas. Finally, his theological criteria led him to attack preachers with what he considered a too pietist bent in the direction of unargued emotion and moralism, as well as attacking sermons which he found deviated in the direction of the sanctification of good deeds – Lutheran dogma emphasizing correctness of faith over pious action which was rather seen as a dubious remnant of Catholicism.

During five quickly published issues of his journal through November, Bynch praised some preachers and attacked others, but his attack on the young priest Hans Myhre from the church of Trinitatis in No. 5 of the journal seems to have been the

255 [J. L. Bynch], *Den Homiletiske Journal. Eller Kritik over Præsternes Prædikener udi Kiøbenhavn's Kirker* [Nr. 1–5], Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele (No. 1, 30 October 1772; No. 2, 4 November 1772; No. 3, 6 November 1772; No. 4, November 1772; No. 5, 20 November 1772).

last straw. Bynch’s final verdict on Myhre was the picture of gibberish drowning in tedious explanation of terms, mixing incompatible subjects, stumbling around on the borderline of sanctification of good deeds, presented in a dull, lazy, and monotonous reading. That was the seventh of Bynch’s reviews, and it also proved to be his last. The new government intervened and prohibited further publication of the journal in late November, and the next month, the journal became the pretext for the first new piece of legislation restricting Press Freedom after the January coup. It was a *Lex Bynch*, simply prohibiting the publication of written reviews of sermons, made public by Christmas Eve.

Today, reviewing sermons may seem a harmless enterprise. Not so in authoritarian Denmark of 1772. The priesthood was a central body of the state, and Sunday services not only served the preaching of the Gospel, but also carried out central state functions such as the presentation and explanation of new legislation to the King’s subjects, as well as the general monitoring of the behavior of the congregation. The priest was a salaried state official, he performed tasks now rather belonging to police and municipalities, and he formed the main oral connection line from King, court and government to the King’s subjects in local congregations. By attacking this central communication link and subjecting it to multifaceted criticism, Bynch was implicitly questioning the legitimacy of the state church, not to speak of the divinity of the King as head of the Danish-Norwegian church. The coup government was constantly nervous about being challenged by counter-coups of several sorts, and its strong efforts to underline its legitimacy was a sign it tried to cover up the fact that its own rise to power had little legal basis. Also for this reason, the government may have considered it a wise move to silence one of the few remaining hotheads about whom lingering rumors of disloyalty had been circulating all year.

The new government, however, was not the only opponent which Bynch’s homiletic reviews faced. His old competitor as provocateur-in-chief the year before, Martin Brun, surprisingly launched a counter-periodical, simply named the *Anti-Journal*.²⁵⁶ Here, Brun endeavored to reject in detail every single one of Bynch’s seven reviews. Already by the publication of Brun’s first issue in late November, however, Bynch’s journal had been prohibited, but Brun continued ahead in no less than four issues, strengthening his anti-critique step by step as time went by. On 1 December, both of the two antagonists by coincidence stepped out of their periodicals to each publish their separate attacks on one another – probably not knowing exactly who was who, as both journals appeared anonymously. Bynch’s defense was indirect and muted in a convoluted fiction, probably not to challenge further the

256 [Martin Brun], *Anti-Journalen, eller Betænkninger over den Homiletiske Journal*, No. 1–3, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein (No. 1.0, 27 November 1772; No. 1.1, 4 December 1772; No. 2, 11 December 1772; No. 3, 5 January 1773).

zealous government; Brun's was more direct, even wicked.²⁵⁷ Maliciously, Brun now assumed Bynch's old pen name as the "Well-Judging" (Veldømmende), as if to remind him about the February prison threat against him and his summer stay in the city jailhouse. It is surprising, knowing the provocative output of both pamphleteers in 1771, when neither of them spared the clergy – particularly not Brun –, to see them now competing to be the more pious. There is no better proof that the new government's combination of priestly campaigns with small persecution steps against pamphleteers through 1772 had worked after its purpose. The two authors of the autobiography of Satan and of the *Hypocritical Shoemaker* were now attacking each other for not being sufficiently well-versed in the Bible. Brun even continued after Bynch was forced to stop, going so far as to finally ditch his own constant celebration of Press Freedom. Now, Bynch ought to be punished for publishing his *Homiletic Journal*, Brun demanded, and in the final issue of his *Anti-Journal*, appearing after the Christmas passing of law against Bynch, he raised the stakes even further: Bynch's journal had committed blasphemy. Along with lese-majesty, that was the most severe crime of the Danish 1683 Law, to be punished by execution with torture. Here, even Brun's constant celebration of Press Freedom was thrown aside in order to maximize his onslaught against Bynch. It is a riddle why Brun felt obliged to publish this dogged diatribe against Bynch, which proved to be Brun's final words after his landslide of pamphlets through 1770 to 1772. He had never before, during his brief but intense career, indulged in campaigning, and his earlier, fanciful, creative, and grotesque pamphlets reveal little trace of the resentful, pedantic, and overbearing style he now displayed. Did Brun do it out of anxiety to publicly display his loyalty to the new regime, or had he genuinely changed his mind on clergy, church, and faith?

Another possibility would be that he acted a paid agent for the new government. As mentioned, persistent rumors in the press at the time were circulating that Bynch wrote and published as the paid agent for a surviving, counter-government secret conspiracy of Struensee loyalists. No sources, however, confirm that any of the two was actually employed as a political agent. Trying to repudiate one such pamphlet, claiming he was a counter-government agent allied to Satan, became Bynch's very last effort, in early 1773.²⁵⁸ So, the long feud over the *Homiletic Journal* in the winter of 1772 to 1773 became the final showdown of the two most prolific and provocative pamphleteers of the Press Freedom period, now in new-won garbs of piety. It was also a sign that Press Freedom was, in practice, approaching the end, and that the brief window for free development, discussion, and dismemberment of religion was

257 [Martin Brun:], *De Retsindiges Critique over den Homiletiske Journal. Skrevet af en Veldømmende*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (1 December 1772); J. L. Bynch, *Den politiske Kandestøber. Et Ugeskrift copieret af Josias Leopold Bynch*, No. 1, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (1 December 1772).

258 [J. L. Bynch], *Gabriels Giensvar, til Helvedes Fyrste, om hans Beskyldning imod Nordfolket. Et Manuskript af Sal. Geheimeraad ****, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1773 (8 January 1773).

closing. None of the two would publish again, and both of them died in the years after Press Freedom, none of them reaching his thirty-fifth year. They were like strange, exploding pieces of firework suddenly crisscrossing the sky of Press Freedom Copenhagen only to disappear with it.

A Loss of Clerical Control

One of the shocks of the Press Freedom Period was the sudden outburst of not only attacks of many sorts on the state church, but of an unforeseen creativity in religious as well as anti-religious imagination. This is one of the main points, in which Danish-Norwegian Press Freedom differs in a much more radical direction from Swedish Press Freedom of 1766 (“Tryckfrihetsförordningen”), where a number of restrictions absent from the Danish-Norwegian case were included, such as the exemption from liberation of religious writings which were still censored by Swedish clergy. Thus, Swedish press freedom did not involve the Danish-Norwegian degree of radical discussion of clerical and religious issues, potentially endangering the political role of the church.

One of the aims of the strong sermon campaign immediately after the 1772 coup (see Chapter 10) was to set this right and to reconfirm the church as an authoritative institution in close alliance with the government, now also with a strong presence on the new pamphlet market. In the larger perspective, the brief interlude of liberty to question the state church, should prove to have long effects. While Press Freedom was slowly smothered through 1772 and 1773, this did not result in the reestablishment of pre-print censorship (see Chapter 14). But it also did not result in the reestablishment of theological control of the public sphere. Now, the police, in close collaboration with State Council and Chancelleries, took over as the relevant authorities responsible for monitoring the public sphere and prohibiting and punishing unwanted publication activity. So, governance of the public sphere slid from theologically dominated institutions and to secular power structures. This beginning of the delegitimation of the state church policy of controlling not only the public sphere, but also the detailed theological-political beliefs of the subjects, formed the background for the outburst, in early nineteenth century, of a number of strong dissenter awakenings led by lay preachers outside of the church touring Denmark-Norway – even if only acquiring legal standing after freedom of religion was declared as part of the 1814 Norwegian and the 1849 Danish democratic constitutions. In that sense, the short period of Press Freedom would prove to have deep future implications for the Danish state church and its believers.

7 The City of Press Freedom – People and Places

Press Freedom was, to a large extent, a Copenhagen phenomenon. The city and the urban life provided topics and material for writers who, for the most part, lived and did their writing in Copenhagen, whether they belonged to the old elite or the new groups of debutant authors. The 15 printing shops in Copenhagen printed what Copenhagen writers produced, and it was sold by Copenhagen printers, booksellers, and other merchants to Copenhagen customers and read by Copenhagen readerships. Physically, there was only a very short distance from the writing desk to the printing shop, from the bookstore to the reader. The spaces and places of the city played a decisive role in the making of a particular Press Freedom public.

Many of the debates of the Press Freedom Period revolved around specific Copenhagen matters, and in this chapter, a selection of central themes is presented: favoritism, sexuality, social criticism, fashion, superficiality, urban sociability, drinking, and morality. Topics like these often appeared in the Press Freedom Writings as components in spatial representations – pubs, for example – or spatial metaphors – readers in pubs, for example – endowing the textual composition with a strong entanglement of local everyday spatial experiences and social imaginary. So, this chapter analyses how spaces and publics were seen, produced, and constructed from the specifically urban viewpoint of the contemporaries, as well as portraying the many historical agents living in Copenhagen and – so to speak – carrying out Press Freedom.

Shoe Brushes and Lackeyism

The city experienced drastic changes as a result of Struensee's reform program, which affected the new public and fueled the debate on urban matters. In early April 1771 the Lord Mayor, the Municipality and the so-called "Council of the 32", i. e., the co-optative representatives of the Copenhagen citizens, were discharged. This initiative was a violation of the privileges that the citizens of Copenhagen had been given by King Frederik III when absolutism was established in 1660. These changes fundamentally affected the city's administration, jurisdiction and executive power. Struensee put an old acquaintance, Count U. A. Holstein, coming in from the Duchies, in charge of reforming municipal government. In an order of 27 March 1771, Struensee informed Holstein that he wanted a reconstruction of the police and the city's jurisdiction, as well as an investigation of the municipal finances which he believed to be in serious disorder. Not least, Struensee wanted the payment of salaries of the civil servants to be determined more transparently according to meritocratic and functional standards.²⁵⁹

259 Hansen 1916–1923, II, 585–589.

Soon after, on 3 April 1771, the new Lord Mayor Holstein dispatched a bill proclaiming the composition of the new and severely curtailed city council. Furthermore, the bill presented five articles by which the terms of reference for the new council was presented. Two articles concerned the election of the citizens' representatives, while the next three dealt with more basic conditions of the social life of the city. Article 2 stated that "anyone has the right to enjoy absolute liberty in one's own house without being prevented – neither day nor night – by the police from doing private business (*particulaires Forretninger*)". This was a significant break from the police's license – which had been codified in 1684 – to examine private houses if any activity going against good moral conduct was suspected there.²⁶⁰

The meaning of the phrase 'private business' in article 2 of the Bill of 3 April was open to extensive interpretation, but it seems apparent that one purpose of the article was to establish more firm boundaries between private and public spheres by introducing limitations on the municipal control and interference with what was considered belonging to the private sphere – in line with the simultaneous morality reforms reclassifying sexual conduct as a private matter.²⁶¹ In the same way as Struensee had created a new public sphere by introducing freedom of the press, one could argue that he wanted to outline a private sphere, which was to be fundamentally inaccessible to the public, as long as no illegal activities were known to take place.

The following articles dealt with corruption and legal reorganization. City officials were prohibited from receiving perquisites and other remuneration for their work. The intention was 'to reduce civilian expenses', as it was put. This was a thinly veiled hint to what was considered to be widespread corruption in the city government and administration and the perception that officials allowed themselves to be overpaid – in the form of perquisites – when carrying out their duties. The last article heralded a reorganization of the complicated Copenhagen court system, involving different courts for different estates and social groups. In practice, this meant that the city government was deprived of judicial authority, which stemmed from medieval traditions of city courts.

These changes were soon hailed in an anonymous thanksgiving poem.²⁶² In order to free the citizens from oppression and maintain their freedom, the King had

260 Schou and Rosenvinge 1795–1850, about 29 April 1684, 409, specified by an instruction of 24 March 1741 and an ordinance of 19 April 1743; see Kolderup Rosenvinge 1828, 21 and Koch 1982, 46.

261 On the Bill of 3 April 1771, see also Stevnsborg 1998, 247–256. The Bill is also discussed more elaborately in Langen 2021.

262 [anonymous], *Allerunderdanigst Taksigelse til Den vor Største og viiseste Monark [...] for de Allershøystpriselige og viiseste Indretninger udi i Staden Kiøbenhavn i Aaret 1771, allerunderdanigst insinueret af Samtlige Stadens Borgere den 15 April 1771*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (22 April 1771).

eased the “burden of a too numerous municipality”, put the administration of justice on a better footing and now would give citizens the opportunity to elect who should sit on the city council. But even before the reorganization of the municipality, the city council and its officials had been up for debate in the Press Freedom Writings. Actually, since mid-January 1771 an unprecedented debate on clientelism, nepotism, and corruption had pushed the boundaries of public debate.

A satirical pamphlet with the enigmatic title *Eulogy to the Shoe Brush given as an Inaugural Speech at the Opening of the Shoe Brush Temple in Old Greenland* would become one of the most influential texts in the early Press Freedom Period and serve as a point of reference for a wide variety of comments.²⁶³ The eulogy was a satirical tale in the tradition of fictitious travel novels like Holberg’s *Niels Klim’s Subterranean Journey* and Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* imbued with implicit references to contemporary affairs.

In brief, the storyline is as follows. Two shipwrecked men – a young male servant and an old erudite – are rescued in the semi-fictitious land of Old Greenland where they recover thanks to the nursing care of native inhabitants. In a conversation with the natives about happiness, the old scholar explains that happiness in Denmark is best achieved by studying hard, serving the nation and leading a god-fearing life. The natives ask if the best minds and most diligent students are offered the best offices and lucrative positions in society, now that they have gained a thorough knowledge of the sciences. Reluctantly, the old erudite has to admit that this is not the case.

The servant Erik has a very different view of the pursuit of happiness. Sciences are not needed at all, he argues. One can easily become a success without having learned anything, one just has to practice. Wouldn’t he himself be able to hold office or pass judgment just as well as a student, even though he has only seen the cover of his master’s law book? Definitely so. Erik explains that what really has helped his way in the world is the shoe brush. It is the tool that brings success. The natives are excited and want to worship this shoe brush as an idol capable of bringing happiness. A temple to the worship of the shoe brush is established and Erik is appointed high priest performing a service, while the ageing erudite is forced to write his sermon.

263 [C. P. Rothe], *Lovtale over Sko-Børsten holden som en Indvielses-Tale ved Skobørste Templens Oprettelse i Gammel-Grønland*, no place or printer, 1771 (18 January 1771).



Skobørste Tempelens Indvielse i Gammel-Grønland.

Sort efter Ny-Danmark i Aaret 1619. var bleven opfundet af Capitain Jens Munk *) paa den vestlige Deel af Jord-Kloden, var der en Skipper, navnlig Gunner Lange, som seilede fra Kanders didhen, i Haab, at han i Hudsons-bayen skulde giøre en anseelig og fordeelagtig Fiskefangst.

Vorgenesterens Tiener der i Kanders seilede og med denne Skipper didover, baade for at fortiene sig noget ved Reisen, som og for tillige at faae Kundskab

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*) See Danske Mænds og Qvindes berømmelige Eftermæle 2. Part, Sid. 526.

Fig. 22: C. P. Rothe's criticism of offices given to lackeys was presented in a satirical allegory in which Greenlanders assume a new religious celebration of the Shoe Brush in a temple consecrated to its worship. From [C. P. Rothe] *Inauguration of the Shoe Brush Temple in Old Greenland*, 1771. © Royal Danish Library.

This satire had circulated in handwritten copies since the mid-1760s, but with the introduction of Press Freedom, it was printed and put up for sale. At that time – the turn of the year 1770 to 1771 – a common understanding of the possibilities of the new freedom of the press was emerging; for instance, publishing a text that was previously considered impossible to publish due to its satirical critique of the practice of appointment to public office. Thus, the text reflects the new public as well as the old. It was not written out of an intention of addressing a new audience in a new situation; rather it had clandestinely been fashioned in the awareness of doing something forbidden. Neither author nor printer appeared on the title page. The author was the lawyer Casper Peter Rothe who had published a number of popular historical works since the 1740s.²⁶⁴

The text portrayed a phenomenon later nicknamed as “lackeyism”; the practice of influential people favoring their lackeys and servants and making sure they got public offices after serving their lordships. The anticipation of future office made lackeys accept lower pay and the promise or expectation of office or promotion was an often unspoken part of their employment. It must be emphasized that many lackeys acted, on a daily basis, as scribes and accountants for their masters and thus could often do more than stand on the back of the carriage, wait, and take care of the wardrobe. But the impression that former drivers and servants could rise to secretaries with their master and from there further on to government officials or court clerks, was widespread and was tied to a practice that had taken root since the beginning of the century. The introduction of the law degree at the university in 1736 had the aim of granting a higher degree of formalization when hiring civil servants, but there were still far from enough trained lawyers for many offices. In addition, several types of office were so poorly paid that they were hardly attractive to educated law scholars.²⁶⁵

Eulogy to the Shoe Brush kick-started an elaborate debate on nepotism and clientelism including a critique of the Municipality, of urban legislation, and social conventions. Rothe’s text introduced the social naming of a phenomenon, a type, and a problem. A “shoe brush” became the pejorative name for a favored servant who had obtained office without formal qualifications; a synonym for a despicable person and a symptom of a dysfunctional society.

The Rumored Suicide of a Pixie

A few weeks after the publication of *Eulogy to the Shoe Brush*, a new pamphlet appeared taking the shoe brush debate from the general to the particular. The title was *A very strange Incident that happened in the City of Antwerp to a bewitched Boy Child*

²⁶⁴ Rothe’s bibliography, see DBL, 1.–3. ed.

²⁶⁵ Høst 1824, I, 61–62; Jensen 1973.

who was a Pixie but transformed himself into a Shoe Brush (and more) as the Story goes.²⁶⁶ Basically, it is a bizarre – and rather spiteful – story about shoe brushes, injustice, and the works of the Devil, describing the metamorphosis of a bewitched boy who first turns into a pixie, then turns into a shoe brush and ends up becoming a man manipulating his way to a powerful position. The story is ripe with social and sexual stereotypes and the text utilizes a complex structure of layers, but it is in the thick, situational, and detailed descriptions of deception and manipulation that the message is to be found; civil servants in high places were not seldomly crooks with diabolical traits. It was evident to many readers that the story was about a particular person within the Municipality – not least because of the convergence between the Danish word for pixie – *nisse* – and the name of one of the Copenhagen deputy mayors, Hans Nicolai Nissen.

According to Luxdorph's records, Nissen received the pamphlet about the pixie and became so stricken from reading it that he died a few days later, on 10 February.²⁶⁷ We cannot say whether this is correct or not, but the fact is that the deputy mayor, if he read the pamphlet, would find himself portrayed in the most malicious satirical form imaginable. Or at the very least, he would see references to people and places that could be interpreted as an incisive commentary on his career and work. The pamphlet was written by an author with knowledge of Nissen's professional and private affairs. It has been mentioned that the author might be found among students at Borchs Kollegium, a student hall of residence, who would have reasons to be dissatisfied with the fact that uneducated lackeys were given offices which the students saw as belonging to their hunting grounds.²⁶⁸

While Rothe satirized about general matters, the pamphlet about the pixie took a specific target. In the eighteenth century, a traditional distinction was made between satires dealing with general social matters and lampoon or pasquinades, characterized by mocking personal attacks. Thus, the Danish-Norwegian playwright Ludvig Holberg maintained a distinction between permissible satire aimed at the ordinary and impermissible satire aimed at "either innocent or guilty persons" – a distinction repeated by the young Struensee in his *Altona* periodical. Handwritten lampoons were common in eighteenth-century Copenhagen as a limited and clandestine alternative to the government-controlled public. Mostly, anonymous authors

266 [anonymous], *En saare mærkværdig Tildragelse som er skeet i den Stad Antwerpen med et forhexet Drengbarn der var en Nisse men omskabte sig til en Skoebørste med mere som Historien fortæller. Først skrevet i Hollandsk ved Heer de Calmuysen og i det Danske oversat ved Claus Lille, fordum Sogne-Degn, og nu til Trykken befordret ved Casper Ebletoft samt hosføiet en Lovtale over Skoebørsterne*, no place or printer, 1771 (30 January 1771).

267 Nyerup (ed.) 1791, 513.

268 Jensen 1973, 42–43.

attacked named or easily recognizable senior officials and criticized nepotism and the abuse of power.²⁶⁹

The pamphlet about the pixie significantly differs from Rothe's *Eulogy to the Shoe Brush* in the sense that it is written in the new situation without censorship. While lampoons and satires before September 1770 were, as mentioned, written and circulated along hidden channels to avoid censorship, there was now a legal *carte blanche* to ventilate criticism. The strong personification of the object of satire in the tale of the pixie indicates a change in satirical approaches brought about by Press Freedom. There are many indications that personal attacks – directly and indirectly – came to constitute an essential element in the new public sphere; while lampoons and squibs used to thrive as a concealed underground part of the public, Press Freedom turned them into a regular genre. One can ask, furthermore, whether content and quality of satire also changed with the abolition of censorship.²⁷⁰ It was the specifically harsh satirical and personally insulting content in some of the Press Freedom Writings that was pointed out as the problem in the motivation for the restriction of the Freedom of the Press half a year later, on 7 October 1771.

With the two spectacular texts about the shoe brush religion and the pixie from Antwerp, the shoe brush debate had only just begun. A string of pamphlets was published with comments on the death of Nissen and further contributions to the debate. It took on a fresh turn when, on 12 February 1771, the government issued a Cabinet Order stating that servants who had been taking care of their master's personal waiting were not to be employed in public office. It was not entirely clear how such a "Domestique oder Bedienter", as it was phrased in German, was to be defined. Who was covered by the ban and how was it to be administered? No doubt, this law was inspired by the shoe brush debate, and contemporary observers like Luxdorph pointed to *Eulogy to the Shoe Brush* and the lampoon against Nissen as the direct cause for the new government to issue the Cabinet Order. This would imply that either the King, Struensee or an influential person in their circle had followed the debate and acted accordingly. Whether this was the case or not, the Cabinet Order indicates that the lackey-nepotism issue was occupying the minds of many Copenhageners. We may add that Struensee, again in his youthful *Altona periodical* of 1763, had satirized the magical act of transforming a lackey into a public official. Furthermore, the ban was in line with the meritocratic reforms of administration and civil service that had been on the Cabinet's agenda since September the year before.

269 On lampoons in eighteenth-century Denmark-Norway, see Færch 2010. Holberg is quoted from this essay. See also Bartholdy 1972.

270 Satirical creativity with or without censorship respectively is a classic theme within satire research: Burke 1941, 231–232; Elliott 1960, 264–265; Griffin 1994, 138–134; Hodgart 2010, 39. On the tradition of anticlerical satire in particular, see Brink 2015, 2018.

After the Anti-Shoe Brush Cabinet Order

Several new Shoe Brush-pamphlets followed, and in the period from 8 March to 8 April, at least 14 publications about shoe brushes came out. It is characteristic of this series of shoe brush pamphlets that social and economic matters in Copenhagen played a particularly important role in the perception of injustice. One example, the pamphlet *The Fall of the Shoe Brush 1771. Described by Jens the Servant*, published shortly after the Cabinet Order, takes place in America.²⁷¹ In a situation with no relatives, parents, and friends, a young boy grabs the brush and takes to shine people's shoes at the city gate. A man takes pity on him and brings him to his house where he becomes a scribe, learns to cut pens and stand on the back of a coach. He learns to use both men's and ladies' pens and comes to court where he becomes a kitchen scribe. He earns money and gets a reputation, among other things because he ingratiates himself with noblemen and provides them with mistresses. The author highlights that the mindset of a Shoe Brush can be found anywhere in society, and he presents a string of examples on how the new law will benefit social justice. It will no longer be possible to bribe one's way into office and the Municipality will, from now on, consist of enlightened men, not of Shoe Brushes.

The story is a tribute to the newly issued Cabinet Order banning the employment of servants; a kind of projection of the effects of the law. Social conflicts will be minimized when knowledge and insight have replaced nepotism and self-interest, and harmony and respect between the various social groups of the city will emerge. The pamphlet is a social policy statement that is not just about fighting nepotism. In addition to the appreciation of formal criteria for access to positions and assessment of qualifications, it is about the human qualities of employees. When people no longer find it reasonable and necessary to act in accordance with the rationales of a corrupt hierarchy where it is simply a matter of making up to one's superiors, ways of thinking will change, and civil servants and the Municipality will take a more compassionate approach to being in office. It is the return to a natural order. An important result is that the economic exploitation of the poor will decline.

The exploitation of common people was also the main perspective of *A Breadless Lackey's deplorable Letter to his Uncle* (March 8 1771).²⁷² In this pamphlet, the shoe brush problem is linked to another current and quite serious matter, namely the grave food supply situation in the ice winter of 1770 to 1771. The lack of food had forced the government on 24 December 1770 to ban the production of distilled spirits using rye. On February 14, the Municipality was ordered to be in charge of baking

²⁷¹ [anonymous], *Børsternes Endeligt 1771. Beskrevet af Jens Gaardskarl*, no place or printer, 1771 (20 February 1771).

²⁷² [anonymous], *En brodløs Lakeys begrædelige Skrivelse til sin Farbroder vel bekiendt Kornpuger i Jylland angaaende Rugens faldne Priis og den ædle Skoebørstes Forhaanelse i Dannemark til Trykken befordret af Rasmus Ligeftrem*, no place or printer, 1771 (March 8 1771)

bread to be sold to the poor at the lowest possible prices. In terms of genre, the story of the breadless (*brødløs*, i. e. unremunerative) lackey does not belong to the ensemble of travel stories, but was what one might call “the mediated letter” in which a person brings a supposedly found letter into print; a type of text that was quite prevalent among the Press Freedom Writings and was part of a long tradition.

In this pamphlet, the disapproval of ‘shoe brushing’ turns into a social criticism that is not just about nepotism and offices but has a number of other implications presented by Jens the Lackey in his letter: pretence, self-presentation, social hierarchies, and social conventions, excessive consumption, food hoarding, conditions of the poor, masquerades, and gambling. Certainly, Jens possesses all the negative human qualities characterizing a Shoe Brush, but he is just as much a product of snobbery, superficiality, and the prevailing patron-client system of society. In addition, there is a more unnoticed implication about gender and sexuality. Jens becomes valet to the lady of the house and dresses her hair, which insinuates a sexual relationship between the lady and the young, pomaded man, as no woman usually had a male valet. Another shoe brush pamphlet highlights, in versified form, how a shoe brush almost becomes lord of the house because of the sexual power he obtains over the women of the household:

I often please the women of the house
At times they take favors from the joy of my brushing
I therefore rule all of the house
Sometimes violently, sometimes cunningly, I do my deeds.²⁷³

Although the women of the house are formally his superiors, the lackey achieves a superior position through his sexual services. Thus, the criticism is no longer just about shoe brushes in undeserved offices, but just as much about the function of the shoe brush in his lackey service and the corrupting power he exercises in private contexts as well.

Shoe Brushes versus Students

The problem of shoe brushes is also discussed – albeit satirically and condescendingly – from a different perspective. The people who lose out because of the new law on domestics are mentioned in *A Conversation between two Girls about the Fall of the Shoe Brush, made from Nye-Gaden to Amager-Torv. Brought to the Press by Morten Slowly*, which is staged as a piece of intercepted reality from Copenhagen street life.²⁷⁴ The title page is provided with a vignette depicting shoes, boots, brush,

²⁷³ [anonymous], *Skoebørstens Svanesang*, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 1771 (13 March 1771).

²⁷⁴ [anonymous], *Samtale imellem tvende Piger om Skoebørstens Fald, holden fra Nye-Gaden til Amager-Torv. Til Trykken befordret af Morten Langsom*, no place or printer, 1771 (18 March 1771).

comb, and a heap of hair, in which the name Lars is seen on a ribbon. Under the vignette is written: “The Brush has given Bread”. The subject is both visually and metaphorically clear, pointing to the fact that as early as 18 March when the publication was announced for sale, the shoe brush theme was so generally understood that the title page’s illustrations and text were expected to be easily decoded by buyers at printers and booksellers.

The satirical pamphlet portrays a conversation between two sisters as they stroll along the main street of Nygade down to Amagertorv – an important central square in the public sphere of the Press Freedom Period. In this text, the legal intervention against the shoe brushes is presented as a social degradation. Disappointed hopes and a loss of confidence in the customary system of nepotism characterize the two women. Pale-looking and without her usual fashionable clothes, one sister complains that she no longer sees any prospect of marrying Lars Brush, with whom she is engaged. The other sister objects: Lars can accommodate, he can shave and speak French, which are all valued sciences. And most importantly; he is the servant of a powerful man. Many have become considerable men with the help of the brush.

The first sister is annoyed that she can no longer expect to receive the new clothes that her boyfriend has promised her. She says that she has read about the Shoe Brush Act in the newspaper, which she is now pulling out to let her sister share the bad news. Both are horrified by the consequences of the new law. The second sister is appalled by the news because her husband, a coachman, is courting to become a town hall attendant. He cannot calculate or write, but he has learned to take payment for services done. They soon reach Amagertorv where a peep show is displaying pictures of the fall of the Shoe Brush and his crashing from the mountain of honor. Depressed and disillusioned, the two sisters leave the square.

The text portrays an urban oral culture where newspaper reading is involved as an informative and clarifying practice. These women are readers, while at least one of their male fiancés cannot read. The image of Copenhagen street life, giving space to the discussion of the Shoe Brush Act, is emphasized by locale and mobility when the two sisters move along the central axis of Nygade to Amagertorv while talking. It is worth noting the communicative practice depicted, albeit in a parodic interpretation; the Shoe Brush Act, the textualizations of the newspapers, the oral processing and the visual representation of peep show are connected in a communicatively interpretive interweaving, in which the newspaper is highlighted as documentation.

In a surreal narrative based on traditional folklore about elves and supernatural creatures, we move from Amagertorv to Valby, a village not far outside of Copenhagen, in the pamphlet *A Wondrous Sight*.²⁷⁵ One night, a schoolmaster witnesses a magnificent and grotesque funeral ceremony among supernatural creatures, in

275 [anonymous], *Et forunderligt Syn som blev seet en Nat i W*lb** Skole der forestillede en Liigbægængelse med Skoebørster samt en Liig-Tale som blev hørt af underjordiske Folk. Optegnet og til Trykken befordret ved Mogens Skolemester*, no place or printer, 1771 (18 March 1771).

which the insignia of the deceased is carried on striped pillows; clothes-brush, comb, pomade box, powder puff, soap, razor, slippers, dressing gown, chamber pot, shoe polish, shoe brush, and so on. A hair bag, white silk stockings and a muff are placed on the coffin. Every material representation of a Shoe Brush is present. A funeral speech is delivered using a frame of contrasting social characteristics: before the Act, the Shoe Brushes walked about with offices in the pocket and distinctions in the stomach, but now they are left to the circle of provision dealers, *kældermænd* (basement men, i. e. tenants or shopkeepers in cheap basement leases) and bottlers. Lambskin coats now suit their bodies better than velvet jackets. This reference to costumes is commonly used for social stereotyping; *skindpels* (a lambskin coat) was frequently used name for a – tarnished – provision dealer.

Back in his house, the schoolmaster records the experiences of the night. The next day, the narrator goes to Copenhagen and visits a place in Pilestræde (probably the printing business of the Berling brothers), where he usually reads newspapers. He reads something – most likely a notice on the Shoe Brush Act – so that the strange scene he witnessed the night before suddenly makes sense. Once again, newspapers are referred to as explanatory and conducive, just like in the story of the two sisters walking along Nygade to Amagertorv.

The following night, a creature appears to the schoolmaster and commands him to note down his experiences and have them printed. The next morning, he edits his manuscript and goes to a printing shop in Copenhagen to have it published. In a way, this finale gives a snapshot of the writing and printing practice of the Press Freedom Period, in which one senses the new short and fast path from pen to print. But the main conclusion of the pamphlet is about social tensions between lambskin coats and servants who rise to glory, versus cowed students who do not. The opposites are also illustrated in the contrast of fine garments (superficiality) and knowledge (profundity).

The tensions between uneducated brushes and scholars are expressed even more clearly in a pamphlet entitled *Money is better than Mind and Knowledge*.²⁷⁶ The text is written as a funeral speech in which Hieronymus Blockhead speaks harshly to his fat-headed audience. What is science and reading good for, he asks, and heads into a lengthy ridicule of the learned as a social stereotype; his weak and stooping appearances, his worn-out clothes, his failing eyesight from too much reading and his everlasting financial difficulties. No, the half-learned fool in a nice coach, fashionable outfit and with money in his pocket is the ideal. He may write an occasional poem so that everyone thinks he has spirit. That will suffice. Who wants to spend his life rummaging old Latin writings only to receive contempt, ridicule, and poverty in return? The opposition to the scholars is sharply drawn up with a direct incitement

276 [anonymous], *Penge er bedre end Forstand og Lærdom: Forestillet i en kort Afhandling holden som en Oration paa det øverste Auditorio i **** af Hieronimus Dumrian*, no place or printer, 1771 (22 March 1771).

to hatred; one shoe brush advice is to persecute and hate all “those whom the world calls scholars”. Love the gaudy frock, hate the black one, as it is proclaimed with reference to the traditional uniform of the students.

Another pamphlet, *Twelve Letters from a Peasant to his Lord*, mentions how students have suffered for centuries while the fall of the shoe brushes has now paved the way for the rise of the book.²⁷⁷ The hatred of shoe brushes towards the learned will be replaced by the victory of erudition and academic studies over nepotism and incompetence. Yet another author contributes to this theme by letting a student proclaim a verse:

Now is the golden age for the students
 Speak about what we know, and we shall be happy
 By means of our studies we can now succeed
 For the brush who used to oppress has disappeared (15).²⁷⁸

A fictitious patriotic professor – in another pamphlet – mentions how offices that were previously occupied by shoe brushes have now been opened to students.²⁷⁹ In still another text, an author makes a proposal for how shoe brushes can make themselves useful and enter the Copenhagen labor market, now that they can no longer get offices.²⁸⁰ As they are used to wait and have been trained to ‘a certain kind of courtesy’, they will be well suited for the catering business.

While the early shoe brush texts were exclusively about clientelism, the later texts spread into elements such as gambling, injustice, pretense, the devaluation of learning, the relationship between the sexes in the household, etc. It is remarkable how the shoe brush debate in some texts was closely linked to considerations on the Copenhagen Magistrate, but the most striking thing is probably the quite explicit display of experiences of – or perhaps sometimes only the notions of – a thoroughly corrupt civil service. Whether the pamphlets reflected a regular unveiling of extraordinary corruption in the municipal government or rather a more general and long-simmering dissatisfaction with an ingrained clientelist system, the texts constituted a harsh political critique of the civil system by attacking both administrative and civil service culture of Danish absolutism and the absurdities of prevailing social hierarchies. It had by no means been possible until 14 September 1770.

277 [F. A. Pflueg], *Tolv Breve, fra en Bonde til sin Herremand*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (20 March 1771).

278 [Martin Brun], *Forsvars-Skrift for Fanden og Jøderne. Skrevet af Anne Blyetækkers*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterleverske, 1771 (3 April 1771).

279 [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem en ejegod, viis og stor Fyrste og en Minister, Borger, Bonde, Philosoph, Professor, Kiøbmand og Krigsmand angaaende Finantserne, Handelen, Laugene, Krigsmagten til Lands og Vands, Lærdommens Udbredelse, Agerdyrkingen og de dyre Tider. Til alle Stænders fælles Velfærd og Lyksalighed*, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 1771 (10 April 1771).

280 [F. A. Pflueg], *Tolv Breve, fra en Bonde til sin Herremand*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (20 March 1771).

Food, Hunger, and Hard Times

Steady food supplies and food price levels perceived by the urban population as fair were decisive factors in the maintaining of social stability in early modern cities. The Luxdorph Collection contains the new Municipality's printed rules about food prices and quality, which were included in the collection to provide the proper context for a pamphlet debate on the measures taken by the government and the city council to curb high living costs and food shortages. The ubiquitous Martin Brun paid tribute to the new Municipality in verse ventilating his hopes for its ability to do something about high prices and bread shortages and particularly to take care of the predicament of the poor.²⁸¹ Other authors were less enthusiastic – the anonymous pamphlet *Civil Considerations on the City Regulations issued by the Copenhagen City Council* delivered a scathing attack on the new city council, which was described as ignorant and uninformed of the state of the city.²⁸² Furthermore, there was added an ill-concealed critique of the new Municipality's German tinge; the Lord Mayor Holstein was a Holsatian German, like several other members of the new city council, which is why they were considered ignorant of Copenhagen conditions. Despite the hard words that fell on the new magistrate, the author assured that they were written out of a pure patriotism and that "a permitted freedom to put forward my thoughts in public has carried them to the press". The author was well aware that his critique could never have been made if it were not for Press Freedom.

The discussion about prices and storage of grain came on the heels of a severe winter with food shortages. A collection of fictitious letters from a farmer about conditions in Copenhagen described the hunger and poverty in the winter-plagued city.²⁸³ A husband goes out in the bitter cold to find work while his wife stays at home to take care of the children screaming for bread, but he comes home empty-handed in the evening. Trade and factories almost stand still, while smuggled goods destroy city trade. Artisans do not have enough to order and have no income. The fatal consequences of rising food prices were also described in *Thoughts on Distillation of Spirits*.²⁸⁴ When food "becomes expensive, it is difficult for the poor to earn his bread, and an overwhelming poverty in a country diminishes in many ways the number of its inhabitants, the children die of hunger at the breasts of a hungry mother, parents are suffocated by sorrow, the beggars implore in vain" (17). It is a

281 [Martin Brun], *Fandens Liv og Levnet første gang til Trykken befordret ved Doctor Faust*, Venedig [?], no printer indicated, 1771.

282 [anonymous], *Borgerlige Betænkninger over det fra Kiøbenhavns Raadstue udkomne Stad-Reglement, viisende i visse Maader dette Reglements fortrædelige Indhold og skadelige Følger*, no place or printer, 1771 (20 September 1771).

283 [F. A. Pflueg], *Tolv Breve, fra en Bonde til sin Herremand*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (20 March 1771).

284 [anonymous], *Tanker om Brændeviins-Brænden. Skienket til Stiftelsen for nyefødte Børns Opdragelse*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (28 June 1771).

downward spiral, and evidently the patriotic notion of the benefits of population growth plays a significant role in the argument. In a pamphlet staged as a conversation between a traveler, an officer, and a Copenhagen citizen, food prices are discussed and the officer explains that food has “risen to an excessive and oppressive price, especially for the poor and those with low income and large families”.²⁸⁵ The traveler cannot understand why a grain-producing country like Denmark is unable to feed its own population and, furthermore, why a trading city like Copenhagen does not have stocks to last for a least six months. The citizen replies that royal storages, which are normally intended for the Army and Navy, have already been distributed, but that there are hardly any merchants with large stocks of grain and fatty goods in the city. The traveler is reminiscent of the grain hoarders that have recently been uncovered in Bohemia and Moravia hiding grain in order to push up prices, and, echoing Philopatris, he suggests that something similar may be the case in Copenhagen.

In one of his fictitious conversations between a prince and his subjects of different classes and professions, Martin Brun gives voice to a subject who humbly thanks the prince for handing out bread to his people, although he is still increasingly worried about the future.²⁸⁶ The prince promises to take care of it, but he needs time and the help of Providence. The regret of the prince contains two assumptions also found in other pamphlets; that the high meat prices were due to the premature slaughtering of lambs and calves, and that food shortage was linked to an unpatriotic export at the expense of Danish subjects. Press Freedom writers were intensely discussing where to place the responsibility for rising prices and the resulting poverty. The undisguised social critique in the discussions about food shortages and prices reveals a hitherto rather unnoticed side of the Press Freedom public. The public discussion of poverty and trade had previously taken place in closed expert circles, among the learned, in the civil service, or in a few specialized treatises. Now it was unfolding as a conversation between concerned citizens. This was a significant and far-reaching opening of the realm of debate.

Social perspectives became more common in many pamphlets dealing with urban matters, particularly the functionality and social use of urban space were recurring themes. Frustration and suggestions for improvements, which had previously either been discussed orally or were communicated in a more formal manner through mainstream channels such as petitions to the Municipality or to the King,

285 [anonymous], *Discours imellem en fremmet Reisende, en Officer og en Borger ved Navn den Tænkende. Handlende 1. Om de høie Priser paa Brød og Fødevarre, 2. Om det Fattiges Væsen, 3. Om Skifter, 4. Om Procuratores Antal for Underretterne, 5. Om Gade Løgter, 6. Om Gade Vægterne*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (29 April 1771), 3.

286 [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem en ejegod, viis og stor Fyrste og en Minister, Borger, Bonde, Philosoph, Professor, Kiøbmand og Krigsmand angaaende Finantserne, Handelen, Laugene, Krigsmagten til Lands og Vands, Lærdommens Udbredelse, Agerdyrkningen og de dyre Tider. Til alle Stænders fælles Velfærd og Lyksalighed*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (10 April 1771).

were now shared with the public in expectation of attention from co-citizens. Debates often took their point of departure in considerations on solving a specific practical problem in urban public space. One example is the debate on street cleaning, which began with pragmatic suggestions and considerations on the pro and cons of public, municipality-organized street sweeping to turn, after a few pamphlets, into social satire. In this style, an author argued that the sweeping of the large, wide streets must precede the sweeping in the small narrow alleys, because noble carriages always take the large streets. And the nobles must always be supported. Their carriages must be able to move quickly because the business and affairs of nobles are so important that they should withstand ‘no protraction or delay’ (13). The fact that there are so few sweepers in the small streets may be regarded as a sign of helpfulness from the scavenging department; as it is difficult to get through the small streets, the department will not make the passage even more difficult by sending too many sweepers into them. So, in small streets they have to live with the stench in order to grant better passage. The social geography of the city is made explicit in the contrast between the great and the small streets, so that there is nothing to misunderstand: “Just as the small animals are created and live to serve the larger animals, so the small streets must give up their full contingent, so that the great streets can be better served”.²⁸⁷

The introduction of public street sweeping a few years earlier was criticized by the pseudonymous Harlequin Savage, and once again, the city’s social inequalities are reflected in the universe of street sweeping.²⁸⁸ If public street sweeping were abolished, everyone would have to “sweep his own street without respect to persons, both rich and poor, both titled and untitled, both high-born and low-born” (18). Private sweeping will simply have a socially leveling effect – at least while it is going on. The same was stated by Martin Brun in one of his pamphlets; if public sweeping was abolished, everyone again would have to sweep (or having swept) their own street “without distinction of rank and condition” (9).²⁸⁹ Following this point of view, public sweeping had removed the performative equality-making practice of private sweeping.

Shoe brushes, the municipality, corruption, food prices, and street sweeping were separately dealt with in many pamphlets but just as often such issues appear in mixture with many others. Quite a few pamphlets took a full tour in the urban

287 [anonymous], *Fundne Breve. Første Stykke indeholdende: Om de til Kiøbenhavns Gaders Reenholdelse afgivende Feye-Penge*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (2 April 1771)

288 Harlequin-Vildmand [anonymous], *Harlequin-Vildmands Betragtninger over Statens Tarv, Feil og Forbedring. Skreven i Snakke-Maaneden, først i Aaret efter Skrive-Friheden*, Copenhagen; Borups Efterleverske, 1771 (21 May 1771). Harlequin writes in the “Chattering month” in the early year after the Freedom to Write, as he says. He knows he owes Press Freedom his possibility of voicing public complaints.

289 [Martin Brun], *Lucifers Begrædelse over Helvedes Forstyrrelse og de Onde Aanders Udryddelse*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (10 April 1771).

subject catalogue with interlacements of comments, assessments, and ridicule, which differed, in every way, from the stringent, reasoning, and discussing form which had, ideally at least, characterized the academic style of most pre-Press Freedom scripts. The current of urban pamphlets can be read as detailed snapshots of the topics occupying Copenhageners in the spring of 1771. One of these topics were about sumptuousness and social appearance.

Opulence and Frugality

In relation to the debate on poverty, material signs of wealth became a hot topic for many writers. In the pamphlet *Twelve Letters, from a Peasant to His Lord*, a socially differentiated taxation is proposed by the industrialist F. A. Pflueg, so that the tax be not levied on the common people, but on ‘all useless and boastful splendor. The big mirrors, the ingenious clocks, the proud tapestries, the gilded carriages [and] the lavish clothing’ (22). The objects are presented as evidence of the owners’ boastful behavior – and in these times of scarcity – as a lack of community spirit and failing understanding of the desperate situation of others. Therefore, they should be taxed. In one of his fables, Martin Brun regards the spectacular consumption of the rich as an insult towards all the Copenhageners who have suffered from the cold and scarcity of the cruel winter: “The gentlemen in their long fur coats ride the sleighs and enjoy themselves at the expense of the weather. The rest of us stay at home freezing and starving, so that even our souls tremble”.²⁹⁰ Fur-clad masters and mistresses appear again and again as an example of social injustice, even the magnificent fur coats of Struensee and Brandt are mentioned in a pamphlet following their arrest in January 1772 (see Chapter 11). Sleigh-riding is portrayed as an inconsiderate pleasure: the high and mighty rush through the snow-covered streets in their fast sleighs just for fun, surrounded by torch bearers, while common Copenhageners have to struggle onward in knee-deep snow, having a hard time staying warm because of the shortage of firewood, while the sea is frozen, so that no goods can be shipped into the starving city.

Abundance viewed as an explicit expression of social inequality gave rise to a fictional letter by the active pamphleteer F. C. Scheffer, in which a Muslim man explains a Turkish vizier why abundance of food and drinking is both harmful and punishable, because the rich and voluptuous consume, in one meal, more than what ten poor people could live off for many days.²⁹¹ In addition, excessive con-

290 [Martin Brun], *En Samtale holden i Niels Klims Rige, imellem Keiser Klim selv, nogle af Ministerne, en Borger, en Bonde og Klims Hofnar*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (8 April 1771).

291 [F. C. Scheffer], *1ste Brev til Løven, fra Cameleon, 2det Brev til en Storvizir, fra en Muselmand, og 3die Brev til den Tyrkiske Mufti, fra en Christen Slave, alle 3 oversat af Tyrkisk. Saa og trende Fabler. 1) Om Løven og Ræven. 2) Om Hoppen og Koen. 3) Om Hyrderne og Faarene*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (11 June 1771).

sumption of food will cause prices to rise to the detriment of the poor. But if a rich man wants to waste his money on clothes, let him spend a fortune on a turban and a robe, as long as they are produced within the borders of the country. If he may destroy himself with his lavishness, yet he will nourish many industrious fellow-citizens, “whose hands are set in motion by his opulence, whose merits give them again the ability to pay for the diligence of other fellow-citizens” (15). Here, economic reasoning comes before moral judgment.

Authors contrasted opulence and superficiality on the one hand with utility and education on the other. In Martin Brun’s allegory, where the fine coffee pot, the less fine teapot, and the not-fine-at-all chamber pot discuss their lordship, the chamber pot has noticed how what is useful is not appreciated.²⁹² The chamber pot observes how the schoolmaster in the house is treated with contempt and have to remain in a corner, while the dance master and the hairdresser receive all the attention. “The schoolmaster, on the other hand, who is to form their minds and hearts, has no esteem at all. Had he not been so fortunate as to know a little French and music, he might hardly have been considered a human being in this house” (4). In addition to the useless skills of the dance master and the hairdresser, French and music are also considered to be superficial capacities, which the lordship values, but which are not worth much. The same reasoning is found in Pflueg’s mentioned *Twelve Letters, from a Peasant to His Lord* where a hope is aired that the rich will, in the future, spend money on their children’s education instead of on “abundance”, on “dance masters, hairdressers, and so forth” (19).

Even worse is it when conspicuous consumption forces citizens to opt out of the basic necessities of life in order to maintain a lavish lifestyle. One pamphlet mentions how a gentleman “whistles and dances for so long, keeps hairdressers and tailors, until his intestines prove that there is a vacuum or emptiness, and he is dragged to prison, after first cutting off his galloons, removing his fancy hat, and stripping him almost as naked as when he was born”.²⁹³ The superficial opulence has such a strong hold on the gentleman that he does not give heed to his hunger and heads directly towards humiliation, ruin, and debt imprisonment.

To some writers, the socio-economic aspects of the issue of luxury consumption were the most important argument; this was a debate on consumerism which had been prominent in large parts of Europe during the eighteenth century.²⁹⁴ In his *Collections*, P. F. Suhm elaborates an argument on simplicity, i. e., in the contemporary use of the word; modesty and frugality. He evidently builds on theories on national

²⁹² [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem Kaffekanden og Thepotten samt Kammerpotten. Skrevet i Fryse-Maaned*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (6 March 1771), 6.

²⁹³ [anonymous], *Harleqvin-Vildmands Betragtninger over Statens Tarv, Feil og Forbedring. Skreven i Snakke-Maaned*, først i Aaret efter Skrive-Friheden, Copenhagen; Borups Efterleverske, 1771 (21 May 1771), 5.

²⁹⁴ See for instance Berg and Eger 2003, 7–27. The Danish debates, see Dalgaard 2015 and Pedersen 2013.

characteristics when arguing that Danes and Norwegians are, by nature, more devoted to simplicity and frugality than to lust and opulence.²⁹⁵ Still, “Yppighed”, i. e., splendor, luxury, and opulence, had progressed, especially in Copenhagen. This development was based on an illusion of wealth, the pandering to everything French and a desire for comfort and pleasure, but at the same time these tendencies impoverished the country as it pushed and distorted the national import-export balance. In addition, it had consequences for morality. But as soon as someone mentioned the idea of even the slightest restriction of ‘the so-called good way of life everyone is shouting and whining, even those who preach against opulence, and who, however, most often practice it the most’ (50). Hypocrisy flourished, but the message of Suhm, himself very wealthy, was clear: Nothing but the strictest simplicity would save the Danes. The royal court ought to lead by example and ‘become simple’ because it would have an immediate spill-over effect on the subjects. Next, the authorization to wear gold and silver was to be revoked, the use of costly costumes was to be limited, servings even at private banquets were to be restrained by law, the import of lace, cambric, perfume, wine, and coffee was to be restricted (52). This was to be complemented by strong encouragement of domestic trade, industry, mining, fishing, and agriculture, combined with new tariff rules and monetary reforms. Evidently, Suhm argues within the framework of cameralism, and the acquisition of luxury items such as jewelry and expensive clothes was viewed as losses, as seen from a state economic perspective. Furthermore, he subscribed to a prevalent, somewhat culturalist idea that expanding Francophilia fed into the increase of superficiality and undue refinement.

Women between Depravation and Ideals

Wardrobes, equipment, and appearances constituted an essential part of city social life and could not be separated from the intricate system of performativity and ambition represented in several Press Freedom Writings. As we have seen, Martin Brun was particularly active in this debate. His descriptions of *petits maîtres* (he often used the phrase *Smaaherrer*, i. e., little gentlemen), which, with the help of splendid attire and polished behavior, ingratiate themselves with the ladies, are repeated in pamphlet after pamphlet, beginning in his very first publication *A Letter from Caroline, Mama's Only Daughter, to Pastor Fido, her Confessor* in which he writes about “the evil spirits with ostrich feathers in their hats” and “petit-maîtres with watery eyes and greasy mouths from mere appetite for women”.²⁹⁶ Notwithstanding Brun’s

²⁹⁵ P. F. Suhm, *Samlinger, Udgivne af Peter Friderich Suhm. 1. Bind 1. Stykke*, Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (18 February 1771).

²⁹⁶ [Martin Brun], *En Skrivelse fra Caroline, Mamaes eneste Datter, til Pastor Fido, hendes Skrifte-Fader*, Copenhagen: [Svare?], 1770 (31 October 1770).

quarrel with such male urban youngsters, it was often women who were his primary target, as can also be seen in the number of caricatured or directly derogatory representations of women in the Press Freedom Writings. With Press Freedom, the framework for representations of women – and especially Copenhagen women – had expanded considerably, and the soft, harmless, and cheerful style found in a pre-Press Freedom novel on women and fashion like *The Envelope* was replaced by vicious satire, rumbling condemnations or sarcastic extradition of the hypocrisy that women were performing or were exposed to.²⁹⁷

Attention to women's appearance and bearing in urban public space was particularly linked to the use of dress. 'Fashion disease' and inordinate love of finery were, as mentioned, presented by writers both as a moral problem and as an economic one. A direct connection was claimed between the desire to dress modern and a deeper moral corruption. Again, Martin Brun is at the forefront with his fictitiously reporting narratives, for example in *Letters to Mette Corporals from an Acquaintance in Funen*.²⁹⁸ One of the pamphlet's female characters has often observed a young woman by the name of Mette (with whom she is acquainted because they grew up in the same village) going to the theater or on private visits wearing long tugs, combs in her hair, envelopes, white silk stockings, and velvet shoes. Another figure in the pamphlet recalls Mette as she once was: a poor peasant girl dressed in old rags, and a critical contrast is established between Mette's previously wretched clothes and her new, sophisticated wardrobe. In the past, Mette would have been delighted with a simple garter, but now she is much more demanding. Clogs have turned into velvet shoes, cambric and fine lace have replaced calico caps and now "the body that used to be covered in a rough dress is wrapped in so much silk cloth that half an acre of it is sweeping the streets of Copenhagen". When Mette's attire and posture are, at the same time, linked to rumors about the many "cheerful men" visiting her while her soldier husband is on duty, the negative connection between outfit, the female body, sociability, and corrupt sexual morality, even outright prostitution, becomes unmistakable. The details of the materiality of clothing constitute an important point of reference in the letter's social descriptions. Mette's costume and bodily behavior become the subject of the narrator's fairly obvious slander.

Furthermore, Maren – the letter narrator – reports how the ladies in Copenhagen do not have the time to repair their socks full of holes because they are so busy making social calls; apparently necessity gives way to courtesy. That must be the reason, Maren continues with more or less feigned naiveté, why the women wear long silk trains, so that no one can see their ruined stockings. Maren finds it strange that the women are prepared to waste good silk on sweeping the streets, but at the same time

²⁹⁷ C. A. Thielo, *Enveloppens eller Saloppens forunderlige Hændelser: en comisk Roman oversat af Vers*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1763.

²⁹⁸ [Martin Brun], *Brev til Mette Corporals fra en Bekjendt i Fyen*, Copenhagen: [Svare?], 1770 (14 November 1770).

do not have the strength to repair their own socks. The urban women must be freezing with their thin and worn-out socks, unlike people in the country who wear two pairs of wool socks and straw in their clogs.

The letter writer's judgmental tone is dressed in a false care for her girlfriend in the big city. Through the textualization of materiality ranging from the straw in the clogs to the worn silk stockings, the narrator stages a string of contrasts between country and city life, between frugality and ornamentation, between the naturalness of folk costume and the unnatural creations of fashion, between rural chastity and urban licentiousness, between provincial honesty and urban superficiality and calculation. It is significant that none of the three women in the pamphlet appear particularly likeable, one is naïve, one is licentious, one is a disloyal gossiper; misogyny is quite evident. The traditional critique of women's behavior that was an integral part of moral narratives in the pre-Press Freedom spectator periodicals had developed into a detailed and depreciatory system of urban female social stereotypes. Before the introduction of Press Freedom, female presence – whether fictitious or real – as acting, reading and writing individuals in the public was primarily represented in educational literature and moral periodicals inspired by the English spectator genre.²⁹⁹ One of the more spectacular examples of this had been the female "sender" in the periodical *La Spectatrice Danoise, ou l'Aspasie Moderne*, written and published by the author L.-A. de la Beaumelle (1748–1750) during his residence in Copenhagen. As the title indicates, the sender was a female spectator, while the contents were addressing both female and male readers presenting moral essays based on concrete experience and lived situations, although it was written by a man under a female pen name.³⁰⁰

In 1767, the periodical *The Female Times and the Friday Society* had been introduced and became a relative success. *The Female Times* was staged as being authored by a society of female narrators made up of type characters; six women of different age embodying different social status and human qualities; a serious widow of a priest, an experienced housekeeper, a young and gay lady, and so forth. Readers were encouraged to submit 'useful and amusing manuscripts' to have them published in the periodical or to pick a subject to be presented by one of the female characters. The editorial twist was to create accordance between the constructed personality of a specific narrator and the nature of the subject. The fictitious society of characters in *The Female Times* was ideally a collectively created mouthpiece for the female readership. This openness towards the contributions of the readership was an important attempt to create a community of readers and writers around the peri-

299 The moral and educational literature for women (written by men) were often published as collections, not as regular periodicals. See for instance C. A. Thielo, *Den borgerlige Hovmesterinde eller en Samling af moralske, kritiske og oeconomiske Tanker for Fruentimmerne* (1759) and Pierre-Joseph Boudier de Villemert, *Fruentimmerets Ven* (1761), which a translation of a French bestseller (*L'ami des femmes*).

300 See Krefting 2008.

odical. Basically, the readers were offered influence on the creation of the female narrators as a reflection of their own image. Furthermore, the development of the characters over time contributed to strengthen this link and consolidate the community. This is why seriality was a constitutive element of periodicals such as *The Female Times*.³⁰¹ With the introduction of Press Freedom, however, a much more radical criticism of gender roles, particularly their female versions, became possible.

In addition to the above-mentioned moralist link between female finery and depravation, an opposition between patriotic ideals and fashion emerged, as for example in the pamphlet *Madame House-Proud's Home-Visits to the Copenhagen Women, which must now report on their Housekeeping, whether they serve and have served the Danish State* written as a call to Danish *Jomfruer*, i. e. young, unmarried women.³⁰² The author sends out the fictional Mrs. House-Proud on house searches to confront the young women. A young girl confesses that her mother has provided her with skills in dressing, decorating, and mirroring herself instead of “learning housekeeping and doing something good and useful with her hands”, so that she will not be despised in a world of ‘gentlemen, who knows how to live, and demands of the daughters of the capital a certain way of life’, which is the opposite of the common lifestyle found in the country (10). For the same reason, all honest and proper parents are warned against sending their children to the capital for upbringing.

Country girls learn how to be useful and use their hands, while city girls dress up and make up to catch the attention of men, thus causing the ruin of those men. The “unreasonable fashion disease” of the mother is the cause of the corrupt behavior of the daughter. Actually, the daughter is more inclined to follow her conscience and be of use, but she is constantly rewarded for the opposite. In this way, women cannot become “useful and edifying members of the state”, the author claims (15). Such women thus have a share in the “pitiful poverty and great disorder” of the state. It is quite a responsibility that the young women have to take on.

The contrasts between country and city, between utility and superficial skills, and between the interests of state and the commandments of fashion are the main themes of the pamphlet. But there is also the conflict of interest between the fashionable mother who teaches her daughter useless skills and the daughter who is inwardly inclined to utility and patriotic behavior. Such conflicted relations between mothers and daughters are a recurring theme in the Press Freedom Writings.

301 An analysis of seriality and reader communities is presented in Maidment 2009.

302 [anonymous], *Frue Huusligs Huus-Søgning hos de Kiøbenhavnske Fruentimmer, der nu maae aflegge Regnskab for deres Huusholdning, hvorvidt de tiener og har tient den Danske Stat*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (29 October 1771).



Fig. 23: A considerable part of Press Freedom Writings targeted a female audience, both by thematizing women and female behavior, by pretending to be authored by women, and by explicitly addressing female readers. There is no doubt that Press Freedom Writings actually reached a large and growing female readership, which we also find portrayed in Press Freedom Writings and other contemporary sources, such as this painting of a reading housemaid. *Kitchen Interior with Reading Girl*, painting by Jens Juel, 1764. © National Gallery of Denmark.

The anonymous publication by the Danish-German baroque composer J. A. Scheibe, *A Russian Traveler's Anecdotes*, tells the story of a fictional traveling Russian who, among many other observations, is amazed at the splendor of the attire he notices in a company of simple traders in Copenhagen (twelfth letter).³⁰³ In the capital, an exu-

303 [J. A. Scheibe], *Anekdoten eines reisenden Russen über die Staatsverfassung, Sitten und Gebräuche der Dänen*, in *Briefen an seine Freunde*, Copenhagen: Lübeck auf Kosten des Herausgebers [?], 1771 (5 April 1771).

berant penchant for luxury is reigning so as to make it impossible to distinguish the noblest lady in the kingdom from a common burgher wife. He suggests that a legal code on dresses curtailing the consumption of luxury would be of great benefit and support the ability to ‘separate one class from the another’ (63). The effacing of distinctive visual class characteristics was to be avoided.

In contrast to this distinction argument, a widespread idea claimed that all estates ought to exercise restraint. And women should lead the way. The relation between costumes and women is raised to an affair of state in the pamphlet *The Power of Women to Support the State*, in which economist O. D. Lütken directly addresses the female readership.³⁰⁴ Most people know, the author claims (echoing the argument of P. F. Suhm above), that splendor and opulence are the cause of Denmark’s misery, and simplicity and frugality are the only tools to help getting the country back on its feet. And women should take the lead because, as everyone knows, they are controlling men. The pamphlet is a call to women to assist the state, and the author mentions several examples of heroic deeds of good women that have proven historically significant. Now is the time for the women once more to step forward to “bring the entire country to regard simplicity with the same affection as splendor and finery are regarded these days” (10). The author explains how young women arriving in Copenhagen from the countryside or from Norway – where they have socialized with their mothers and sisters only – are poorly dressed. But as soon as they begin attending parties in the city, they start relishing for opulence and “all kinds of spectacles and merriment”. Once again, naturalness is opposed to artificiality, the unspoiled livelihood of the rural population versus the unnatural craving for finery and amusement of urban residents.

Without embellishment and by decent simplicity, nature comes into its own, and women will appear in their “proper beauty” (13). After a short while, the women will be adorned with the endearing beauties of nature and not with “France’s innumerable, poisonous, and cunning inventions”. Again, France is singled out as the originator of destructive opulence. On the other hand, the author highlights the English women in New England agreeing not to drink tea because the American colonies had been imposed a stamp tax. By abstaining from tea-drinking, the women would inflict losses on England and thus force the English King to abolish the tax. In the same way, “our ladies in Copenhagen” ought to set a good example, so that it would spread to smaller towns.

304 [O. D. Lütken], *Fruentimmerets Magt til at ophielpe Staten*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1771 (5 June 1771).

Drinking Contested

In Press Freedom Writings, clothing, gender, sociability, and urban life were represented and debated through situational portrayals, deliberately imposed prejudices and views of different sender positions. To this may be added another dimension that seems to be of crucial importance for the understanding of the complicated entanglements of city life – the alcohol consumption of Copenhageners.

The unemployed theologian and frequent pamphleteer F. C. Scheffer published *A letter, from the Flighty to the Flighty* in which he, as first-person narrator, tells a story of a man who cannot find work and hits the bottle, gets sick from drinking, and ends up hospitalized.³⁰⁵ Unfortunately, he is forced to leave the hospital without having recovered, because he cannot treat the nurse with “coffee and morning brandy”. From here, the narrator goes on to describe Copenhagen sociability in somber colors. No one cares about the well-being of the country, instead, everyone is preoccupied with superficial pursuits. In respectable society, people do not talk about serious topics out of fear of being considered a bore, but keep on about spectacles, sleigh rides, and love affairs – all without taste. They go to the theater only to see and be seen, not because of interest in the plays. Later, the author describes how one of his sisters dresses up and looks like a princess, while she is starving and thirsting until evening, when her beautiful daughter ‘knows how to cash in’, i. e., by prostitution. His other sister, who is ugly and married to a *Skindpels* shopkeeper who has become wealthy on the misfortune of others, takes to drinking. Her husband tries to keep her from alcohol by beating her, so she ends up leaving him. The stories of the two sisters develop over a number of pages and many topics are touched upon, but the important thing is that the description of superficial sociability and social stereotypes not only highlights clothing and behavior as social markers, but also focuses upon drunkenness as an important factor, which is also found in a number of other representations of urban sociability.

Due to severe winters and the resulting poverty, the distillation and consumption of spirits in Copenhagen was thematized in a number of pamphlets. During the winter period, distillation using rye was banned to keep grain prices from rising, and the connection between grain prices and spirits infused the discussion with a socio-political dimension that was highlighted over and over again. In the Press Freedom periodical par excellence *Magazine for Patriotic Writers*, no. 20, a reader rhetorically asked: “There are only 48 bakers in Copenhagen but 294 distillers, so it is fair to ask: Whether the latter do not cause high prices on the beloved bread when there is crop failure on rye, and if is not better to dispense with schnapps than bread?” It was basically a question about the conditions of the poor and the common people. On a daily basis, many of the authors witnessed the growing poverty in the

305 [F. C. Scheffer], *Et Brev, fra den Forfløine til det Forfløine*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterleverske, 1771.

closed Copenhagen urban environment, and it is not surprising that it grew to an important topic in Press Freedom Writings.

One author called attention to this fact in the introduction to a lengthy booklet on the distillation of spirits: “By reading a good deal (no one can read all of them) of the patriotic scripts to which Press Freedom has given birth, I have noticed that nearly everyone is complaining about shortcomings and disorder, and a great number has assumed the task of showing the cause of the evil, the difficulties of earning one’s living and the general poverty” (3).³⁰⁶ This paragraph reflects reader and writer in the same persona, considering Press Freedom to be a patriotic project to the benefit of the common good in line with the statements in the Press Freedom Act, trying to keep up with the ongoing flood of pamphlets and singling out poverty and high prices to be the most urgent social problems. That point of view is also present in a passage in which Press Freedom is once more brought into attention: “Is a subject or a citizen allowed to be silent about what he believes to be to the benefit or the detriment of King and country when he has the freedom to write about it?” (6). It is a patriotic duty to use the freedom granted by the mild monarch not to be silent about liquor and poverty.

The author explicitly makes a point of wanting to discuss the pros and cons regarding the production of liquor but after a long series of considerations, examples, and calculations about especially the unfortunate resource economics and trade consequences for all estates and sections of society, he concludes that liquor is the number one enemy of society. The author mentions how children down to the age of 10 to 12 are now urged to drink schnapps, and that liquor is used as a consolation “when poverty increases” (22). Therefore, a change of mentality is desperately needed. Drinking is a bad habit that must be eradicated because it keeps the poor in misfortune and destitution.

Drinking was a favorite theme, not only in patriotic writings like the above-mentioned, but in religious fulmination and satirical writings as well. In a pamphlet, the farmer Jens Larsen presents a letter fallen from heaven, which he has found on his way from Copenhagen to the village of Emdrup where he lives.³⁰⁷ The letter inveighs against the city of Copenhagen, and a longer tirade against fornication, laziness, corruption, adultery, and degradation develops over 14 pages. There are also admonitions against drunkenness, leading but to remorse, sinful speech, misconduct, and men starting to look for women, ultimately leading to the violation of every single one of the ten commandments. The citizens of Copenhagen are encouraged to lead a different life so that all kinds of accidents and plagues will not fall upon them.

306 [anonymous], *Tanker om Brændeviins-Brænden. Skienket til Stiftelsen for nyfødte Børns Opdragelse*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (28 June 1771).

307 [anonymous], *Et Himmelskrift nedfalden på Veien fra Kiøbenhavn til Emdrup*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (23 October 1771).

Shortly after, none less than the Devil in person responded to this letter, declaring that Jens Larsen must have been intoxicated by schnapps, if he really thought he had seen the sky open up and a letter falling down.³⁰⁸ Maybe, it had just been the contents of a chamber pot poured into his head from a window in the city. According to the Devil, the author of the letter had published it with the sole purpose of making money from his “bitch readers”, so he himself can get drunk. He “found it most convenient to write a letter from Heaven; for all the old hags of the city, who believe, drink, gossip, weep, club their half-shillings together, and from this grows a Peru in miniature, who earns the author rivers of liquor” (6). The devil goes on to speak of the readers as “hospital hags”, who are but “drunken sows, querulants, envious, hateful, slanderous, contentious”, and says that his prose is addressing “some old beer matrons” (16). Just as the author is a drunken fool, his readers are maudlin and malicious low-class women. Liquor, grub street writers, and mob readers are each other’s prerequisites. The anonymous author identifies the readers of such writers as female – and of the lowest strata of the urban society.

The Devil continues by telling a story of a lazy woman who gets drunk and loses all the money of her husband through gambling. A little further on, the Devil describes a drunkard:

He kills time, and changes from the image of God to a pig. His eyes are darkened, his throat is stinking and burning, his blood is thick and burnt, his hands are shaking, his legs are stumbling, his body is dull and weak, reason is gone, the human is lost and vanished and only the animal remains, new violent and destructive projects are invented to be able to keep drinking, new drunkenness, new sins, and new pleasures for me. (11)

The alcoholic’s meltdown as a human being, the degraded body, the week-willed individual, are depicted in strong prose with the Devil’s well-satisfied mine. The Devil goes on to tell how he once used alcohol to pull the philosopher Damon away from an immaculate life. The wine made the philosopher burn up, he began to go to bed with his sister, whom he later murdered using poison, after which he hanged himself. The harmfulness of alcoholism – social as well as personal – had never been described as explicit as this in any Danish publication.

Another author claimed in his *Evening Walks* that liquor drinking was now more prevalent than ever.³⁰⁹ Consumed in moderation, schnapps was “a very useful drink for poor commoners”. Soldiers, sailors, and peasants who are particularly exposed to frost, cold, rain and sleet can, “by a drink of schnapps and mouthful of bread, recall the spirits of life and by such a revival gather new strength to withstand the

308 [anonymous], *Fandens Svar paa Emdrups Himmel-Skrift. Optagen af Lars Jenssøn Huus-Mand, og af hannem til Trykken befordret*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1771 (1 November 1771).

309 [anonymous], *Aftens Promenader eller Samtale mellem Prudentius og Simplicius om Forbud at brænde Brændeviin af Rug og Byg i de 2de Aar, som et sikkert Raad imod høye Korn-Priser; samt om Korn-Brændeviins og Sukker-Brændeviins forskellige Dyder og Qualitæter*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (17 July 1771).

difficulties which are a consequence of their calling and standing” (18–19). It would therefore be “a cruelty” to deprive them of this opportunity without giving them anything else in return. The author praises alcohol as a remedy for pain and self-medication, which, however, should be used with moderation. And the problem is precisely that alcohol consumption has taken over. Especially so among the peasants. In the countryside, one can thus meet boys down to the age of five or six who may drink schnapps like adult men, the author claims. This mentioning of the socializing aspect of drinking was, indeed, a critique of the culture of drinking and the devastating effect on the population.



Fig. 24: Hangover. The artist Jens Juel sketched this direct depiction of conditions after a carousal not long after Press Freedom. *Drawing*, Jens Juel 1777–1778. © National Gallery of Denmark.

An anonymous author presents his hope that the time-limited ban on distilling with rye will lead to a general ban on alcohol, which is, in a 1,000 ways, “to the detriment of the Danish commoners”.³¹⁰ If one wants to drink liquor, it ought to be rum from the West Indies instead of schnapps. The reasoning is both economic and mental-hygienic: “The West Indies belong to the Monarch. So, they would not lose. And we who kept our rye, our wheat, and perhaps our common sense, would not lose either” (21). But a ban was still preferable, the author wrote.

310 [anonymous], *En patriotisk Samtale imellem en reisende Engelskmand og en Kiøbenhavnsk Borger. Holdt paa det Engelske Caffé-Huus paa Christianshavn*, Copenhagen: Johan Gottlob Rothe i No. 8 På Børsen, 1771 (4 March 1771).

In his above-mentioned text on simplicity, P. F. Suhm also advocated “eradicating the use of schnapps, if it is possible, instead of considering it a source of income to the King” through taxation (52).³¹¹ Martin Brun’s fictitious narrator Jeppe the Watchman was also the supporter of a ban, and he suggested that no one should be permitted to sell “strong or harmful drinks” (11).³¹² He pointed out the paradox of banning and burning atheistic and deistic writings, when all such writings at all times have hardly done as much damage as has liquor in one single day.

The harmful effects of alcohol were evident in the Copenhagen urban environment but were also perceived as a long-term national problem by patriotic writers, such as in a publication that deals with the effect of alcohol “to the human bodies and to the moral of a nation”.³¹³ One thing was the individual consequences, another was long-term effects, because “those who drink too much liquor will have weak and fragile bodies, they become evil and horny people; imagine how a deplorable condition a state would be in if it had too many of those people” (17). The result would be degeneration of the population and national stagnation.

A versifier named Christian Saufhals (i. e., Greedy-Guts; presumably J. L. Bynch) goes in the opposite direction, attributing, in a fictional letter, to liquor the poetic inspiration that helps him write.³¹⁴ He therefore pays tribute to the distillers for creating the drink, “which is the only element in which I live, float, and move” (3). He would like to see butchers’ stalls and bakeries replaced by wineries and taverns and cannot bear the idea of alcohol being banned. The very thought of having to put out the “fire of thirst” that burns in his chest, with the muddled and disgusting water from the standpipe makes him sick. Hopefully, the government is so merciful as not to deprive him and his drinking brothers of their only blessing. Just change everything else but let us keep the schnapps. Christian Saufhals’ letter is followed by a text that acknowledges the severe effects of the high prices to all estates and the excessively high level of grain prices but still, he cannot support a ban on distillation. The shortage of grain has other causes, he claims, especially hoarding, which is why the author demands a firmer control over landed nobility farmers and advocates compulsory delivery of grain to the royal magazines.

The pamphlet develops into a social satire against nobility, shoe brushes, provision dealers, and other usual scapegoats. The Danish nation has been drinking ever since Adam was a lad, and the author ironically mentions countless every-day examples of all the contexts in which schnapps is sorely needed. The housewife turns ill if she does not get her “rightful schnapps” at certain times of the day. An old spinning

311 Suhm, *Samlinger*, 52.

312 [Martin Brun], *Jeppe Vægters Betragtninger over Staten og det almindelige Beste, samlede paa hans Natte-Vagt i Aaret 1771*, Copenhagen: Nr. 8 paa Børsen, 1771 (29 January 1771).

313 [anonymous], *Tanker om Brændeviins-Brænden. Skienket til Stiftelsen for nyfødte Børns Opdragelse*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (28 June 1771).

314 [J. L. Bynch], *Saufhalses trøst til Brændeviinslauget som et Beviis at det er utroeligt at Regieringen vil forbyde at brænde Brændeviin*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (6 November 1771).

woman in her cold attic must have schnapps and a piece of bread instead of a warm soup. A mother with a child at her breast must consume an “appetite schnapps” before breastfeeding, indeed, schnapps is, in general, “a necessity for the pregnant and hefty matrons” (16). The day laborer works better if he can look forward to a drink at the end of his day’s work, a sailor needs alcohol on his long journeys, and the tailor must have a schnapps for his split peas, which is good for digestion. Evidently, aquavit is what keeps the wheels turning.

It is striking that the gender distribution between the portrayed drinkers is roughly equal. When the schnapps-loving male narrator lumps himself with “old drunken hags” it is clearly a joke, but the satirical portrayal of drinking women who, under the pretext of health and well-being, use every opportunity and excuse to get a schnapps, paints a picture of gender-specific abuse types (13). And for men, a further social identification of the drinkers is created when day laborers, sailors, and tailors are used as examples, i. e., males from lower social strata.

As mentioned, liquor also plays a role in derogatory characterizations of certain types of Press Freedom authors. Such writers are portrayed as drunken henchmen who will write anything just to get money for aquavit. J.L. Bynch’s pamphlet *The Heart is my Devil* attacking the Queen receives such a review in *Fortegnelsen*: “Contains a multitude of nasty and rude gossip compiled by a scoundrel to earn a little for liquor from a similarly rude printer or publisher”.³¹⁵ Another pamphlet is described as a foolish and boring concoction that is “pieced together to earn a little for liquor”.³¹⁶ Martin Brun’s *The Life and Times of the Devil* is characterized as: “Another worthy product of the three well-known Booze Brothers who for the time being produce most of the mean pamphlets which are published in a certain lady publisher’s own printing house”.³¹⁷

The authors Brun, Scheffer, and Rosenlund make up this triumvirate of aquavit. The above-mentioned pamphlet by Brun is not provided with a place of printing, but it can hardly be any other than the printing shop of Borup’s Successor, to which the reviewer alludes as “a certain lady publisher”. The widow of book printer Thomas Larsen Borup, Rebecca Buch, continued the printing business of her deceased husband after his death in April 1771, until she married book printer Thiele in October the same year, after which the two printing houses merged.³¹⁸ During her time as an independent printer, she published at least four pamphlets by Søren Rosenlund, three by Martin Brun, and three by F. C. Scheffer. Several others of the same authors’ writings from this period without any printer indicated on the title page may very likely also have been published by Rebecca Buch. The derogatory review more than

315 *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 2, no. 50.

316 [anonymous], *En Satyrisk Fortegnelse paa En Deel Pretiosa*, Copenhagen: P. H. Höecke, 1772 (24 January 1772), reviewed in *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 2, no. 115.

317 *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 1, no. 186.

318 Harald Ilsøe 1992, 151 and 173.

suggests that the publisher was taking advantage of the three thirsty hacks to make a quick profit on their trash literature.

Public Houses as Public Spaces

Production and consumption of alcohol represented a very significant feature of the Copenhagen cityscape. There were hundreds of distilleries in addition to the multitude of brewers and wine tapsters. Aquavit and beer were consumed in pubs, in *brændevinskældre* (literally, aquavit cellars), in beer houses, at provision dealers – in short, in public houses of many different sizes and types. The Copenhagen Directory for 1773 mentions 277 distillers in Copenhagen; the number had been steadily increasing during the eighteenth century, and towards the end of the century there were 300 distillers and 3,000 *brændevinsmænd*, i. e., spirit sellers – out of a total population around 80,000.³¹⁹ Pubs were densely located – “in living rooms, basements and on first floors” – all over the city.³²⁰ In accordance with Lord Mayor Holstein’s new guidelines for Copenhagen, pubs were, as of April 1771, given the opportunity to stay open all night.

While certain writers, as we have seen, would be scolded as alcoholic grub street hacks, the reference to liquor and pubs was also used in the description of specific types of readers and audiences. In Press Freedom Writings, pubs were referred to both as actual places and as metaphors that painted a – often caricatured or derogatory – picture of different sorts of readers and the literature they read.

The place in which a pamphlet was read indicated something about its literary quality or lack of it. In one pamphlet, the fictional waitress Secilia mentions that the weekly magazine *The Danish Argus* (*Den danske Argus*) – one of the earliest and most prolific products of Press Freedom – is delivered to a billiard cellar and read aloud by one of the guests. This paragraph implies both a description of semi-public practice of reading aloud and a categorization of *The Danish Argus*; it is a weekly magazine fit for being read by guests in a billiard cellar. The latter is not meant as praise.

One pamphleteer was of a similar opinion, believing that much of the production of his co-writers was used merely as entertainment and rarely did any real good.³²¹ Addressing his colleagues, he says: “Most of your writings have been an occasion only for chatter in wine houses and other pubs when passing time with a pipe

319 *Kiøbenhavn's Politiske Veyviser*, 1773, 163–172.

320 On the production of spirits in Copenhagen, see Henningsen and Langen 2010, 17 on and 23; Matthiessen 1924, 82–83.

321 Hans Georg Rasmussen, *Betænkninger over de danske Skrivers Arbeide*, 1) *Hvad 2) Hvortil og 3) Hvorfor de har skrevet, forfattet i Anledning af Skrivefrihedens Indskrænkelse, tilligemed et Vers om de Skrivesyges Udpibning af Hans Georg Rasmussen, Philosophiæ Studiosus*, Copenhagen: J.R. Thiele, 1771.

of tobacco; there you are read with pleasure” (9). The texts are integral parts of pub conversations where guests are amusing themselves with text, tobacco, and alcohol. Precisely this, in the writer’s view, is no mark of honor. In this pamphlet, Press Freedom texts are judged by where they are read – pubs –, what they give rise to – talk –, and what effect they have on their readers – pleasure. It is implicitly understood that the opposition to pubs, talking, and pleasure would be home, contemplative silence, and gravity; the virtues of a serious reader. In addition, the author view is that Press Freedom Writings are but a pastime – meaning that you could spend your time better than reading that sort of thing.

Pubs, ale houses, liquor cellars, beer houses, billiard basements, or whatever name they went by, are distinctly present in the Press Freedom Writings and not least in reviews of them. *Fortegnelsen* provides numerous examples when referring to the pamphlets. The portrait painted by Martin Brun in the booklet *The Portraitist* is “Nuremberger-work” only, i. e. talentless scam art, but “good enough for decorating an ale-house”.³²² Brun’s *A Conversation in the Realm of Niels Klim*, was, according to the reviewer, “written in a tone such that it will hardly have any resonance outside Nyboder, beer houses, and perhaps some other places”.³²³ We don’t know what the innuendo of these “other places” refers to, but the composition of Nyboder and beer houses cannot be mistaken. Nyboder was a district in Copenhagen built in the seventeenth century as a housing project for people employed with the Royal Navy; sailors, ship’s carpenters, sailmakers, and so on. Thousands of families lived in this part of town known for its permanent unrest and plebeian atmosphere. So, the reviewer’s description of the pamphlet using a combination of the meanest readership one could imagine, namely the socially low-status sailors in Nyboder (and their wives), and intoxicated customers at the pub was a no coincidence; it was a stereotyping with firm references to local urban culture of Copenhagen. Nyboder appears, in many texts, as a spatial metaphor for poor quality of pamphlets as well as a reader typology, for instance when one pamphlet is laconically described as “Written for Nyboder and beer houses”.³²⁴

In several pamphlets, the author performed a significant distancing from pubs and the life that unfolded in them. While the social elite distanced themselves from the taverns as locales, the intellectual elite distanced themselves from tavern guests as readership. Even Bynch, who did not belong to the intellectual elite, was quite condescending when describing the “the small beer-skilled statesmen” of the pubs.

³²² *Fortegnelsen*, vol. II, no. 64.

³²³ [Martin Brun], *En Samtale holden i Niels Klims Rige, imellem Kejser Klim selv, nogle af Ministerne, en Borger, en Bonde og Klims Hofnar*, Copenhagen: no printer indicated, 1771 (8 April 1771), reviewed in *Fortegnelsen*, vol. I, no. 152.

³²⁴ [anonymous], *Den Danske gamle Nordmand Christian Jacobsen Drackenbergs adskillige Syner og underlige Hændelser, som han har havt imedens han har levet, hvilket udgjør en Tid af Hundrede og Syv og Fyrgetyve Aar, samt ziret med hans Portrait*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (18 February 1771).

“So many pubs, so many courthouses, so many guests, so many judges”, he continues (50).³²⁵

As is evident from the large number of pubs in Copenhagen, they were of great importance in the urban environment. The pub was an extension of the street, but not an extension of the public space, although it was in principle open to all. A pub was a kind of liminal zone, neither public as the street nor private as the residence, although it is clear that the boundaries between private and public was significantly different from later periods.³²⁶ In one important way, the pub stood out from public urban space: the spatial function of the pub was defined by economic transactions. In addition to selling alcohol in various forms – often governed by privileges and monopolies, which is why there is both a semantic and functional separation between, for example, a beer house and a liquor cellar – pubs sold momentary residence to the guests. Unlike staying in the street or other public spaces, presence in a pub required the guest to have money and to spend it.

The spatial organization of the pub played a role in the social interaction. Guests were placed at tables in groups (loosely) defined by mutual affiliation and activity; journeymen from the same workshop, acquaintances from the neighborhood, and so on. The gathering at the pub was not organized as were guild meetings, clubs, societies, or Masonic lodges’ more or less ritualized gatherings, but although meeting at a pub constituted a more diffuse sociability – often a mixture of familiar faces and strangers who came and went in a steady flow – the guests were not assembled in a completely random manner. Different types of interaction and activities at the pubs contributed to the grouping of the visitors. There were those who played cards or dice, those who just drank and smoked, those who discussed and, as we have seen, those who read aloud and those who listened. The pubs were used to maintain social networks but in a far more loose and improvised way than the use of private visits and organized meetings in societies or guilds.

Frequently, pub visitors would be singing one of the many songs from a bulk of versified Press Freedom Writings which were written to well-known tunes of the time; a genre that literally exploded with mocking ballads about the fallen counts after the coup against Struensee in the late winter of 1772. Some pubs also offered music, often by way of a single violinist who entertained and stoked up a dance tune on his own initiative hoping for a tipping. Music attracted guests and made the individual pub seem more open to passers-by and hard to distinguish from regular low dives (*danseboder*). The social composition of guests varied from place to place and there was quite a difference between the diminutive liquor cellars and the larger establishments outside the city gates. It is difficult to determine at what time of the

325 [J. L. Bynch], *Den paaseende Bias*, no. 3, 1772, 5 June 1772, 50.

326 See, for instance, Klein 1995, and Nauman and Vogt, ed., *The Private in the Public. Scandinavia in the Eighteenth Century*, 2021.

day the pubs were attended the most, but it may very well have been in the first hour after dark.³²⁷

When the fixed closing hours of the pubs was abolished by the new Municipality in the spring of 1771, the pattern of access changed, and nightly visits became more frequent. Further, directions from the Lord Mayor to the Chief of Police specified that it was to be of no concern to the police what went on in the houses on Sundays and holidays; consequently, the observance of the third commandment was openly disregarded. This decision was clearly at odds with the laws on sacrilege. Finally, it was declared that it was to be of no concern to the police if drinking and gambling took place in public houses during night-time.³²⁸ In this way, the Lord Mayor indicated that no distinction should henceforth be made between night and day, which was a break from the traditional distinction between night and day in early modern cities and the social code that belonged to this distinction. The difference between day and night marked not only a transition between work and leisure, but also between the orderly practices of everyday life and the more disordered nocturnal life outside the searchlight of the authorities and the social control of the surroundings. Therefore, during the second half of the seventeenth century, a strong demand arose among the inhabitants in the cities for *god politi* (good police), i. e., law, order, and decent behaviour. The hiring of police officers in market towns originated from this demand for supervision of *nattesæde* (“night-seating”, i. e., illegal night-time serving of costumed), which was considered to be sacrilegious, especially if happening on Sundays and public holidays. For the same reason, the first local police officers hired in the towns were paid from the funds of the church. The church bell’s evening ringing marked the transition to night-time – “police night” (*politinat*), as it was sometimes called – with stricter rules for orderly behaviour. However, it was rarely a particularly easy task for the officers to get citizens to abide by the rules.³²⁹

The taverns functioned as distribution hubs for hearsay and debate topics. When one pamphlet was characterized as containing “the meanest beer house witticism” it was not solely a comment on the contents, but just as much a judgment on the conversations taking place in the pubs; a kind of prattle in which the reviewer himself would never dream of participating.³³⁰ In a review of another pamphlet it

327 No work has been done on the sociology of eighteenth-century pubs in Copenhagen. Knud Bokkenheuser briefly touches upon Copenhagen pub culture (including coffee houses) as a precondition for the establishment of club life in the 1780s (Bokkenheuser 1903, 17–26). The considerations above are inspired by non-Danish material such as Brennen 1988 (especially 228–268), Brennen 2005, 29–43, Kelly 2015 and the essays in Kümin & Tlusty 2002 and Rau & Schwerhoff 2008 (part 1).

328 Copenhagen City Archives: Magistratens almindelige øvrighedsforretninger, Struensees kabinetsordrer m. v. 1770–1772, memorandum written by Holstein (undated). These measures are described in Langen 2021.

329 Regarding *nattesæde*, see Mührmann-Lund 2015. The concept of “good police” in a Danish context is discussed in Munck 2007. On the early modern night, see Ekirch 2005 and Koslofsky 2011.

330 *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 2, no. 57.

was stated that, “matter and style correspond very well, and are of the sort that one usually can hear in a drinking house”.³³¹ It goes without saying that pubs served alcohol and alcohol made people drunk, affecting behavior, judgment, and conversation abilities. Notwithstanding the importance of alcohol consumption, it is pivotal to focus on the significance of pub sociability and the communication which took place between the guests. It was – and is – in the nature of pub sociability that the pub was a place where one could speak more or less freely and express opinions without being accountable to authorities of any kind. Instead, judges would be found among the other guests. In the above-mentioned description of pub guests, Bynch emphasized the irresponsible proclamation of opinions taking place in the pub.³³² Sitting in a corner of the pub, he observed how an honest, good, but also simple-minded guest with “a facial expression of a statesman” spoke at length about this and that. He solemnly talked about “a good deal of insignificant and unreasonable things built on rumors” but concluded by disclaiming any responsibility for the content of his speech by saying: “Well, I am just a simple man” (50). Another guest – “a furious *politicus*” – proclaimed his equally insignificant statements with great authority, while a third one was as cool-headed and cold-hearted as Mazarin. Bynch’s character sketch of such amateur politician types is no satirical pinnacle, but it touches on one of the pub’s important social and political functions; namely as an arena for the exchange of orally communicated views, often in interplay with written sources such as Press Freedom Writings.

The many examples of criticism of the level of pub conversations do not necessarily mean that such conversations were apolitical and lacked the Habermasian dimensions often ideally attributed to coffee houses. Parallel to the criticism of pub conversations ran a critique of the very fact that common people were now increasingly debating politics (for instance, Bynch’s *Bias*, Ewald’s *The Brutal Clappers* or the anonymous *Letters of Beelzebul*).³³³ Many observers satirized about this development, and it was a common move to dismiss this kind of talk as “pub rubbish”. Traditional urban oral culture and the pamphlets became two sides of the same coin in the new Press Freedom public. Many of the debates surfacing in the Press Freedom Writings were rooted in attitudes and debates which in the days of pre-print censorship had been taking place orally within the walls of the pub and which were now intensified in the emerging political dialogue between pamphlets and beer cellars.

331 *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 2, no. 79.

332 Bynch, *Den paaseende Bias*, no. 3, Copenhagen, 1772 (5 June 1772).

333 Johannes Ewald, *De brutale Klappere. Et tragi-comisk Forspil, til Brug for den kgl. danske Skueplads*, Copenhagen: Hallager, 1771; [anonymous], *Beelzebuls Breve til Nogle sine Venner i Kiøbenhavn*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (18 September 1772).



Fig. 25: The Copenhagen harbor was center of town, both for merchants and the navy, and sailors were a constant presence in the streetscape, with a reputation for less inhibited speech and behavior than most. *Drunken Sailors at a Drink Stand*, painting ascribed to Johannes Senn, early nineteenth century. © Øregaard Museum, photo: Ole Haupt.

A frequently used indication of place in Press Freedom Writings is the term *cellar*. In the eighteenth-century Copenhagen housing stock, the many darkish, swampy, and damp basements constituted the absolute least attractive housing and commercial leases. Basements were literally low-status, and people who lived or worked in basements were simply called “kældermænd” – “basement people”. Among servants,

the so-called basement girls, viz. waitresses, belonged to the lowest part. It was no coincidence that *the Danish Argus* categorized his female opponent Secilia as a basement girl; something which promoted associations in the direction of the easy-going.

One pamphlet emphasized the disturbing fact that night watchmen who were to keep an eye out for fire, were absent in the streets after midnight, because they “rest in a liquor cellar or a beer house, where they drink and play cards in a warm room, or they go to their own basements where they live”.³³⁴ To add yet another pejorative dimension to the portrait of the night watchman, the author places him in a basement dwelling. *Fortegnelsen* used the term “basement poet” about a poor author who handed over his manuscript to a publisher so as to earn a penny by putting “dirt in print”.³³⁵ Bynch describes himself as a “basement poet” in *Eve’s Nightgown* when describing how he has been “running breathlessly around his basement (where I lodge) and often jumped on the stove to heat up the vital spirits (Lebens-Geisterne)” (76).³³⁶ Likewise, Brun’s *Den politiske Spækhøker* contains a supplement allegedly written by a “basement poet”. The Observant Bias (*Den paaseende Bias* alias Bynch) writes about a broadsheet print depicting the cut-up corpses of the executed Struensee and Brandt, that it will surely adorn the interior of many a servant girl’s coffin lid, hang in basements and in Nyboder (54) – particularly if it displays their private parts.³³⁷ Servant girl as an occupation, basement as a residence, and Nyboder as a place serves to emphasize the low, the popular and the simple. In Brun’s above-mentioned pamphlet about the coffee pot, the tea pot, and the chamber pot, Nyboder is used several times as a social marker. For instance, the chamber pot says to the coffee pot: “You are said to be distinguished, but you speak as if you had just arrived from Nyboder”.³³⁸

In addition to unnamed pubs, random basements, and Nyboder, a further specific place was used to indicate lack of literary quality by giving name to low-status readership and textual low points in the Press Freedom Writings. This place was *Gammel Strand* (lit. Old Strand) by the high bridge from the city to the castle, where fishwives sold fresh catch from stalls and buckets. One pamphlet is staged as a conversation between two philosophers but according to a reviewer, it was easy to con-

334 [anonymous], *Discours imellem en fremmet Reisende, en Officer og en Borger ved Navn den Tænkende. Handlende 1. Om de høie Priser paa Brød og Fødevarer, 2. Om det Fattiges Væsen, 3. Om Skifter, 4. Om Procuratores Antal for Underretterne, 5. Om Gade Løgter, 6. Om Gade Vægterne*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (29 April 1771), 19.

335 *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 2, no. 122.

336 [J. Bynch], *Vor Salig’ Beste-Mamaes Evaes Natklokke med en nye Historie om Syndefaldet i Lommen sammenflirket af Galimathias*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (30 October 1771), 68.

337 [anonymous/ Bynch], *Bias*, no. 3, 54.

338 [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem Kaffekanden og Thepotten samt Kammerpotten. Skrevet i Fryse-Maaneden*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl., 1771 (6 March 1771).

fuse it with a chat between two fishmongers from Gammel Strand.³³⁹ In fact, the reviewer suspects the author to be a fishwife or a guttersnipe. The pamphlets “are of the same common and whore-like rubbish, which has for so long caused the readers of good taste the worst disgust”. Despite the low literary level these “mob writers” still make a living from their writings, the reviewer concludes. In a few lines, the reviewer makes an assembly of fishwives from Gammel Strand, street urchins, smut (“whore-like rubbish”), and “mob writers” in a mosaic depicting all the worst that Press Freedom has produced. Bynch also mentions Nyboder and Gammel Strand in a characterization of the poets of the moment: “Isn’t Gammel Strand and Nyboder an echo of the balladmongers’ harmonic merits?”³⁴⁰ The hack writers, the fishwives of Gammel Strand, and the sailors of Nyboder (and their wives) seem to form a symbiosis of trash – and one and the same writer, such as Bynch, might be ridiculed for belonging to this rubbish heap at the same time as he himself repeatedly voiced exactly the same attack on other authors.

339 [anonymous], *En Samtale imellem Democritum og Heraclitum om vore Tiders Contrast eller stridige Ting tilligemed en nye Opdagelse ved Natbordet alt sammen samlet ved Professor Babe. den 6.te Junii imodtaget*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (29 October 1771).

340 [J. L. Bynch], *Den paaseende Bias*, 52 on.

8 A Copenhagen of Books and Pamphlets

Booksellers, Printers, Ballad Hags

The spaces and places of Press Freedom were not limited to metaphors and connotative indications of locale but were, to a large extent, rooted in actual urban topography. Press Freedom Writings were sold at the printing houses that produced them as in the bookstores of the city. Not everyone was excited about the new items on the shelves. One reviewer made remarks about how inferior publications were now polluting the bookstores. But fortunately, he continued, quality would “soon kill the swarm of evil insects which have, for some time, covered our bookshelves with their disgusting brood”.³⁴¹ The insect metaphor was repeated in a pamphlet (1.18.10) mentioning “the harmful grasshoppers and deformed insects in our republic of letters” (9) as a consequence of the Press Freedom that had produced countless “mean publications”.³⁴² In addition to the biblical reference to grasshoppers, it was not uncommon to compare literary trash with the underworld of insects. In the poem *Le Pauvre Diable* (1758) Voltaire had described the trash (“la basse littérature”) with a remark that ancient Egypt had fewer locusts.³⁴³ In Copenhagen, one of the leading Press Freedom authors Bie often ironically played on his own insect name of bee.

Either way, the bookstores were no longer safe spaces for people of good taste. A writer describes the changed state of the bookstores after the introduction of Press Freedom: “Our bookstores were flooded with numerous and bad treatises; this deplorable multitude grew and ate away like cancer and dead-flesh (Død-Kiød)” (5).³⁴⁴ A violent image of the new publications. It was an unholy alliance between stakeholders in the market that undermined good taste and created an unhealthy demand.³⁴⁵ This “new and bad taste” meant that everything was devoured, in the same way as children eat sweets – and writers, publishers and booksellers make money. One can only hope for the new profit to be used on publishing a few publications of good quality. Criticism of booksellers was no novelty. Twenty years earlier, the bookseller and publisher Pelt (who had a stall in Børsen) had, in a preface of one of his publications, expressed that if he followed the taste of the learned only, he would soon find himself in a commercial distress. A publisher could survive only if he succumbed to “the prevailing taste” and “the audience, the largest group of readers”.

341 *Fortegnelsen*, vol 1, no. 88.

342 Gustophilus, *Velment og nødsaget Erindring til de Danske Fruentimmer, angaaende den nærværende slette Smag i den smukke Litteratur*. af Gustophilus, no place or printer, 1771 (9 October 1771).

343 The poem can be found at: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k8598918/f5.image>.

344 Gustophilus, *Velment og nødsaget Erindring til de Danske Fruentimmer, angaaende den nærværende slette Smag i den smukke Litteratur*. af Gustophilus, no place or printer, 1771 (9 October 1771), 5.

345 [anonymous], *En ubetydelig Samtale imellem en Skribent og en Forlægger i Anledning af den i Aviserne fremsadte Snik-Snak om Skrive-Friheden, under Artiklen fra Kiøbenhavn og Stockholm*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (6 September 1771).

Pelt elaborated: “I know what reproaches people of my profession must endure from the learned. It is said that we – by publishing bad books – spoil the common taste”. But it was too much ask of the booksellers to become “martyrs of good taste” and publish and sell publications only, “which no one reads, except for a small number of people with special interests”.³⁴⁶



Fig. 26: The task of bookprinters and bookbinders is illustrated and celebrated in this 1766 broadsheet. The bookprinter appears as a hero of Enlightenment, he “doesn’t save his labor and diligence, / To the best of himself and co-citizens / [...] Our world has become enlightened and neat, / When the printing of books was learned. / Earlier everything mostly went wrong; / But now just in single cases”. The work of the bookbinder, by contrast, has a more aesthetic character, he “folds the paper so nice”, and the result is that on the “back of books titles appear, / the back is gold plated like flames. / Everyone receives his requests, / even appearing like marble”. *The Bookprinter and Bookbinder (Bogtrykkeren og Bogbinderen)*, colored broadsheet, Copenhagen 1766, printed by Thiele, woodcut by Thomas Larsen Borup. © Royal Danish Library.

³⁴⁶ Eustache le Noble, *Den Tyrkiske Robinson eller Prinds Eberards af Westphalen, Eleonores og Zulimas Kierlighed- og Levnets-beskrivelse, hvortil er lagt Fr. Chr. Eilschovs Kritik over denne Roman*, Copenhagen 1750, unpaginated preface by the publisher.

Commercialization was a recurring complaint, as it was expressed in the aforementioned pamphlet on the new and bad taste.³⁴⁷ It forced book printers and booksellers to act against their will in order to “maintain a small income” and, furthermore, “to give in to the many Copenhageners who wanted nothing but news, and preferably bad ones” (13). It is the whole of the new commercial circuit between authors, printers, publishers, readers, and booksellers that is presented as subversive, and it is the written word as a commodity and the interest in news as a driving force that takes Copenhageners away from traditional serious reading towards the unprecedented publication current on the bookstore shelves. That book printers and booksellers should act directly against their will and instinct in order to satisfy the audience is an interesting, but not very plausible, analysis. There was money to be made.



Fig. 27: Anna Magdalene Godiche, a daughter of bookprinter Høpfner, led with her husband A. H. Godiche the reputable printshop of the same name in Skindergade. After the death of her spouse in 1769, she continued business at Gammeltorv with her son F. C. Godiche and published some 40 Press Freedom Writings, among those bestsellers such as the verdicts of Struensee and Brandt in 1772 to which she secured printing privileges. *A. M. Godiche*, painting by Ulrich Ferdinandt Beenfeldt, 1776. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Kit Weiss.

347 [anonymous], *En ubetydelig Samtale imellem en Skribent og en Forlægger i Anledning af den i Aviserne fremsadte Snik.Snak om Skrive-Friheden, under Artiklen fra Kiøbenhavn og Stockholm, no place or printer, 1771 (6 September 1771).*

During the Press Freedom Period, reviewers did not hesitate to criticize named booksellers and publishers for the way they did business. The novel *Muhammad's Cousin* – a translation from French – was labelled “a lecherous novel” and described as a story of a carried-away school-boy “filled with the most disgraceful actions with Turkish women” by a reviewer, who attacked the bookseller Proft at Børsen for selling this piece of harem garbage.³⁴⁸ Previously, Proft had been criticized for marketing the soft-porn publication *Celadon and Cloris* and now he was at it again: “To Mr. Proft and the likes of him (not to the self-respecting and righteous booksellers), we present the following problem. Is a bookseller a machine whose mainspring is profit, or a foolish beast, or a sensible man from whom one can demand morality?”³⁴⁹ Proft was later, during the demise of Press Freedom in 1773, to be prosecuted for trading illegal books and pamphlets.

The city's printers and booksellers conducted their business from specific places which were part of the new Press Freedom topography. Going through *Fortegnelsen* reveals that some publications were not sold by the printer who produced them but were handed over to be sold or commissioned by other printing houses.³⁵⁰ In addition, bookbinders sold books in hardcover bindings, but were also poaching on the booksellers' preserves and appeared in *Fortegnelsen's* references to sales outlets for unbound Press Freedom Writings. The group of distributors of literature and Press Freedom Writings also included private rental libraries and self-appointed distributions agents of individual publications.³⁵¹ Secondhand book traders formed a further part of the picture. While printers, booksellers, bookbinders, pamphlet-selling grocers, and rental libraries were part of an established infrastructure of localities and connecting lines, there was an important but looser and more indefinable group of agents who operated as mobile units unattached to specific places. This comprised the female ballad sellers (*visekællinger*, literally, ballad hags) and circulating boys and girls who seized parts of the public space and the urban soundscape with shouts and singing of ballads. In contrast to producers and salesmen with fixed addresses waiting for customers to come by, ballad sellers and the children with their baskets full of ballads and pamphlets acted as a sort of sales guerillas sent out in the urban space by the printers. The stationary components in the urban communication circuit were supplemented by these autonomous satellites. In a Copenhagen periodical, one writer uttered his disgust with the sight of “ragged hags, barefoot girls, and naked boys running up and down the street while shouting: New ballads for sale!”. A writer in another periodical was revolted with the horrible and abominable voices

348 N. Fromaget, *Mahomets Fetter, eller hans forunderlige Tildragelse i Soldan Mahomets Serail i Constantinopel*, Copenhagen: Børsen i No. 11, 12 og 13, hos Rothes Arvinger og Prost, 1772 (15 April 1772).

349 [J. von Besser], *Celadon og Cloris. En Fortælling*, no place or printer, 1771 (15 April 1771). Review quoted: *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 2, no. 162.

350 Nyrop 1870, 308.

351 Nyrop 1840, 309. Renting outside Copenhagen; Jakobsen 2012.

that “proclaim the taste of the common people in Denmark”.³⁵² Both before and after the Press Freedom Period attempts were made to put an end to the activities of ballad sellers. It seems to have been the blurry boundaries between written and oral culture that appeared as provocative; it was the verbal exposure of written products in particular that was resented by critics. One thing was that all sorts of trash were flowing from the printing press – after all, one could choose not to read it. Another thing was when the ballad sellers sang or shouted out print texts and thereby forced the trash on innocent pedestrians.



Map. 4: A Copenhagen of Books. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

The metabolism of print in Copenhagen was concentrated to a relatively small area in the city. This map indicates bookprinters, bookbinders, a foundry of types, bookdealers, and other book sales like the book stalls at the Bourse and some provision dealers also marketing pamphlets.

³⁵² *Aften-Posten*, 1785, no. 61 and *Morgen-Posten*, 1786, no. 1, 4.

When collecting Press Freedom Writings, the official Bolle Luxdorph left out normal literary and scholarly publications while including pamphlets, songs, pasquils, which in his judgment were of concern to Press Freedom or were the results of it. Many of the writings call themselves “Observations”, “Comments”, “Thoughts”, etc.; in this book we use “pamphlet” to refer to writings debating an issue. Pamphlets combine form and content: as to form, Press Freedom Pamphlets were typically a few sheets in octavo format – as against papers, journals, periodicals which used the larger quarto format. One sheet in octavo would give 16 pages, and the typical Press Freedom Writing numbered around 16 to 48 pages; the average length of writings in Luxdorph’s collection is 30 pages. Pamphlets now filled this format with debating content – as against other small prints with stories, narrations, edifying Christian writings, etc. Press Freedom Writings and pamphlets, thus, are categories with a large intersection.

Luxdorph’s collection primarily covers the years 1770–1773, but he included a number of writings from 1774–1775, all of which he bound in 47 volumes, including one collecting broadsheets in folio format. The coup against Struensee on 17 January 1772 was the obvious turning point splitting Luxdorph’s collection in two chronological halves. Within each of these parts, Luxdorph strove to organize his collection thematically so that when one piece triggered answers, debate, and polemics, he collected all of them in the same volume.

Luxdorph’s collection had a parallel in the continuous review periodical *Fortegnelsen*, appearing through the three years from 1771 to 1773. It included more traditional publications and less songs, etc. than Luxdorph, but the two supply each other. While Luxdorph includes 914 pieces plus 66 broadsheets, *Fortegnelsen* reviewed 952 publications. Luxdorph left out most theater-related issues, collecting documents pertaining to the Theater Feud in a special volume outside of the main collection, just like another such volume is consecrated to international reactions to Caroline Matilda’s case. More than 10 % of the collection is in German, some are original German pamphlets published in Copenhagen, others are translations of Danish pamphlets, still others are foreign reactions to the coup or German newspaper reports on Danish events. This testifies to a significant German public in Copenhagen, and there was a German newspaper in Copenhagen which is, unfortunately, not preserved. Many Danish-speaking Copenhageners, particularly in the elites, would understand or speak German. So, an important aspect of Press Freedom was German.

Five small print shops proved particularly active on the new book market. J. R. Thiele printed at least 133 Press Freedom Writings, closely followed by A. F. Stein with 108 publications. P. H. Høecke with 86 writings, Lars Nielsen Svarre with 75, and finally Morten Hallager became active after a late start in 1771 with 65 publications, often collaborating with the new publisher Søren Gyldendal. The pamphlet output of these printshops dwarfed more traditional elite bookprinters such as A. M. Godiche, Nicolaus Müller, Hans Jensen Graae, and Claude Philibert. Thiele had an emphasis on very popular content and published some of the more radical pamphleteers, while Stein also published established elite authors on the new pamphlet market, such as Jacob Langebek, P. F. Suhm, and Ove Guldberg.

Printing small writings with few pages on coarse paper considerably sped up the production process, now that the slow censorship phase was canceled, which made it possible for such small printers to service the new public in a hitherto unseen pace, suddenly making the back-and-forth of swift debates possible. Simultaneously, small publications were cheap, reached a wide readership – circulations of 1 to 2,000 are mentioned in the debates – while particularly popular writings would see several print rounds. So, an overall effect of Press Freedom was also that the total output on the bookmarket considerably grew – and remained on a stably higher level even after the end of Press Freedom in 1773.

The female ballad sellers blended in with apple sellers, lemon girls, soldiers’ daughters with chestnuts, oysters and fruits and other mobile women with baskets: Press

Freedom Writings were offered as one kind of cheap commodity among many others in the streets of Copenhagen.³⁵³ Importantly, this fact demonstrates how a considerable part of Press Freedom Writings were produced for a rapidly growing popular readership whose encounters with literature were based in the streets rather than in the bookstores.

Book Stalls at Børsen

A very special place in the topography of Press Freedom was Børsen (the Bourse or Exchange), which contained a number of bookstalls. This impressive, red-stone renaissance building dating back to 1623 sat in the immediate vicinity of main power centers like the royal palace of Christiansborg, the Danish Chancellery and the church of the Royal Navy (Holmens Kirke). Børsen was primarily a market hall, a center for very diverse commercial activities. A description of Børsen from 1783 gives a sense of the lively and complex place.³⁵⁴ The lower floor consisted of a large number of vaulted rooms on both sides of the building, each with its own entrance at street level, with stalls open to the outside. A number was painted on the doors to the stalls so that suppliers and customers could find the right place, whether they were looking for flax, hemp, iron, tiled stoves, tar, pitch, train oil, dried fish, herring, salt, hops, grindstones, and whatever else was sold. There were canals along both sides of the building giving ships direct access to unload goods at the entrances to the storerooms and basement stalls on the lower floor.

Going up the wide ramp to the main entrance facing west towards the palace square, one entered the upper floor which had open passage through the entire length of the building but was divided into several sections. First, there was a large assembly hall for merchants and brokers who conducted their daily meetings between noon and 1 pm.; the so-called trading time. Boards with auction posters and shipmasters lists offering cargo transportation to foreign destinations were hung up on wooden pillars. On the sides of the entrance were offices for insurers, brokers, exchange commissioners and notaries drawing up contracts and a table from which auctions were held for incoming shiploads and goods. Next to the auction table was a shop selling haberdashery. A low wooden railing separated the assembly hall from the next, larger section with stalls and stores. The numbered stalls ran lengthwise in the hall in four rows along two passageways and were “filled with all kinds of groceries, finery, hardware, furniture like chests of drawer, dressers, beds, mirrors, all

³⁵³ On *visekællinger*, see Matthiessen 1924, 128–134. Soldiers’ daughters selling chestnuts, oysters and fruits, see National Archives: Københavns politi, politimesterens korrespondanceprotokol 1766–1774, politimesteren til Admiralitets- og Generalkommissariatskollegiet, 17 September 1773.

³⁵⁴ Jonge 1783, 415–420.

kinds of tables, suitcases etc”. Then came the bookstores with books, maps, and engravings.

The booksellers made up a considerable part of Børsen’s traders.³⁵⁵ Dutch booksellers were among the first to set up bookstalls in Børsen in mid-seventeenth century and gradually, a significant part of the Copenhagen book traders was working out of Børsen. In 1728, Frantz Christian Mumme opened a bookstore which for many years to come would be a dominant one in Børsen. Mumme’s bookstore kept its name after the death of Mumme in 1759 and was continued by J. F. Heinick and J. J. Faber who still ran the bookstore when the Press Freedom Period began in 1770. In addition to Mumme’s, selling books from stall no. 5, several reputable bookstores were established on Børsen, for instance J. G. Rothe’s Royal Court and University Bookstore (no. 8), C. G. Proft’s Royal University Bookstore, which had three stalls at its disposal (no. 11, 12 and 13), just like F. C. Pelt’s Royal University Bookstore.³⁵⁶ Some of these booksellers also acted as publishers.³⁵⁷

Life at Børsen was varied. Despite a biting cold in the winter and a suffocating heat in the summer and despite an unpleasant mixture of stench from dried fish, tar, and dust, it swarmed with people. Children played in the building, beggars took shelter from bad weather and many people used the building as a passageway when walking from the palace square to the bridge crossing the harbor to the district of Christianshavn. In a letter from the golden year of Press Freedom – 1771 – the superintendent at Børsen gave a vivid glimpse of the conditions at Børsen. In the large assembly hall primarily reserved for brokers had been – unlawfully, according to the superintendent – invaded by other traders. Besides the haberdashery mentioned, parts of the hall were now occupied by all sorts of vendors. The furniture for sale was often painted on the spot, so that passers-by were exposed to the danger of getting their clothes tainted. In addition, soldiers, apprentices, and Børsen’s staff passed through the premises carrying all sorts of things, so that people had to step aside in order not to be injured, while doors were kept open, resulting in a terrible draught. Moreover, the entrance to Børsen and the little square at the foot of the ramp were constantly filled “by several saleswomen with baskets on their arms, by soldiers and sailors, by tramps and unemployed persons, by beggars and depraved children, all day drifting about and jumping around, occupying the seats at the benches which the traders have purchased for themselves, even often lying down or sleeping on them, if not, as is often heard of or experienced, seek opportunity to steal from people’s pockets as much as they can overcome”.³⁵⁸ Anyone who wanted to enter Børsen to look for Press Freedom Writings had to penetrate this bustle with

³⁵⁵ Andersen 1962–1963.

³⁵⁶ On Proft in particular, see Jakobsen 2012, 2017, and Weitemeyer 1908, 14–24. Bookbinders, printers and sellers tied to the University were outside the jurisdictions of the Municipality and exempt from certain taxes, Weitemeyer 1908, 7.

³⁵⁷ See for instance *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 1, no. 8.

³⁵⁸ Quoted from Andersen 1962–1963, 59.

the danger of being robbed. However, it hardly kept anyone from visiting the building and it is not difficult to imagine how the bookstalls have been important gathering points for interested and discussing readers – and maybe for Luxdorph the pamphlet collector who had his office just across the street in the Danish Chancellery.

A counting of the first volume of *Fortegnelsen* – covering the period from September 1770 to September 1771 – reveals that 202 publications out of 322 listed were for sale at Børsen.³⁵⁹ The most frequently occurring bookstore in *Fortegnelsen* is Rothe (Børsen no. 8), while a number of publications are mentioned as put up for sale under the collective designation “at the bookshops of Børsen”. It is not known what agreements on sales, commission and distribution existed between authors, printers, and booksellers. Some publications were sold at all of Børsen’s bookstores, while others were only put up for sale at specific publisher-booksellers such as Rothe or Pelt who hoped to profit from their own publications. Perhaps sales calculations and genre considerations played a role too, but it is not immediately possible to detect a pattern.



Fig. 28: The Bourse at the Christiansborg Castle Square was, in the eighteenth century, a sort of shopping mall where goods of many different sorts were on sale. On the first floor, one could find book stalls with a large selection of Danish and imported foreign literature. To the right, between the Bourse and the Castle, the red Chancellery building where Luxdorph had his office. *The Bourse (Børsen)*, copper, Müller’s Pinakotek, Copenhagen, n. d. © Royal Danish Library.

³⁵⁹ The number 202 includes publications sold in “all the city’s bookstores” (21 occurrences) to which the stalls at Børsen are presumed to belong.

Fortegnelsen reveals that Børsen was by far the largest sales outlet of Press Freedom Writings in the city. Press Freedom Writings appeared in Børsen's distinctive mix of trading and auction house, shopping mall, and general heavy goods trade as a hot commodity. The writings were produced for a new market, and Børsen was both a major player in the retail business and a meeting place for buyers. The authorities also knew about the fact that Børsen was the center of trade in Press Freedom Writings. An example from 1773 shows that the Copenhagen Chief of Police was fully aware of where he had to go to stop the circulation of certain publications about Struensee, by which the post-Struensee government were offended. Instead of publishing a written warning in the form of a public notice, the Chief of Police went straight to Børsen and verbally forbade the booksellers to sell specific pamphlets about Struensee. According to his own statement, the bookseller Proft had not been present when this verbal admonition was delivered, but had heard from his employees, "that the Chief of Police had been in all bookstores and banned the selling of this kind of pamphlets". According to Proft, however, it had not been entirely clear which writings the Chief of Police actually referred to, and some booksellers relentlessly continued selling whatever they had in stock.³⁶⁰

The Address Office – Papers, Magazines, and Practical Enlightenment

An equally important place in the new Press Freedom public was the Address Office on the main square of Amagertorv, which had, during the previous decade, established itself as an important hub of urban communication, distribution, and publishing. With the introduction of Press Freedom, the Address Office was quickly becoming the city's dominant media house launching key papers, journals, and publications, directly influencing the content of the new debates arising.³⁶¹ The Address Office seized the opportunities offered by Press Freedom, quickly adapting to the new media situation and exerting its influence on it, while a number of actors affiliated with the Address Office became important figures in their own right in the new public.

The Address Office was in many ways synonymous with one man, namely the publicist and philanthropist Hans Holck, who acted as author, publisher, editor, reviewer, and salesman supported by a network of writers and editors which he attached to his enterprise.³⁶² He was born in the provincial town of Nyborg in 1726 and

³⁶⁰ Quoted from Jakobsen 2012, 3000.

³⁶¹ Unless otherwise indicated this passage about Holck and the Address Office is based on von Westen 1780; Prah 1783; Davidsen, 1884, 180–211; Trier 1900, 59 on; Liisberg 1908; Kirchhoff-Larsen 1942–1962, II, 53–84 and Nøding 2013.

³⁶² Nøding 2013, 119.

since he was a child, he had dreamt of studying theology. But his parents could not afford an education, instead, at the age of 14, he became a commercial apprentice in a grocery shop and later became an employee at trading house in Flensburg. Apparently, it was during his residence in Flensburg that he was seized by pietism and its combination of personal piety and world-improvement. Arriving in Copenhagen in 1750, he was 24 years of age, and the following year he made his debut as a poet when he published two religious poems at his own expense. His former dreams of becoming a priest metamorphosed, he frequently attended pietist congregations, evening singing, classes of spiritual edification, and worship services. For three years he served as a trade assistant, he married in 1754 and started his own business as a tea merchant. At the same time, he experimented with various publications, including printed commodity prices lists, ship lists and a translation of the German popular science journal *Relationes curiosæ*.



Fig. 29: Hans Holck was a thrifty entrepreneur who simultaneously, with his Pietist background, was the founder of ameliorating social initiatives. He took the *Adresseavisen* to become the leading newspaper of the time, originally but an advertising paper which gradually grew more editorial material and now appeared four days a week. His central *Adressekontor* (Directory Office) around the corner of Amagertorv and Købmagergade published several periodicals including the first directory guide of Copenhagen, surviving to this day. He was, in many ways, a driving force for practical Enlightenment in Press Freedom Copenhagen. *Hans Holck*, painting, maybe by Erik Pauelsen, n. d. © Kraks Fond, photo: Torben Nielsen.

In 1759, Holck and his business partner Andersen took over the monopoly of running an address office, that is, a bureau offering information of addresses of shops, persons, and other useful city knowledge, and immediately they breathed new life into this passive and dormant business. At the same time as taking over the Address Office, Holck and Andersen established a business that, among several other things, sold spring water and rat poison and ran writing rooms. Furthermore, they began selling “various prints”, including historical, political, philosophical, literary, and religious publications. The two were already in the process of running a publishing and bookstore business.³⁶³ To house the new Address Office, they acquired a property next to the city’s most famous pharmacy, Gottfried Becker’s house in Købmagergade. A few years later, they added another premises around the corner at central Amagertorv, the two cadasters meeting in the back yard.

To distribute the information and advertisements of the Address Office, Holck had launched a printed advertiser dubbed *Adresseavisen* (The Address Paper). According to a presentation in the first issue, the main activities of the new paper were to disseminate information on travelers, market and port prices, exchange rates, births, deaths, marriages, sale of goods, transport, search for lost or stolen items, arranging loans, skippers’ arrivals and cargoes, arranging positions, in short “everything that everyone finds comfortable to report or demand on the Address Office”. In addition, Holck promised that “original dissertations and problemata” and translations of such could also be submitted to *Adresseavisen* for the benefit of readers. The same applied to more entertaining things.³⁶⁴ Just like the two existing newspapers in Copenhagen, *Adresseavisen* was subjected to censorship performed by the Municipality and the Chief of Police. While initially primarily an advertising paper, *Adresseavisen* would gradually extend to include still more editorial content.

To widen the scope of his business, Holck launched various supplements to *Adresseavisen*. In 1767, a so-called *Monthly Supplement* was commenced; a literary supplement which was, the next year, dubbed *Kritisk Journal*, edited and mostly authored by the philologist Jacob Baden in Elsinore.³⁶⁵ In addition to this, Holck either wrote, edited, or published a number of new magazines dealing with topics ranging from trade and foreign news to moral issues and entertainment. It is hardly wrong to view the Address Office also as a literary school for young, talented writers, as an experimental hub for journal editors and writers and as a challenging actor in literary criticism, as well as in the newspaper market.³⁶⁶ Many of these writers and editors came to occupy important positions in the new Press Freedom public.

Adresseavisen was not just a newspaper, not only a network of writers and editors. It had a concrete physical local anchoring in the Address Office on Amagertorv,

363 *Adresseavisen*, 23 November 1759.

364 Westen 1780, 23–27.

365 Nøding 2018, 142.

366 Nøding 2013, 119 and 136.

from which the publications originated, where people appeared in large numbers to insert ads, respond to ads, or make use of other of Holck's offers ranging from alms to auctions. Messengers, writers, editors, and customers populated the house from morning to evening. In addition to these activities, Holck initiated a number of ventures that gave additional life to the office. He started a fishing company, the purpose of which was to provide fresher fish to Copenhagen, an auction house, a house for handicrafts and established a mail coach route between Copenhagen and the silver mining town of Kongsberg in Norway. In addition, there was the many projects that he started and then handed over to the further execution of others.

Also because of pietist influences, Holck's philanthropic work came to play an important role in his multi-faceted effort. Perhaps it was the daily contact with the many commoners who approached the Address Office that led him, in 1765, to set up a sick-benefit association providing support and medical care for people of humble means. In 1769, he set up a so-called *Bespisningskasse* (Feeding Box Office) which, on the basis of voluntary donations, distributed meal tickets to the needy so that they could have a meal at eateries or receive money at the Address Office to buy food. Many other initiatives, including establishment of schools for poor kids, could be added to the list.

When Press Freedom was introduced in 1770, the Address Office was the dominant media house in Copenhagen and an important center for trade activities and the exchange of information concerning quite a few matters in the city. Censorship of *Adresseavisen* disappeared with the introduction of Press Freedom and during the next few months, Holck took a number of initiatives that made him and his office a publicist center of Press Freedom. In October 1770, the first Press Freedom Writings began to appear among the regular book advertisements in *Adresseavisen* and gradually the majority of Press Freedom Writings were advertised by their printing houses in Holck's paper, rather than in the dominant elite Copenhagen newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*. *Adresseavisen* now appeared four times a week, and oftentimes, the columns containing book ads, of which many were advertising Press Freedom Writings, occupied close to a whole two-column page out of the paper's eight pages. In December, *Adresseavisen* took it a step further. Immediately after the publication of the Philopatreias pamphlet, substantial excerpts of the text were printed on the front page of *Adresseavisen* over two consecutive days (12 and 14 December), followed by intense reactions also given front page exposure (17 and 21 December), to which Philopatreias replied, in turn, on the front page on 28 December. In this sense, Holck definitely lived up to the statement that *Adresseavisen* would publish "dissertations and *problemata*". The huge and influential Philopatreias debate was effectively kick-started by *Adresseavisen*.

During 1771, a very large part of the Press Freedom Writings that Luxdorph collected in the twenty volumes of the first, pre-coup series of his collection were advertised for sale in *Adresseavisen*. The paper continuously presented countings of the published Press Freedom Writings and, for example, on 25 January 1771 it was an-

nounced that “one now counts a total of 29 small pieces published since the Freedom of the Press, which together amount to 17 mk. 6 sk.”. Quite typical of the tabular and informative style of *Adresseavisen*, the counting of the total purchase price was supplemented, which hardly was a piece of information requested by many. It is not too far-fetched to say that *Adresseavisen* became the newspaper of Press Freedom; readers could stay informed about every new pamphlet hitting the bookstores, while debates and letters to the editor in the paper were intertwined with the publications of the new public sphere.

At the turn of the year 1770, the flagship periodical of the Address Office – *The Ladies Times* – were radically reorganized and changed its name to the descriptive title of *Magazine for Patriotic Writers* with the subtitle “in which political, moral and historical matters will be published free of charge, started with the Writing Freedom”.³⁶⁷ The establishment of the *Magazine for Patriotic Writers* was announced on the front page of *Adresseavisen* on 2 January 1771, and the new magazine, like *Adresseavisen*, pervaded the golden age of the Press Freedom with debates and comments on the ongoing discussions. If *Adresseavisen* was the newspaper of the Press Freedom, the *Magazine* was its periodical. In fact, the *Magazine* explicitly pronounced its ambition of creating an arena for the use of press freedom. On the front page of the first issue, it was stated that the King had granted his subjects “the freedom of writing which has been suppressed for so long; and therefore it is the intention of this magazine to let anyone have his patriotic thoughts inserted at no cost in so far as this (without mentioning persons) is in accordance with the Ordinance” (no. 1, page 1). The full text of the Ordinance was quoted following this paragraph. It is worth noting that freedom of writing is perceived as a natural right that has been suppressed until now. Furthermore, it was important to Holck to open the pages of the *Magazine* to everyone free of charge and to grant anonymity, just as he made room for very short written formats that did not reach the eight pages minimum of the pamphlet format.³⁶⁸ Money and text size were not to be decisive for true patriotic ideas and the dissemination of relevant questions. Regarding anonymity, Holck in a later issue elaborated the argument that anonymous publication would promote impartiality (no. 20).³⁶⁹

Citizens were encouraged to ask questions and raise issues that readers could then answer or discuss further. The *Magazine* was created to constitute a patriotic conversation in writing. The reference to the Press Freedom Ordinance was repeated over and over by patriotic contributors to the *Magazine*, as when a letter about the

367 *Magazin for Patriotiske Skribentere, hvori Politiske, Moralske og Historiske Materier uden Bekostning indføres, begyndt med Skrive-Frieheden.*

368 It can be argued that Holck, in this way, preceded the later development of serialized publications taking the place of stand-alone pamphlets as the major genre of political and debating communication. On this development see Kristiansen, 2021.

369 Anonymity and the creation of new author roles in the Press Freedom Period is investigated by Horstbøll 2010.

hauliers' guild began with an celebration of the King, "who has provided his crowded-out subjects with the freedom to reveal suffering and injustice, experienced by everyone regardless of social position once in a while." (no. 15, "III. Om Vognmands-Lauget Kiøbenhavn"). Here, Press Freedom is interpreted as an opportunity to air a social critique when speaking in more direct form about repressed subjects, distress, and injustice.

Several times, however, Holck had to reject submitted texts, which he conscientiously pointed out in the *Magazine* and explicitly stated his reasons (e. g., No. 19). Yet, in no. 20 it had become necessary to clarify more general criteria for having a piece accepted in the journal. No evil, harmful, biased, false cases, or personal attacks would be published, but his editorial comment also regarded Press Freedom in a more general sense. It was "the public" who wielded the pen in the pieces that were submitted, but the *Magazine* still felt obliged to sort and edit the content for the sake of "the public". While freedom of the press applied to everyone, the *Magazine* reserved the right to open the pages solely to "sensible patriots". In this setting, the public is both sender and receiver, while the *Magazin* constitutes a mediating body weeding out writers who got lost "in the labyrinth of passions", producing writings that did not suit a "moral and polished nation".

Many topics were brought to the fore: guild affairs, food production, price development, rural economics, and recurring matters such as calls for laws against opulence and splendor (nos. 23 – 24, and 45) were eagerly discussed. There were many cross-references or comments on the contents of *Adresseavisen* and *The Danish Argus* (e. g., no. 22). As in *Adresseavisen*, there were several comments on Bie's Philopatreias in the *Magazin* (e. g., nos. 14 and 15), which – once more – emphasizes the importance of Philopatreias not only as a thematic debate-creating incidence, but also as an engine for the initiation and development of the whole of the Press Freedom public. At the same time, the *Magazin* initiated debates by way of reader questions that spread to other media and formed the focal point of several pamphlets and constituted a strong instigator in the intensified intertextuality of public debate.

This was also the case when an anonymous society wanted to use the pages of the *Magazin* for a weekly review of the most recently published Press Freedom Writings. The society believed that the reviews in *Kritisk Journal* and *Fortegnelsen* were good and useful but were published too late for the public to be warned against buying particular publications. Precisely such warnings against spending money on bad writings was the main endeavor, which was in line with the *Magazin's* idea of the press and the public exercising an appropriate amount of self-regulation (no. 20). According to this anonymous society, increasing commercialization brought about by Press Freedom was a problem. "Despicable greed" had given mean souls the stimulus to write and had "brought the abuses of the press to such a degree that printers and booksellers, publishers and the most miserable scribblers and scribes (we cannot call them authors) freely and unimpededly can do as they please with the honest

names and reputations of co-citizens”. When such writings are promoted, or even just mentioned, they arouse the curiosity of people and so “the meanest writers and publishers can sell their black and ugly writings; they earn from them and, look, immediately this profit becomes a new incentive for their deformed malevolence”. Money spent on such publications ought to be used for better purposes, for instance to the benefit of the poor or the schools. After this tirade, a list of publications and short comments on each of them was presented. Many are mentioned with politeness. But in the last part, five publications, all of them belonging to the shoe brush debate, are listed – but surprisingly without the brief review that followed all the other mentioned writings.³⁷⁰ The reason was that the editor of the *Magazine* had removed the reviews. The editor agreed with the society that those five pamphlets were very bad, but in the submitted review they were mentioned in a way considered to be “too offensive and in conflict with the guidelines of the Magazine”. So, they were omitted. The spaces left blank spoke more than many words. Patriots censored patriots in the new uncensored public.

Adresseavisen made sure to keep its subscribers informed about the publication of *The Magazine* and the contents of individual issues. The Address Office’s cross-cutting textual practice was, to a large extent, also a matter of business strategy when spreading the communication across several platforms and tying them together in mutually interwoven marketing. Another step towards the consolidation of the media conglomerate was taken when Holck and Andersen received, in 1771, royal permission to establish their own printing shop. With the printing business, Holck complemented the infrastructure of his business. The Address Office now controlled all stages of text production: financing of authors, printing in its own printing house, distribution by its own couriers and postal routes, sales in its own bookstore, advertising in its own newspaper, and not least reviewing the texts in its own critical periodicals.³⁷¹

In several ways, 1772 became a turning point for the Address Office. At the turn of the year 1771 and after a total of 107 issues in just one year, the *Magazine* ceased to exist in its previous form and was from now on published under the title of *Bibliothek for nyttige Skrifter* (Library for Useful Writings) edited by a learned group that had undertaken to manage the journal. It seems that Holck left his creation to be taken care of by other forces. Instead, the sudden events at court were to pave the way for a brand new – and perhaps Holck’s most innovative – initiative. Immediately following the coup against Struensee on 17 January 1772 Holck hurried to

370 [anonymous] *Lygtemandens, Heldhestens, Varulvens og Marens Fødsel*, no place or printer, 1771 (12 March 1771); [F. C. Scheffer], *Pilati Livs- og Levnets-Beskrivelse*, Copenhagen: Thiele, 1771 (13 May 1771); [anonymous], *Den forvandlede Gedebuk*, Haag [?], no printer indicated, 1771 (3 April 1771); [anonymous], *Et forunderligt Syn*, no place or printer, 1771 (3 March 1771); and [anonymous], *En saare mærkværdig Tildragelse som er skeet i den Stad Antwerpen*, no place or printer, 1771 (30 January 1771).

371 Nøding 2013, 120.

launch a new newspaper entitled *Aften-Posten* (The Evening Post). Under the impression of the muddy communication situation in connection with the events at the palace, where no one really knew what was going on, Holck teamed up with some of his former co-writers and made it the prime task of the newspaper to keep Copenhageners continuously informed on news related to the coup.³⁷² It was the first evening paper in Denmark providing the readers with fresh news after hours. The inspiration came from the English daily *London Evening Post*, and after an initial planning period, by March *Aften-Posten* had stabilized a certain regularity coming out twice a week. Holck's success during the Press Freedom Period was reflected in several new initiatives, for instance, in 1772, he opened Denmark's first newspaper stand at the gate of the house on Amagertorv. This "Newspaper-Boutique" consisted of a cart from which newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets were sold and potential customers could browse the goods on display.

But dark clouds soon began to pull in over the Address Office. Due to a string of unsuccessful business adventures, with no connection to its publishing business, the company went bankrupt. It was taken over by shareholders, while Andersen continued to run the retail business. The new publishers let Holck keep *Aften-Posten* in order for him to make a living. Holck moved to another, more modest premises not far from the Address Office and ran his business from this new headquarter, where he also established a so-called newspaper office serving as newspaper sales point, bookstore, publishing house, editorial office for *Aften-Posten*, and as a lottery agency. With *Aften-Posten*, Holck entered a new phase in the Press Freedom Period. The active contribution of *Adresseavisen* and Holck's periodicals in shaping the new public belonged to the first hectic part of the Press Freedom Period. Now the circumstances were changing, and *Aften-Posten* became a popular magazine reflecting many of the less politicized matters occupying Copenhageners in the 1770s.

Let us return to the significance of space and place in the practical public sphere of Press Freedom. Holck and *Aften-Posten* were based around Amagertorv, as was the Address Office. The square was a central urban site known for its lively atmosphere, halfway between the Western Gate and Kongens Nytorv, with a view to the power center of the Christiansborg palace. In a self-satirical article in *Aften-Posten*, the anonymous author refers to a conversation between two men; one of them mentions Holck's newspaper shop on Amagertorv, with which his wife is very dissatisfied. The reason is that it is impossible to have the servant maids back in time for their household duties because they go to visit Holck's shop where they buy lottery tickets or spend time reading the papers on exhibition. Not infrequently, the maids spend some of the money that was to be used for the purchase of pork, butter, groats, fish, and herbs from the marketplace on the square. The other man responds that he has observed up to seven girls standing in the square gathered around one issue of *Aften-Posten* – one of the girls read aloud with the others listening carefully.

372 Ehrencron-Müller, I, 389 and Nøding 2013, 132–133.

The girl with *Aften-Posten* in her hand had put down her basket and not noticed the fishes jumping out of it and getting snatched by street urchin. When she had finished reading aloud, she discovered that her basket was empty, and she had to go to the fishmonger once more and spend her own money to buy new fish.³⁷³ This fictitious conversation reflects the concrete spatiality of the urban public sphere – Amagerterv – portraying a specific readership, the girls reading and listening, as well as a media for common people, *Aften-Posten*. In spite of a slightly condescending tone, it acknowledges the vivid activity of the practical public sphere.

The King's Garden as a New Public Venue

A major topic for *Adresseavisen* during the summer of 1771 involved the King's Garden. This royal garden was built as an extension of the royal residence of Rosenborg dating back to 1607 and was the only major public garden within the gated city of eighteenth-century Copenhagen. The garden was originally laid out to be used by the royal court but had, to some extent, been opened to the public who was allowed to use the garden avenues and some main areas. In a description from 1748, the architect Lauritz de Thurah mentioned that the size, decorations, planting and paths system of the garden made it an extremely pleasant place to stay, which was why it "in the summer time abounds with people who entertain themselves with promenades and the sweet sounds of nightingales".³⁷⁴ A Swedish visitor to Copenhagen described, in 1768, how the beautiful garden functioned as a relatively socially mixed and heavily occupied public space in which it was common to promenade until late in the evening – and he emphasized that every citizen would enjoy the garden free of charge.³⁷⁵ This activity was also referred to in a German travelogue from 1769 describing the social rules of the garden. It is mentioned that one should be careful if staying too long in the garden after dark, as one would easily risk to "sacrifice his honor, money and health on the merciful sisters", meaning that male visitors were in danger of being lured or corrupted by female prostitutes.³⁷⁶ Contrary to what would later be claimed, sexual activities in The King's Garden was not a phenomenon introduced by Struensee. We shall return to that.

As the architect Thurah wrote in the above passage, the guests in the garden amused themselves with promenading. Promenading or strolling, especially from mid-eighteenth century, had developed into a specific pastime in most European

373 Kirchhoff-Larsen 1942–1962, II, 139.

374 Quoted from Nystrom 1938, 47.

375 Becker (ed.) 1865–1871, 331.

376 Willebrandt 1769, 292.

capitals in which the *promeneur* differed from the walking subject of everyday life.³⁷⁷ In cities where most people transported themselves on foot for all sorts of purposes, one could differentiate oneself from the ordinary activity of daily walking (in the sense of moving purposefully from one place to another) by promenading in a park like the King's Garden with no particular destination. If walking in a garden, one was not on one's way to a specific locale in a certain errand. Walking in a garden was an activity with other purposes that can be roughly divided into three – often coincidental – kinds: to enjoy the green space of the garden, to do physical exercise, or to take part in the social activity for which the garden provided the space. The latter particularly included social recognition: seeing and been seen. These three types of activity were represented in the above-mentioned descriptions of the garden, but the example from the German travelogue reveals that there was a big difference of activities depending on the time of the day – or the night, the time when the “merciful sisters” operated.

The above examples indicate that the *promeneur* was, as a figure, associated with a specific practice involving more than putting one leg in front of the other. The promenading guests were, in a sense, contributing to a codification of the garden space and giving rise to ideas of socially acceptable (or unacceptable) behaviors in the garden. The German traveler observed the specific promenading customs that had developed in the King's Garden in contrast to other public gardens he had visited around Europe. After her arrival in Copenhagen, Queen Caroline Matilda further strengthened this cult of promenades by strolling around the city and in the King's Garden. An outraged civil servant later wrote in retrospect that the Queen, in an unfortunate way, inspired Copenhagen ladies to stay away from the female chores of the home.³⁷⁸ Contrary to such negative judgments, a Press Freedom Writing entitled *Tonight's Promenades or Conversation between Prudentius and Simplicius* presented the promenades as a practice promoting conversation between friends, being beneficial for health.³⁷⁹

The transformation of the King's Garden from a place of promenades to some kind of amusement park occupied the minds of many city dwellers in 1771. The change was drastic, and the behavior and the socially conditioned regulation of life in the garden were turned upside down. In *Adresseavisen*, it was announced that the royal family would dine in the garden on Sunday 26 May 1771 in the evening in the garden gazebo accompanied by “magnificent music”. Furthermore, it was proclaimed that the King now gave full public access to the garden, with the sole excep-

³⁷⁷ The emergence of *le promeneur* (not to be confused with the nineteenth-century *flâneur*) is investigated in Turcot 2015, 67–99. Also, see Heller 2010 and Turcot 2009. On the creation of specific spaces for promenades, see Poulsen 1997.

³⁷⁸ Bregnsbo 2007, 59.

³⁷⁹ [anonymous] *Aftens Promenader eller Samtale imellem Prudentius og Simplicius*, no place or printer, 1771 (17 July 1771).

tion of the areas immediate to the castle and the royal kitchen garden.³⁸⁰ In connection with this, a German publican from Alsace, Johannes Jakob Gabel, was given permission to open a restaurant and a gambling marquee in the garden. Shortly after, the government gave permission for music to be played in the garden as entertainment. Furthermore, lightning was installed to support festivity and help visibility in the garden after nightfall.

As a kind of entertainment director of the new activities in the garden, Gabel held three major public parties during 1771. To celebrate the birth of Princess Louisa Augusta (the King's second child; in reality the illegitimate daughter of the Queen and Struensee) in July, there was an official party in the garden with fireworks and music until the early morning. Subsequently, the garden celebrated the baptism of the Princess with a large firework display, in which the Queen and the Princess' signatures appeared as colored flaming figures – critics noted the missing monogram of the King. Later that the year, another major fireworks display took place with the royal family, the foreign envoys and the top three rank classes as special audience. Gabel's events were funded by the Royal Treasury and so carried an official stamp.³⁸¹

Refreshments, Conversation, Promenading Women

The sudden change in the garden became a matter for Copenhageners, quickly finding its way also to Press Freedom Writings. It began with small hints in footnotes or indirect references in titles, such as the pamphlet *A little Parcel found on the Road from the Palace to Rosenborg Garden*, the latter being another name for the King's Garden, in which the name of the King's Garden is inserted in the title as a symbol of the changes at court.³⁸² Without using the toponym, the garden is described in a footnote as a garden where "one can enter, and to comfort the thirsty and the needy brothers and sisters take an expensive drink. One is also assured that the air is so composed, and so blissfully cool, that when one has been there 3 or 4 times, one can have the coldest and most confused conscience, when one observes the challenging rules for it" (15–16). There is a clear reference to the norms of behavior ("the challenging rules") in the garden which had emerged as a consequence of a new and apparently more extravagant and unscrupulous use of the place. The wording "the coldest and most confused conscience" most likely refers to the "loss of honor" among the visitors; something which soon became a major theme in the Press Freedom Writings. The comment on the expensive drinks is noteworthy. The year 1771

380 28 May 1771, no. 84.

381 Gabel's events, see *Adresseavisen*, 1771, no. 84, 111, 117 and 172 and Brock 1881–1883, III, 72–73.

382 [anonymous] *En liden Paqve funden paa Veien fra Slottet til Rosenborg-Hauge af følgende Indhold: Sandheds Ord af en sand Patriot, til Trods for den danske Regierings Fiender. Samt et aldeles umærkværdig Svar paa et Brev fra en Søster til sin Broder*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (19 August 1771).

was a time of economic hardship and the allegedly high prices of food and drink in the garden suggest a socially excluding element in the new garden sociability.³⁸³ The previously mentioned Swedish visitor had, in 1769, emphasized that anyone could visit the garden free of charge. With the introduction of commercial supply of refreshments and entertainment in the garden, a distinction was made between those who could pay and those who could not.

The first pamphlet dealing with the King's Garden as a regular subject was *Experiences in Rosenborg Garden on the Day the Refreshment Tents were erected, communicated by a careful Listener*, in which garden life is presented in versified form.³⁸⁴ When the author feels sad, he often goes to the garden. The sight of trees, bushes, flowers, gazebo, fountains, statues, and the castle always delights him just as sounds and smells are described as uplifting to his mood; not least the song of the nightingale song is refreshing. With the expectation of so recovering, he enters the garden on the day Gabel's tents are erected:

When entering I soon saw an innumerable crowd
of medium to lower class with craving desire
seeking shadow under the newly built tents
to build an alter true to each one's personal god. (9)

Because of this new invasion, the statues and the nature in the garden no longer give him any pleasure. The new guests do not aim to enjoy the garden but prefer visiting the tents and devoting themselves to their vices. Even though the poor nightingale's song is now drowned out by the music, the author can still listen to conversations among the guests; he hears praise, blame, complaining, and thanking from all sides and in a mash of utterances. Based on conversations thus intercepted, the poem turns into a description of all the new initiatives of the King (i. e., Struensee); the reorganization of the state administration, the expenses of the royal court, the introduction of the lottery, the naval expedition to Algiers and so on. Everything is reproduced in *pro et contra* conversations between the guests of the garden consisting of a "swarm of gentlemen, ladies and waiters". It is difficult to detect at what point one of the characters in the garden or the narrator himself is reasoning, which can be viewed as an indirect comment the impersonal nature of the emerging "public opinion". Completely dizzy from the many opinions and voices, the narrator finds he has to leave the garden.

The poem portrays the crowd engulfed in conversation in the garden, which is thus represented not only as a meeting-place for pleasure, but also as a public space for the exchange of information, views, and rumor. The many perceptions of the events at court and the political situation in general are aired and presented in a ca-

383 On the high cost of living in the period, see Stevnsborg 1980a, 588.

384 [anonymous], *Erfaringer i Rosenborg-Hauge den Dag de opsatte Forfrisknings-Telter, meddeelte af en agtsom Tilhører*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (16 July 1771).

cophony of voices that the narrator recreates in verse. In a sense, the poem reflects the oral urban culture among the socially mixed audience in the space of the garden. It is obvious to compare the features here attributed to the King's Garden with the characteristics associated with the Palais-Royal in Paris in the 1780s where people from all walks of life sought the place as a space for public – and hidden – exchange of views, and where many later revolutionaries gave impromptu speeches, while also more hedonistic pleasures were cultivated.³⁸⁵



Fig. 30: In the early summer of 1771, larger parts of the King's Garden were opened for the public, and the Royal Court held several major celebration events there. The new popular life in the Garden including serving, drinking, fireworks, gambling – and sex in the thicket in particular – became a hot topic for debate through summer. *The King's Garden*, painting, unknown artist, ca. 1780. © Museum of Copenhagen.

According to the poem, a new public is created on the spot, so to speak, and the author gives the impression that a string of topics is discussed in the garden that had not previously been possible to debate. The many initiatives from the government are debated by a newly composed audience, which is constituted in a new public space opened by the government and based on the flow of communication gener-

³⁸⁵ On Palais-Royal, see McMahon 1996.

ated by the Press Freedom. These components fertilize each other.³⁸⁶ Exactly the new topics and forms of conversation of the time are mentioned in *Fortegnelsen's* review of the poem, in which it is stated that it is a “not badly written satirical poem about the occurring changes of the day”.³⁸⁷

Another side of life in the garden was addressed in the pamphlet *A loving Poem by King Harald. As well as a small Appendix depicting Rosenborg Garden opened*,³⁸⁸ in which the author ironically asks whether it is permissible and decent to read in the King's Garden? The real summer pleasure is to take a walk. Most people think so, and Her Majesty is happy that the health and pleasure of the nation can be maintained this way. But something has gotten in the way of the usual practices in the garden. The new, pervasive desire to *read* now affects life on the garden avenues, and especially the presence of the many reading women is both novel and disturbing. The city gentleman trembles at the sight of reading – “instead of laughing or talking” – women. Reading has spiraled out of control and the gentleman asks: “Will one poison the pleasant strolls with the disgusting activity of reading?” If women spend too much time reading, they will no longer be able to give small blows with their fans on the hands of the impertinent. All this reading makes superfluous the garden cavaliers' usual attention, and they are reduced to “useless, wandering statues”. But if the women want it that way, the cavaliers can do nothing else but following their demand and serve them by bringing “these magazines”. Evidently, the promenading women used to be the main attraction of the garden to the cavaliers. A blow of a fan was a badge of honor. If this can no longer be achieved by serving as usual, male honor must now be won by procuring Press Freedom Writings for the ladies.

Apart from the fact that the pamphlet is a commentary on all the nonsense that, from the perspective of the narrator now flows from the writers' pens, it is a satire on how the explosive production of small prints consumed by everyone and everywhere is changing the patterns of sociability in the garden, so that a smooth cavalier no longer knows what to do. His only option to regain some of his lost territory is by accepting the new public conditions and supplying the reading women in the garden with the publications they demand. According to this fictitious account, the reading and writing revolution of the Press Freedom had left its mark on public space.

386 The emergence of a public in public space is debated in Vanhaelen & Ward (eds.) 2013.

387 *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 1, no. 265.

388 [anonymous], *En Elske-Digt af Kong Harald. Samt et lidet Anhang forestillende Rosenborg-Hauge oplukt*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (2 August 1771).

Fireworks and Fornication

Other activities than reading were also taking place in the garden. A pamphlet mentions, for example, a bourgeois wife who “is expecting a good friend, a new acquaintance whom she met last night in the King’s Garden”, thus insinuating the garden’s potential for facilitating liaisons leading to adultery.³⁸⁹ It was hardly only by the summer of 1771 that such things started happening in the garden, but with the newly expanded access, serving, gambling, and popular events, erotic activities may very well have increased. The good-natured tone which characterizes some of the early publications is completely absent in the pamphlet *Thoughts and Sensations in Rosenborg Garden, the Evening of the Storm of July 24, when the little Souls went hunting. As well as an Ordinance from Conscience, feared by the unchaste Men and Women and to the Consolation of the insulted Spouses*.³⁹⁰ As is seen, the title mentions the garden, fornication, and not least the date of 24 July in the same breath. On 24 July 1771, Gabel arranged a large firework display in the garden to celebrate Queen Caroline Matilda’s birthday and the baptism of Princess Louisa Augusta. Only five days after this event, the pamphlet was for sale. Thus, the text was based on a specific event that many Copenhageners would have been aware of if they had not actually participated in the festivities a few days before. The author deliberately used the bombastic linking of the event with adultery to create attention; Press Freedom Writings were more than expressions of opinion in a new public, they were goods to be sold. Under three headings (Thoughts, Sensations, Considerations), a burning indignation is articulated over pretense, over mask and powder, over contempt for nature.

The event seemingly had been announced as a masquerade, but was replaced by a fireworks display, which makes the author present some thoughts on masquerades. Reference is made to the long line of masquerades which had been taking place since Christian VII’s ascension to the throne in 1766.³⁹¹ Maybe masquerades are not needed at all, the author argues, because life in the city has gradually become like one eternal masquerade, even to such an extent that he feels as if he is a part of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. For example, on the street you meet a gilded fox that looks like a deceiver. The capital “no longer needs Jews to practice this art” because everyone deceives each other. Soon you meet a lion and a crocodile, both out on prey. They are all dangerous animals without locks on their mouths. From the city streets, the spotlight is directed towards the King’s Garden. It does not get any better here.

389 [F. C. Scheffer], *Den Danske Halte-Fandens historiske Beretning, om alle de forunderlige Syner og Opdagelser, som han ved Hielp af en Messing-Kugle*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (12 April 1771).

390 [anonymous], *Tanker og Fornemmelser i Rosenborg Have, Stormens Aften d. 24. Julii, da de smaa Siæle holdte deres Klappe-Jagt. Samt en nye Forordning fra Samvittigheden, til Skræk for de ukyske ægte Mænd og Koner og til Trøst for de fornærmede Ægtefæller*, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, 1771 (30 July 1771).

391 On masquerades at the court of Christian VII, see Langen 2008, 159–163.

According to the author, curiosity and frivolity had driven a large crowd into the garden on the night of the event, and when decent spectators arrived in the garden to see the fireworks, they were forced to mingle with this “naughty company, which had cast off all shame and modesty”, and who had let their “disgusting lusts” rise much higher in the air than the fireworks (6). The powder smoke from the fireworks is compared to the fumes from the “decadent zealots” and their “glowing and ignited lust which rushed towards eternal darkness”. The fireworks turn out to be the trigger for a psychological release of sexual urges, and the fireworks are both an actual occasion and a metaphor for the subsequent explosion of mass eroticism. Fortunately for the narrator, the stench of powder drowns out the enticing scents of the sirens. He seeks refuge in a bush to quietly sit and contemplate what he now shares with his readers.

The space and the flora of the garden play an active role as the framework of the text. The senses are affected by the noise, light and smoke of fireworks as by the immoral chaos of the human swarm. Everything the narrator experiences this day, 24 July, is fateful. “The everchanging laws will burn everything I see and hear, smell, taste and feel” on this dreadful day when fireworks penetrate the docile air. The text continues about fumes of sulphur, biblical Judgment Day scenarios, and the horrors of the times in a somewhat fragmentary prose. A clear division of the audience is made between decent people who wish to obey the rules of conduct that previously prevailed in the garden, and the new users of the garden, who romp about in a sensory bombardment consisting not only of fireworks, but also of an untamed behavior and dominant carnal lust. The textualized sensory experience emphasize the garden’s transformation from a place of quiet promenading to a noisy amusement park.³⁹² Also in Brun’s pamphlet *A Greenlander’s Description of Copenhagen with a Consideration on the Observance of the ten Commandments*, fireworks and fornication are merged in a cheeky remark “that the sixth commandment goes up in the air with the rockets in Rosenborg Garden” (11).³⁹³

Fatefully, several pamphlets began to appear in which the combination of garden life and the disseminating knowledge of the love affair between Queen Caroline Matilda and Struensee was evident. One author wrote that gilded chambers were not so dense as being able to hide the adulterer and the adulteress. “The gossiping rumor” carried intelligence around town, but fortunately the virtuous do not allow themselves to be influenced by “the blinding stench which entangles an unfortunate couple”. However, there are those who applaud fornication and allow themselves to be defiled. And where does this take place? In the King’s Garden, indeed: “It is only sinful monkeys, the little souls who applaud so well in the King’s Garden, who are

392 On the textualization of sensory experiences in historical source material, see Smith 2007, 125–128, and 2012, 469–472.

393 [Martin Brun], *En Grønlanders Beskrivelse over Kiøbenhavn med Betænkning over de Ti Buds Helligholdelse*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (15 November 1771).

infested with your filth”. The garden is represented as a tribute arena for the adulterous couple (i. e., Caroline Matilda and Struensee), and the visitors are simply infected by their immorality when visiting the garden (cf. Chapter 9).³⁹⁴

In the pamphlet *An Open Letter, found at the Entrance to the King’s Garden*, the anonymous author addresses a letter to a fictitious female recipient, called “my dearest Hermantine”.³⁹⁵ The letter compares the King’s Garden with the Garden of Eden, where Eve was “misled and entangled by the schemes of the enemy of humanity” (4). In the same way, innocent, young girls these days are seduced by merely stepping out on the avenues of the King’s Garden. The place has been sullied by the new disgraceful use of it. The place is profaned, the avenues of the garden are now downright “offended”; the King’s Garden have simply become “a green brothel”. The gender-specific issue is presented in a metaphorical image that revolves around marriage. Previously, only married people came to the garden. The marital status was the visitors’ entrance ticket, so they could stay in “the shady archways of the real love”. A few prostitutes obtained fake tickets but were mostly refused admission at the entrance to the garden by “Chastity and Modesty”, who kept watch. Again, a distinction is made between the former users of the garden and the new ones, who with their presence have broken down the previous code for virtuous, promenading behavior. At the end of the letter, the addressee changes. The author no longer writes to the fictional Hermantine, but to all Copenhagen mothers. In a concluding appeal, mothers are urged not to allow their daughters access to the King’s Garden without supervision during the dark hours. Mothers also have a responsibility.

Many pamphlets focus on the behavior and virtue of women. Female honor was in the first instance a responsibility of husband or householder, in the second instance a public matter. The traditional perception of women as warm-blooded creatures with animal impulses is presented as posing a threat to future generations – and the King’s Garden are complicit in this misery because providing the space – and the grass – for women to give in to their nature.

This aspect is noted and ridiculed in the laconic review in *Fortegnelsen* announcing that the pamphlet is trivial and that the “pious” author reveals his ridiculous fear of “the pollution of the chastity of the fair sex in the dangerous Rosenborg Garden” through his warnings to his beloved “to resist temptations, if she dares to enter the garden”. The conclusion is that it is, in fact, the author who has a problem, not the women or the garden.³⁹⁶ Here, prevailing moralist discourse is opposed by critical assessment – both were central elements of the new Press Freedom public.

394 [Martin Brun], *Hiertet er min Dronning, Fornuften er min Konge. Eller Svar paa det i Magasinet fremsatte Spørgsmaal No. 72*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (12 August 1771).

395 [anonymous], *Et aabent Brev, fundet ved Indgangen til Kongens Have*, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, 1772 (August 1772).

396 *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 1, no. 301.

Farewell of the Nightingale

In Brun's pamphlet *The Queen of the Birds, or the Nightingale's Farewell Song from Rosenborg Garden*, looking back on the vanishing summer of 1771 from a vantage point beyond the 7 October restrictions on Press Freedom, the title page carries a quotation by La Beaumelle aiming at the self-staging aspect of promenading where the participants observe each other being part of the complicated pattern they create: "Promenading is a kind of public comedy, where everyone is an actor and a spectator at the same time. Which gender plays the most advantageous role?"³⁹⁷ But the purpose of the pamphlet is more than just pointing out the game of promenades. This author also has a moral message to teach. The text begins with a song from the nightingale to the other birds in the garden, followed by a song for the ladies. In the latter, the author describes how the garden were once an innocent place where "the thoughtful spectator" enjoyed "the wonder and joy" of the Creator and was touched by the trills of the nightingale. Back then, an innocent girl could enter, enjoy the garden and leave again with her innocence intact. This is not the case these days: "O, beautiful virgin! Just because you are the daughter of Eve, will you therefore compete with your fallen mother to make the deeper fall?" The reference to the Fall of Man is as evident as the guilt of the women over the defilement of the King's Garden. The women "will transform it [the garden, ed.] into the home of the swarm and a place of assembly for wild desires and a lifestyle, whose history will grate too much on the ear of the virtuous". The women have drowned out the singing of the nightingale with their "poisoned expressions" and siren song. Young people have been seduced and found role models – and praise – among "the Great and the well-to-do". This reprehensible behavior is widespread even in the highest place. It is not difficult to guess to whom the author is alluding.

In the end, Nature is invoked by the bird, who more specifically addresses the grass of the garden: "Lovely grass! You who grew to the glory of nature is now being dishonored. Who made you the bed for the impure? And from where did they receive the freedom to abuse you so disgracefully. Then a sinful couple sank into the grass: That was when I flew away, nothing more will I know". When the aroused couple rolls around on the grass in the garden, nature is mocked. In the author's suggestive image, the excited couple is all but natural.

The bird's escape from the garden is summarized in an appendix to the pamphlet, in which the sad nightingale is bidding goodbye to the once so lovely, now contaminated, garden:

397 [Martin Brun], *Dronningen for Fuglene, eller Nattergalens Afskeds-Sang fra Rosenborg Have*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (October 18 1771). Brun had, earlier that fall, expressed extreme, vitriolic contempt of female frivolity in Copenhagen, see below. His more mellow, melancholic stance in the Nightingale pamphlet may be due to his looking back upon a summer passed, but maybe also due to the fact that the 7 October restrictions passed less than two weeks before the appearance of the pamphlet, considerably dampening the radicality of most pamphleteers.

Farewell my Rosenborg, my Eden
 Transformed into a forest of wormwood
 I hurry out to solitude
 To sing there my song and my rules
 Remaining was not secured
 Goodbye, hear my peeping

The nightingale flies away because she cannot live in a “depraved area”, where “the dirty slaves of lust” whistle away. The nightingale will move to live in nature, in which virtue, fidelity, and chastity are to be found everywhere. It wants to fly out to the peasant who knows how to appreciate the simple fun and games of the nightingale. Just let the naughty, wild fool rage and tumble around in the bushes of the King’s Garden. He will receive his punishment. In this farewell song, a distinction is made between real nature in the country and the now defiled nature of the King’s Garden, between the former and the current users of the garden.

As indicated, the garden was used extensively even before the enclosed areas were opened to the public in June 1771. Judging from the earliest Press Freedom Writings there seems to be a certain degree of acceptance of the expanded function of the garden as a public space in which speaking and reading takes place; the garden remain a meeting place for promenading Copenhageners, but also a public space created by the Press Freedom, where opinions are exchanged and discussed on the basis of reading the new publications. One could, as Darrin McMahon has pointed out, argue that public gardens and promenade areas were, in the second half of the eighteenth century, seen as essential to the maintenance of a public and urban civilian life that ought to characterize any enlightened metropolis. The King’s Garden can be perceived as playing precisely that role in Copenhagen. For the same reason, the authors of the critical pamphlets lament the challenge of social norms of behavior in the garden that was brought about; sexual excesses undermined the place as an ideal space of bourgeois sociability. And the blame for this misery was clearly identified when a direct line was established between actual immoralities in play at court and the lewd uses of the garden. Furthermore, there was a neglect of traditional recreational functions, where visitors would enjoy the garden and the flora in relative peace and quiet. The natural element – nature tout court – disappeared with the surprising flow of new guests, not least due to Gabel’s event activities. An invisible border was crossed, also because fireworks, music, serving, and not least setting up tents were similar to the characteristics connected with popular amusement gardens such as Dyrehavsbakken outside of Copenhagen. This transformation destroyed the naturalness of the garden.

There is also a sensory component to this critique. The more restrained use of the garden space in the past was pushed back by the swarm of people who were testing the tactile sensitivity of the previous visitors. And when the natural song of the nightingale was displaced by the artificial and noisy pandemonium stemming from music and fireworks, conversations, and eroticism, the sensory bombardment be-

came almost unbearable. A part of this perceived vulgarization of the garden was expressed in the blurring of the temporal limitations in the use of the garden. With the lightening of the main avenues – just as with the dancing and music until the bright morning – the difference between night and day was relativized. The illumination of the dark garden at nighttime on certain August evenings was presented as a special attraction in *Adresseavisen*, which reported that “the public can still have fun in Rosenborg Garden in dark evenings”, because Gabel, had “arranged lanterns and colored lamps” in the main avenues of the garden “which is illuminated at its most beautiful”.

In a more overall perspective, the Press Freedom Writings’ representations of the King’s Garden can be viewed in a more general framework emphasizing changing relationships between private and public. As Richard Sennett has pointed out, it was a widespread notion in mid-eighteenth century that parenthood and deep friendships, for example, were potential proficiencies or qualities inherent in man by nature and, thus, belonging to private life. In contrast, man created himself as an individual in public by his behavior and dealings with other people more remote. When more meeting places in the cities and more sociability outside direct state control emerged, a notion of an increasing need for public order arose.³⁹⁸ Following that perspective, the Press Freedom Writings’ descriptions of the King’s Garden can be viewed as a reaction to the sudden disturbance of the balance between private and public geography. When the folding screen of privacy fell and lustful behavior was publicly displayed, it was a moral obligation to reprimand it. Here, Press Freedom provided unprecedented opportunities to – anonymously – express opinions about this alleged disturbance of order and balance; a disturbance which at the same time was a consequence of the very policy which had also ensured the possibility of expression. Press Freedom also allowed for its own critics, even detractors.

Again and again, pamphlets address and reveal what Press Freedom meant to urban life. Not only the elementary establishment of a new public with new conditions and fewer limits, but just as much as an opportunity to explore the potential of bringing the city’s varieties of thoughts, speech and observations into publications. As for the moralization about fornication in the King’s Garden in particular, they would gradually enter into a toxic amalgam with the indignation of the relationship between the Queen and Struensee during the summer of 1771, which proved to busily erode whatever popular support the powerful Cabinet Minister may have had.

398 Sennett 1973, 17–19.

9 How the Pamphlet Market Turned against its Originator and Fed into his Fall – from the Summer of 1771 to the January 1772 Coup

When the royal court left Copenhagen early June 1771 in order to take up summer residence at the bucolic castle of Hirschholm to the north of Copenhagen, things must have looked brilliant from the view of the young Struensee government. After nine months in power, a series of ambitious reforms had been launched, Press Freedom had unleashed a lot of new and ambitious writers discussing a host of issues never before accessible to the public. The Shoe Brush debate had given rise to a legislation against corruption in the administration; the *corvée* had been contained, the huge reform of the government of Copenhagen had been launched in April; the maze of financial state institutions was merging into one by May, the fusion of all the bewildering court systems of Copenhagen into one, with clear demarcation between executive and judicial powers, was underway.

From this point, however, things would begin to sour, and when the court returned to the castle of Frederiksberg immediately outside of the city in November, the city was virtually fuming with anger over the Struensee government, and old tensions among Copenhageners were flaring up. Already at the time, the special atmosphere of Copenhagen developing through the fall of 1771 was described by many as one of “Gjæring” – that is, Fermentation. A process had been initiated by pamphleteers in early summer which would ultimately terminate in the coup against Struensee in January 1772 and his subsequent execution. This chapter covers this extraordinary development.

This fateful half-year leading to the toppling of the Struensee government fall in two connected halves. The first period saw an increase in pamphlets attacking the government, both in numbers and in aggression, and it terminated in the 7 October restrictions on Press Freedom. This did dampen pamphlet aggression, but the population of Copenhagen was already ignited by the summer events and pamphlets, and the restrictions did little to calm Copenhageners. Rather, the passions were but further intensified by being pressed underground. The first half of the chapter, then, tracks the pamphlet stream leading up to the October restrictions while the second half follows the continued popular “fermentation” to the point of the 17 January coup events.

The Debate over Whoring through the Summer of ’71

The beginning of this fateful course of events was a pamphlet debate on the moral issue of “Horerie”, of whoring, which originated in late spring to take off during summer and culminate in September. 7 October, the Struensee government re-

sponded with a restriction on Press Freedom. What nourished this debate – with the large majority of pamphlets taking a stand against licentiousness and voluptuousness – was the combination of three significant events. One was the spring series of legislative initiatives from the Struensee government relaxing existing morality laws. Another was the above-mentioned full opening of the King's Garden in Copenhagen around the Rosenberg Castle to public access – allegedly leading to increased erotic activities in the thicket. The third was the spreading of rumors about Struensee's relation to the Queen, topped by the late announcement of her pregnancy in spring and the birth of Princess Louise Augusta 7 July – already at the time widely believed to be Struensee's bastard child rather than the King's.

The sequence of new laws addressing morality was impressive indeed. On 27 December 1770, marriage between cousins was permitted, generalized by 3 April to all marital combinations not explicitly outlawed by the Bible. The same day, the new Lord Mayor in the Copenhagen magistrate, Count von Holstein, instructed the police-in-chief to abstain from non-provoked investigation in private homes and pubs. This could be interpreted as an Enlightenment guarantee for a sphere of individual privacy, but many would perceive it rather as an indirect way of protecting public houses, brothels, and prostitutes against police control and intervention. On 17 April, a law followed abolishing the legislation against sex outside of marriage. On 28 April, it was decided that bastard children should be brought to the birth department at a hospital and the father of the child be exempted from prosecution. On 6 May, it was announced that all punishments for fathering and giving birth to children outside of marriage would be annulled, and on 13 May, the judicial distinction between children born inside and outside of marriage, respectively, was canceled. On 24 May, a new law decreed that adultery was punishable only after report from the offended party, hence no longer by report from any third party. There followed on 13 June the annulment of all sentences passed for sex outside of marriage, and on 15 June, as part of the restructuring of the Copenhagen judiciary, all issues pertaining to marriage were moved from the Academic Council of the University to the new Royal and City Court, so that judicial control with marriages passed from theologians to law scholars. All in all, this series of initiatives through early 1771 appears as one of the most thorough and consistent reform programs undertaken by the Struensee government, all of them aimed at redefining sexual morality as a civic and private rather than as a legal and religious issue, now left to free, personal judgment in civil society.³⁹⁹

399 The series even continued after summer. On 3 November, death penalty for infanticide and concealment of births was abolished, and 23 November, a Cabinet Order requested a list of all police regulations which might influence on morality – a report which did not materialize, however, before the coup of 17 January. In addition to the argument that morality should not be an issue of legislation came another argument, voiced in some pamphlets that the relaxation also would produce more children and thus strengthen demography and economy. That argument was prefigured in Struensee's Altona writings in the early 1760s but played no central role in the summer debate.

The 13 June law, the annulment of extramarital affair penalties, in a certain sense came to symbolize the sum total of all these relaxations of morality legislations. The initiative was spectacularly launched on the front page of *Adresseavisen* on 21 June, in the very same period as the newspaper prioritized coverage of the opening of the King's Garden to public access. This was obviously construed as *the* local Copenhagen event of the summer of '71, and *Adresseavisen* not only devoted its front page on the 28 May to an announcement that "His Majesty has decided, to the pleasure of inhabitants of the city, to open the hitherto closed parts of the garden mentioned", but continued on 11 June with reports on the serving of refreshments in the garden, also on the front page, and soon followed with the announcement of the introduction of gambling tents, public music, fireworks, night lighting, and other entertainments.

An increasing number of pamphleteers soon saw the new access to the garden as well as to extramarital sex as two sides of the same coin, and in that cocktail a third ingredient inevitably mixed: the Queen's pregnancy. On 3 May, *Adresseavisen* had announced prayers in the churches the forthcoming Sunday for the expectant regent, already seven months pregnant. The relaxations of morality and garden access were soon linked to the condition of the Queen, and pamphleteers began to detect what they believed to be an increasing libertinism of the city and its garden as having direct political roots in the debauchery of the court. Symbolically, the birth of Louise Augusta on 7 July was followed by a huge official celebration in the garden three days later – an event effectively functioning as a litmus test of the highly different morality mindsets of Copenhageners. While many flocked to the new entertainments and celebrations in the garden, other Copenhageners marked a silent protest against what they saw as a bastard child in the royal house by leaving churches when the priests announced the birth of the new Princess, soon nicknamed "La petite Struensee". As already mentioned, the existence of prostitution and licentiousness as well of public moral condemnations of it were no news in Copenhagen, but the three connected events of 1771 radicalized that debate to an unprecedented level. Such condemnation, of course, would ne a traditional task of the clergy, but also anticlerical, moralist pamphleteers like Martin Brun contributed to moralism – already in 1770, he had launched his whole career with a series of fictions taunting female licentiousness and male affectation.

The debate about whoring, however, took all of this to a wholly new level, igniting the major change of atmosphere in Copenhagen during 1771, and because of the possibility of dating most pamphlets after their first advertisement in the *Adresseavisen*, it has proven possible to chart the development of that particular debate in great detail over summer.



Fig. 31: Struensee's relation to the Queen electrified Copenhagen public during 1771. Here two sets of blue-green and red garters – now somewhat faded – which Struensee presented, as a gift of love, to Caroline Matilda. For the same reason, they were later presented as evidence in the court cases against the two in the spring of 1772. © Rosenborg Castle.

One pamphlet in particular seems to have triggered the long summer debate over morality, *A Conversation between Religion and Reason on the free and cheeky Abuse of the Gifts of the Mind*, followed by *A noteworthy Letter from a Brother to his Sister* – dated 27 June and advertised for sale on 9 July.⁴⁰⁰ The author was the young, unemployed theologian Christian Thura subscribing to a fundamentalist Lutheran-Ortho-

⁴⁰⁰ [Christian Thura], *En Samtale imellem Religionen og Fornuften om den fri og frække Misbrug af Sindets Gaver, hvorvidt den vanærer Menneskeligheden, og qvæler Dydens Fornemmelser hos Efterslægten. Et merkværdig Brev fra en Broder til sin Syster*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (9 July 1771).

dox theology, a stronger basis of criticism than the more tempered rationalism of the modern, fashionable preachers of the time. He had debuted with a rude comment on the Philopatris debate some weeks earlier under the pen name of “The Truth-Sayer”. Already the first half of his new pamphlet was explosive. Here, Religion and Reason exchange views in a dialogue and surprisingly easy, the two agree upon appealing to monarchs to stop the current stream of slime and dung threatening to contaminate the pure waters of virtue. Here, Thura initiated his dangerous, indirect criticism of Struensee – “a fool” – as well as of “the one giving him free rein”, that is, the King himself. He avoided mentioning any of the two by name, but everybody would understand whom he addressed. In hindsight, the conclusion reads as one of the first public urgings to religiously motivated rebellion against the Struensee government, promising eternal salvation for “virtuous and perfect rebels” taking action. It was the pamphlet’s appendix letter, however, that launched a radical attack on sexual licentiousness. The new spring legislation is analyzed simply as an incitement to whoring: “many will, encouraged by this regulation, become licentious enough to practice debauchery and copulate like animals, yea, many whore-hunters will, without shame, take a new harlot every year”. The fictive author, F. M. Abeltoft (Apple-Garden, that is, Paradise) finds it considerably more disgusting, however, when women indulge in such activities than men. This reasoning lies behind the radical conclusion:

But when such a vice is committed by a female regent, a Princess, or other high-ranking female persons, then the deed is not only extremely shameful, ungodly, hateful, and despicable. And I say without timidity nor fear that when such an action is committed by them, they should no longer be tolerated in the country, but they should really pay for it (if not publicly, then secretly), no matter their high standing and condition; for to contaminate a state and government and other high marriages is unbearable to watch for a high family and for an honorable subject. (24)

This could not be read as referring to anyone else but Queen Caroline Matilda whose initials are repeated in the addressed sister’s fictive name Christine Matthias. Thura explicitly draws the connection between the new lax morality laws and the Queen’s debauchery. The idea that such behavior should not be “tolerated in the country”, that is, to banish the Queen from the realm as the proper penalty for adultery, Thura would be the first to launch. The implication is clear: the new morality legislations serve but to legitimize debauchery at court.

Only a week later, the first of a cluster of writings appeared localizing such debauchery at a precise locale in the cityscape: The King’s Garden.⁴⁰¹ *Experiences in the Rosenberg Garden the Day when they put up Refreshment Tents* mostly considered the new, emerging climate of public debate in the garden, as we heard, but the

401 [anonymous], *Erfaringer i Rosenberg-Hauge den Dag de opsatte Forfrisknings-Telter meddeelte af en agtsom Tilhører*, Copenhagen: J.R. Thiele, 1771 (16 July 1771).

“meticulous observer” also saw an innumerable crowd “of middle or lower estate with longing desire/ to seek the shadow under the newly-built tents/ probably in order to erect there an altar for each their God” (9). Such erotic innuendo would soon be left behind, and a number of pamphlets around late July-early August would prove considerably more direct: *A Letter from the Truth-Sayer; Thoughts and Sensations; The Patriot's Equitable Complaint; A New Regulation given by Conscience; Loving Poem*, etc.

In the meantime, Struensee's formal accomplishments reached new heights. On 17 July, *Adresseavisen* reported how he had been appointed Cabinet Minister two days before, and on 22 July the baptism of the young Princess was announced with a report of how, as an example to other young mothers, Queen Matilda breastfeeds her infant daughter herself. At the baptism ceremony that very day, Struensee and Brandt were ennobled as Counts. A few days later, the “Truth-Sayer” Thura marketed a new pamphlet in which he complained that “for a long time you have not heard any news but talk about undue entertainments, masquerades, comedies, viciousness, new occasions for madness, dismissals”, and sternly warned that God's punishment of the whole country for these sins was imminent.⁴⁰² The increasing association of royal and popular immorality became evident in a number of pamphlets by the end of the month, very different but with a common tendency. The anonymous *Thoughts and Sensations* almost took the shape of a sermon, beginning with an effective shock-aesthetic description of how fireworks exploding in the garden triggered a breathless outbreak of mass arousal among the gathering masses – and concluding with a Christian admonishment to seize instead every fleeing moment to prepare oneself for the Last Judgment, before it is too late.⁴⁰³ *The Patriot's Equitable Complaint*, by comparison, is scholarly and politically cool in its analysis of whoring built on Antiquity authorities.⁴⁰⁴ Even the pagan Augustus saw that rambunctious lustfulness will lead to blasphemy and discouragement. Bastard children will perish in public upbringing houses, only private persons know how to raise a child which is why every man should be forced to marry the woman he impregnates. The central problem is the failing devotion to God in the political elite. The problem of whoring is not only that it will lead to Hell in the beyond, but that it leads to the fall of the state already in this world. In *A New Regulation given by Conscience for Unchaste Husbands and to the Comfort of their Offended Spouses*, Conscience herself

402 [Christian Thura], *Brev fra Sandsigeren*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (26 July 1771), 13.

403 [anonymous], *Tanker og Fornemmelser i Rosenborg Have, Stormens Aften d. 24. Julii, da de smaa Siæle holdte deres Klappe-Jagt. Samt en nye Forordning fra Samvittigheden, til Skræk for de ukyske ægte Mænd og Koner og til Trøst for de fornærmede Ægtefæller*, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, 1771 (30 July 1771).

404 [anonymous], *Patriotens billige Klagemaal over utæmnet Horeriers farlige Virkning i en Stat*, Copenhagen: Sold by Kanneworff, 1771 (30 July 1771).

is speaking, and her verdict is severe.⁴⁰⁵ Infidel husbands shall slowly perish in flames, and Conscience does not refrain from targeting the very top of society: “The dirty woman and adulterers who rise only to fornicate, eat and drink, to whore, lay back, fornicate again, shall be the victims of my righteous anger. Their ways are subtle, but I shall find them, even if they hide in the most gorgeous purple and the finest silk, embraced by the most powerful giant’s arms, and hurled up into the freest and most restricted impertinence” (21). Purple and silk signal that turpitude has now reached the very highest levels of society. The conclusion of Conscience is the societal consequences of adultery: the most glorious of cities will turn into Sodom and Gomorrah. Everybody knew the destinies of those towns. Conscience admits that her rhetorics may be somewhat gross, but “Grove Folk skal have Grov Konfækt”, as she says: “Coarse Confectionary for Coarse People”.⁴⁰⁶ The pamphlet *Loving Poem, with a small Appendix depicting Rosenborg Garden opened*, in turn, uses a wholly different tactics: interpreting present conditions in terms of a fall since the elevated days of the Old North.⁴⁰⁷ Back then, in the state of nature, love was pure, simple and naïve, but now, “costume outfits, rank, and riches are the ways through which we reach the ruling of the hearts”. Vanity, in short, is what is now spoiling true sentiment. Rhetoric here is indirect, but the target no less evident. It is the depraved elite leading a superficial life at court from which problems spread.

Debate clouds were gathering, but two unforeseen public events would catapult them into storm. The very same day, a general but precise question was posed on the front page of the *Magazin for Patriotiske Skribentere*, under the title of “Nine questions, to which thorough answers are sought”. Most of the questions dealt with economy, the corvée, peasants’ conditions, and the like, but question no. 4 immediately stood out: “Is it possible that the adulterer of a wife can be the sincere friend of her husband and his faithful advisor? When the husband takes him as his confident, what will be the results for all three of them and for the kids?”⁴⁰⁸ Without mentioning King, Queen, court, or Struensee at all, everybody immediately understood to what the question referred. The first part of the questions is rhetorical, the expected answer is no, such a friendship is not possible. The second part is more open and in search of an answer, immediately prompting the reader to regard the issue from the viewpoint of the Crown Prince and the newborn Princess and to imagine devastating consequences for the royal house for many years to come. Now, the royal triangle

405 [anonymous] *En nye Forordning fra Samvittigheden, til Straf for de ukyske Ægtemænd og til Trøst for de fornærmede Ægtefæller*, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, 1771 (bound with *Tanker og Fornemmelser*) (30 July 1771).

406 We picked this proverb for the title of the Danish two-volume work appearing on the 250th anniversary of Press Freedom: *Grov Konfækt. Tre vilde år med trykkefrihed 1770–1773*, Copenhagen 2020.

407 [anonymous], *En Elske-Digt af Kong Harald. Samt et lidet Anhang forestillende Rosenborg-Hauge oplukt*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (2 August 1771).

408 *Magazin for Patriotiske Skribentere*, 2 August 1771.

had definitively entered the public sphere as an issue for open discussion. That would trigger a new wave of writings.

Sit, Christian, Sit Firm, Sit Alone on Your Throne!

In this heated situation, the next thunderclap was one of the most influential pamphlets of the entire Press Freedom Period. Written by a distinguished and well-known scholar of the Copenhagen elite, Jacob Langebek, a mature historian and state archivist aged 60, it irreversibly raised the stakes. His authorship, however, was only revealed after the coup-d'état, even if rumors would have circulated earlier. With the teasing title *A new Example of the Freedom to Write*, it took the shape of one long poem in 122 four-line stanzas.⁴⁰⁹ The poetic form, however, did not prevent it from being one of the most detailed and vicious attacks on the King and his new Cabinet Minister yet to appear. The poem bluntly addressed the King directly with the following advice soon to achieve proverbial character: “Sit, Christian, Sit Firm, Sit Alone on Your Throne! / Let no-one push a stone in Your Crown, / Which you got as rightful heirloom from your fathers, / which was voluntarily entrusted them by the people” (7). Langebek refers to absolutism as a popular mandate offered to the royal house in 1660 which, simultaneously, grants himself the right to address the King. The problem, of course, is that Christian is *not* alone on his throne. That has been made possible by the fact that the age-old pact between King and people has been replaced by “national disasters, hatred, distrust, mutual swearing, persecutions” (9). The historian explicitly explains the *Lex Regia*, article 26, to the King: he must not let himself be fooled by the “small-King group of friends and girlfriends” who is now embezzling the grace of their lord. Langebek’s advice to the King is robust: “Not well defended is the sovereignty of a prince / when he his softness lets to one or few incline / The better herdsman’s he who steers himself his herd”. (9) The King should govern by himself alone. Ironically, this was the very same sovereignty argument which Struensee had used for his abolishment of the State Council the year before. Now, Struensee himself is attacked along the very same lines: someone has sneaked in on sovereignty. His most dangerous quality, however, is that he is a stranger: “Let no stranger’s sound confuse our ears, / then will our hope revive, then is it as should be. / A stranger’s love is only for our money, / the welfare of the country he won’t care about” (12–13). Contrary to the King, Struensee is not mentioned by name, but nobody would doubt the identity of the “stranger” referred to. Langebek took no interest in judging Struensee’s reform policies or their effects but focused on his supposedly egoist intentions only. Struensee’s German tongue seems to have been a main point of contention for the Copenhagen elite (see also Suhm, Luxdorph) – even

409 [Jacob Langebek], *Nye Prøve af Skrive-Frihed*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (9 August 1771).

if there was nothing new in the hiring of German expertise to the court where German was still standard language.

Langebek now launches an Old Testament allegory describing actual conditions at court which would spread and be developed by many authors, especially post-coup in the spring of 1772. The court traitor is comparable to Haman from *The Book of Esther* in which Haman is the personal favorite of the Persian King Ahasverus. Haman planned to exterminate the Persian Jews, but his plans were stopped short by Queen Esther. Nobody knew that she was herself a Jew, cultivating contact to the Jewish leader Mordechai, and all ends with Haman being hanged in the very same gallows he had planned for Mordechai. Langebek: “Mordechai refused to yield to Haman, / it was so close that he was forced to submit / if not the light of God had touched Ahasverus / so that Haman’s sentence was carried out on himself” (14). It remains unclear to whom the Persian Jews of the allegory would correspond, maybe the Danish people – but indirectly, the comparison launched the idea that Struensee had not only usurped the King’s power, but he was also planning to use this power for extremely bloody events. This was the germ of a conspiracy theory which would develop quickly and spread through the fall of 1771 and become one of the central motivations for the January coup-d’état. Correspondingly, the allegory also prescribes the decisive cure: the favorite must die. Langebek even goes so far as to outline a coup against Struensee referring to the biblical allegory: “Might only our time and day possess an Esther, / You’d hardly need to search in East and Westher / in order to collect a group of people and of bandits, / good shots who’re standing by in every moment” (14). As our time, sadly, has no Esther – an indirect stab at the Queen? – a sharp-shooting company must gather who might not know the constitution and which may even be spearheaded by a “hypocrite, false and sneaky”. Even if Langebek glimpses the danger that a conspiracy against Struensee will be led by very mischievous characters, he expresses the hope that some “decent servant” will indeed stand up to do the right thing. You cannot be too picky with the means, if you want to get the job done and eliminate the nepotist, Langebek seems to be saying. Langebek’s interpretation of the Old Testament allegory comes with many striking consequences: he prepares the public for the fact the cleansing conspiracy needed to get rid of Struensee may consist of dubious, if not evil instruments. This might indicate that he – centrally placed in the Copenhagen elite – might have known, already in August, about the germ of a coup conspiracy whose roots in notoriously unreliable noblemen like Beringskiold and Rantzau probably began to form in late summer (see below).

But how has this ghastly development at court been possible at all? After having developed the need for a coup to save the King, Langebek unabashedly turns his aim directly towards the King himself.

Your beautiful proverb do nevermore forget,
 Do struggle by example to overcome
 The damage done by strangers to our language
 They do like Danish bread, then they should like the language too
 Do drive out foible out of the youngster's heart,
 Hark, listen to his life, don't hear it without pain:
Finery, sloth, delicacies, comedy and dance,
gambling, night parties, sleep, depravation of body and mind (18–19).

The proverb mentioned here is the King's motto *Gloria ex Amore Patriae*, (Honor comes from Love of the Fatherland). Langebek goes to the brink of actually insinuating problems with the King's mental health ("depravation of body and mind"), which could not be discussed openly even if it already seemed to be known among the Copenhagen elite. But the attack on the young King's hedonist lifestyle is without a filter.

Langebek concludes his long poem with judging a series of current state activities in didactic imperatives addressed to the King. Elite patronizing of the King would later become explicit in Suhm's letter to the King after the coup. Langebek actually goes through most of the burning political issues of the moment in a detailed, conservative political program centered on an ideal of moderation. Abolition of all entertainment, rooting out tradesmen and landed nobility from politics, Danification of the army, prohibition of tobacco and alcohol, tax cuts, a limited emancipation of peasants, cultivation of moor and heath, planting of forest – and anti-semitism motivated in a theory that Jews capture the surplus of the land. On one point, Langebek agrees with Struensee: "Give balance to estates, give rarely rank and titles". Langebek concludes his tutoring of the King with hinting at his atheism: the King is like a sun indeed, but one ripe with sunspots. The bottom line is that the King and his irreligiosity is the root cause of the misery.

What made the tacit, established historian all of a sudden explode in this vicious piece which was the first to publicly launch the idea of a coup conspiracy in order to kill Struensee? Looking back after the coup when his authorship of the *New Example* had become known, he says that he observed how Press Freedom "was abused to offend truth, to dishonor the nation, to suppress your fellow-man, to subvert all good institutions, to shame religion, to weaken the law of the land and the memory of dead, great Kings and their deeds, and, in one word, to put the country in extreme perturbation and an almost irretrievable confusion".⁴¹⁰ Quite a different verdict of Press Freedom than that of his friend and historian colleague Suhm. Langebek explained that he realized that, for the sake of effect, he had to argue much more ruthlessly than other defenders of truth: "It does not suffice to give the enemy a shot through his arm or hat, if he does not suffer a blow to his heart". The other writers forgot to paint the reigning evil in its true, shrill colors. In hindsight, Langebek is

410 [Jacob Langebek], *Frimodige Tanker*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (March 30 1772), 4.

pleased with what he did: Press Freedom changed, with his effort, from supporting the Struensee government and attacking old institutions only, to also attacking the new rulers themselves. This made an “effective impression, on evil souls as on the good”. There is little doubt that Langebek’s pamphlet did change public discourse, both in the sense that it decisively upped the ante of invective, but also in the sense that he began saying things that would live on to serve as germs of “Fermentation” during fall: that a conspiracy would and should be made, that Struensee nurtured bloody coup plans himself, and that the end should be nothing but his death.

The *New Example* immediately mesmerized the Copenhagen public, it became the focus of debate, of urban gossip and rumors, and as Langebek himself admits, it probably contributed to the government restrictions on Press Freedom of 7 October. One thing he discreetly omitted, importantly: to address Struensee’s relation to the Queen. Popular imagination, however, already saturated with summer rumors and pamphlets on exactly that issue, was swift to interpolate it. Langebek’s first line became a circulating oneliner of almost Voltairean efficiency: “Sit, Christian, Sit Firm, Sit Alone on your Throne!”. The streets of Copenhagen soon supplied the bawdy version: “Lie Christian, Lie Firm, Lie Alone on your Wife!”.⁴¹¹

Pamphlets Turning Wicked

The combination of the *Magazin* question and Langebek’s *New Example* catapulted the debate on whoring to a new level, now attracting two of the most provocative Press Freedom writers in their first mutual competition, Martin Brun and Josias Bynch. Only a few days after the *New Example*, Brun answered, anonymously, the *Magazin* question in his *The Heart is my Queen, Reason is my King, or Answer to the Question of the Magazin no. 72*.⁴¹² The pamphlet opened with a Seneca quote: “No suffering of the mind can conceal itself: you have certain signs on which you can infallibly know licentiousness, fear, and foolhardiness”. The pamphlet finds such signs at court. Even “gilded chambers” may not hide the whoring man and the whoring woman. There will always be a spy giving rise to rumors running around town, for poison is evident at a long distance. Here, Brun explicitly launches a theory often more indirectly implied during summer: it is “your sinful copycats, the small souls, clapping so well in the King’s Garden, who are infected by your filth”. Debauchery at court is the very reason for its spread in the garden and in society at large. But the cuckold must be awakened: “We shall poke the fixated and offended husband so hard on his horns that he will rise to revenge and cleanse his marital bed from its

⁴¹¹ Even more efficient in Danish where the two versions are rhyming: “Sid, Christian, Sid Fast, Sid Eene paa din Throne!”; “Lig, Christian, Lig Fast, Lig Eene paa din Kone!”.

⁴¹² [Martin Brun], *Hiertet er min Dronning, Fornuften er min Konge. Eller Svar paa det i Magasinet fremsatte Spørgsmaal No. 72*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (12 August 1771).

nefarious stains”. The text unabashedly challenges the King to rise to the occasion and personally take armed revenge on Struensee.

The text is followed by a brief address directly aimed at the “whoring women of our time”. Nature is bashful, but if the reins of modesty are loosened, the result will be a wild, unnatural rawness of behavior such as is found in women of the time. Here, nature is moderate, and a certain culture is guilty of female debauchery. Nature itself speaks against them in the text: women are the really guilty, they now seduce the other half of humanity to offend their creator – but they will end up in the eternal flames of Hell. The rise, sin, and fall of the unmentioned favorite and his female following is described in theological terms. The double pamphlet concludes ominously: “This filthy matter cannot be described in pure words”. Other pamphleteers, however, soon proved willing to assume this task.

Such theological arguments against sins at court and in the garden were spreading more and more – so it came as a minor surprise to see one pamphleteer *defending*, on a Christian base, Struensee’s reforms of morality legislations. That was provided by one Rebecca Abeltoft – choosing her pseudonym as incarnation of the Abeltoft sister to whom Thura had addressed his angry letter triggering the whole whoring debate. The answer to Thura was dated 15 July but only announced August 16: *A New Letter from Miss Rebecca Abeltoft to her Brother after having read his Reflections on those breeding Children without Marriage nor further Punishment*.⁴¹³ The money spent on fines for immorality would be better spent on raising the resulting children, she claims. Imprisonment for adultery is no better than fines, for it does not contribute to engagement in the raising of the children, rather it leads but to shame, concealed births, and infanticide. Forced religiosity has never prevented people from following their inclinations, anyway. Indeed, Miss Abeltoft does not know “what forced worship could accomplish, or whether God takes any pleasure in it, when the heart is far away, even when a person pretends, on the outside, to be ever so God-fearing. Hence, it seems better to let each be self-willed after having been taught established religion and knowing what he should do in order to inherit eternal salvation later; just as long as he does not disturb the general order” (31). In short: moral behavior should be left to the individual’s choice. The birth of bastard children, actually, has a positive side seen from the point of view of national economy, she adds, for they will make good soldiers, sailors, workers, traders, and craftsmen. Thus, the 13 June law abolishing punishment for sex outside of marriage would actually strengthen the country and its economy rather than the opposite.

Also, the circulating claim that whoring is worse when committed by a female ruler is attacked by Abeltoft, and the author ends with turning upside down another established dichotomy, that of licentious capital versus the unspoiled piety of the

413 [anonymous], *Et nyt Brev fra Jfr. Rebecca Abeltoft til sin Broder som haver læst hans Betænkninger over dem, som uden Ægteskab og videre Straf avle Børn sammen*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (16 August 1771).

provinces: she writes from the provincial town of Slagelse to her pious brother in Copenhagen. Here, it is Copenhagen that appears as a citadel of exaggerated moralism far beyond what can be argued from biblical bases. Both, of course, may be true: there is no reason to assume that Copenhageners agreed, rather they seem to have held very different opinions on morality issues – many flocked to the celebration of the newborn princess in the park while others left the church in protest against the priestly announcement of her birth. With both judicial and theological erudition, Abeltoft launches an unfanatical antidote against the many theological moralists mushrooming in the debate, as well as a defense of equal rights for both sexes. Maybe the Abeltoft pamphlet is a good candidate to actually be authored by a woman, e. g., the playwright Charlotte Dorothea Biehl who later expressed very similar viewpoints on forced belief. Abeltoft, however, was an isolated occurrence and she would not prove able to stem the tide of ever more radical moralist pamphlets.

Over the next weeks, many more would follow. We heard about *An Open Letter found at the Entrance to the King's Garden*, a fictive letter to the young girl Hermantine, warning her against the many dangers in the garden which are but a contemporary parallel to how bad things went in the very first garden of Paradise.⁴¹⁴ *Some Thoughts from a famous old Pagan* adds a stoic, Ciceronian teaching on the control of passions: one must read the Sermon of the Mount and strive to be perfect just like God. Otherwise, the decline and fall of Rome is what awaits us.⁴¹⁵ The stoic ideal is integrated in Christian references but still gives an alternative analysis of the issue of whoring, not explained here in the familiar pattern of fall, sin, punishment, and Hell, but rather in a cool analysis of how to move from false to true happiness by means of stoic self-therapy and self-control. Just as principled, but on a more consequent Christian basis was the *Free and Well-Founded Thoughts on Whoring*, which addressed the whole issue highly systematically in a thorough attempt at rationally substantiating pre-Struensee morality laws in a detailed motivation of the exact ideal purposes of the two sexes, of marriage, of childbearing, etc.⁴¹⁶ Why, for instance, would a man struggle for his wife only to see another man walk besides her? That would be just like “M* B**m paa Ö g”, that is, with Madame B**m in the high-class street of Østergade. All of a sudden, the rational argument in many bullet points is interrupted by a piece of local hearsay about unfaithfulness. The analytical tour-de-force gives way for a conclusive, personal warning. He who sinks his soul into the “crawling mob of worldly pleasures” will long after realize his errors and languish in his old years fearing for death, fearing for Hell, and when he dies, the

414 [anonymous], *Et aabent Brev fundet ved Indgangen til Kongens Have*, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, 1771 (20 August 1771).

415 [anonymous], *Nogle Tanker fra en gammel berømt Hedning til Overbeviisning for vore Tiders hedenske Gjerninger*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (23 August 1771).

416 [anonymous], *Frie og grundede Tanker om Boeleriet. Samt Religionens Brev til Verdens, i sær Kiøbenhavns dydige Indvaanere*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (23 August 1771).

blood of Jesus will cry: “Revenge! Revenge! Justice for his abuse and his hardening with which he has for so long been mocking my blood-sour torments”.

Many were the arguments against whoring, and it is surprising to see the large variation of genre and style supporting them. Rational arguing might give way, the same day, to heated apocalyptic preaching in *A Vision in a Dream of Great, Forthcoming Occurrences of Heavenly Signs*.⁴¹⁷ In a heavy biblical style with recurrent use of “See!”, “Verily!”, rhetorical questions and so on, the anonymous author envisions a sort of cosmical nightmare with a woman dressed in purple and scarlet but with a cup full of abominations, marked by the name of “Secrecy”, drunken with lust. Here, the Queen is portrayed in the manner of Revelation, while the birth of her bastard child is insinuated with the inclusion in the vision of ostrich chickens, “Strud-sunger” (the ostrich, Danish “struds”, was widespread as an image of Struensee due to the similarity in sound). Just before awakening, the dreaming prophet hears the voice of the Lord, threatening to sweep away all the ungodly like dung in the streets. Probably the dry, rationalist listing of the many subtypes of whoring of the former pamphlet addressed quite another audience than the psychedelic, nightmarish visions of the latter, but the bottom-line message was the same.

A long and detailed argument appeared in the surprising shape of a translation of a more than 35-year old sermon by none less than Adam Struensee, superintendent – bishop – of Holstein.⁴¹⁸ It was a cunning move to play out the Cabinet Minister’s own father against him. Written in Halle, 1735, two years before the birth of Struensee, his father’s sermon gives a detailed interpretation of the sixth command. Over 50 pages, the pamphlet is a learned study complete with initial and final prayers, taxonomically listing a long series of types and subtypes of whoring, including adultery, sex outside of marriage, homosexuality, intercourse with menstruating women, and much, much more. The cure is pietist: let the Holy Ghost teach the sinner, during fear and trembling, to cry to God for creating in him a pure heart. Parts of the thorough pamphlet seemed directly applicable on the current situation, such as Adam Struensees’ emphasis that such sins may be found not only in subjects, commoners, and peasants, but also in the great, in kings, princes, etc. – or an admonishment like the following: if a woman becomes a whore and “gives birth to children by a stranger, she should be excluded from the congregation and her children shall be haunted” (18). Her shame will never be deleted. Finally, the congregation is admonished to kill the lust and desires of the flesh in themselves. There were now two competing, detailed theological analyses of the problem, one rationalist (*Free and Well-Founded Thoughts*, see above) and one pietist. The debate over whoring

417 [anonymous], *Et Syn i en Drøm om store forestaaende Tildragelser af Himmelens Tegn*, place and printer not indicated; 1771 (23 August 1771).

418 Adam Struensee, *Guds Villie efter det Siette Bud i en Prædiken forklaret ved Adam Struense. Af det Tydske sprog oversat* [translated from German by Gutz. Mich. Münster], no place or printer, 1771 (9 September 1771, org. 1735).

was hardly, anymore, a discussion pro and con. The overwhelming majority was decidedly against, and the debate rather took the form of *why* it should be condemned: for social reasons, for health reasons, for political reasons (avoiding God's punishment), for various religious reasons, for avoiding eternal punishment – and *what* the cure should be like.

Now, the scene was as if set for the two most provocative pamphleteers to make their bets, Brun and Bynch. Brun had already begun with *The Heart is my Queen* some weeks earlier, and he now continued with a more generalized and colorful warning against licentiousness in *A mysterious and flagitious Woman-Ghost, seen and observed at several Occasions and at several Places here in Copenhagen and in some nearby Regions, by some philosophical Guards. Written to Fear and Warning for everybody, and to the Betterment of some, by the political Spy*.⁴¹⁹ The appearance of this fateful female ghost in the capital is closely connected to morality relaxations: “Wherever your see her, you see her with the regulation in hand of June 13 1771, along with her filthy servant-maid, Lasciviousness”, and Brun repeats his earlier argument that it is the lech at court which forms the deeper reason to that of society at large: “When there is a regent who depends on words of lie, then all his servants become ungodly” (27). Brun, at this point, was an established pamphleteer with scores of pamphlets behind him – even if known by name only by insiders. Bynch, by contrast, launched his contribution to the whoring debate as one of his two debut writings. It became known under the brief form of the title *A Couple of Words to Dannemark*, but its real title *The Heart is My Devil, Croesus is My Slave* reveals it as directly, polemically turned against Brun's *The Heart is My Queen*, from six weeks earlier.⁴²⁰ Then, Brun had spread the idea that the frivolity of the city had its roots at court. Bynch took issue with Brun's claim that these roots were so filthy as to defy description and exceeded him on all counts by directing a shock attack against the Queen herself. Bynch does what is in his might to surpass his role model – Brun had carved out a position for himself as one of the most provocative writers of Press Freedom, thereby challenging and creating room for a competitor pushing the limits even further.

Bynch's pamphlet began with a fire-and-brimstone sermon, referring to Revelation and ridiculing weak Denmark, now but the scorn of France, the carcass of England, the disgust of Sweden. Denmark does not listen to the voice of its poor, and its sword of steel has degenerated to voluptuous, lazy flesh. The four fables following this prophetic introduction locates the center of all such Danish problems at one lo-

419 [Martin Brun] *Et sælsomt og græsseligt Qvinde-Spøgelse, seet og observeret ved adskillige Leiligheder og paaadskillige Steder her i Kiøbenhavn og i nogle Egne her i Nærheden, af nogle philosophiske Skildvagter. Sammenskreven til Skræk og Advarsel for alle, og til Forbedring for nogle af den politiske Speider*, Copenhagen, printer not indicated, 1771 (11 September 1771).

420 The full title is *Hiertet er min Dievel, Croesus er min Slave Eller et Par Ord til Dannemark. Saa og fire Fabler. 1, Den forvandlede Havfrue. 2, Forsonings Oxen. 3, Den kaade Høne, en Fortælling. 4, Hunden og Plukkefisker*, Copenhagen, printer not indicated, 1771 (27 September 1771).

cus: the Queen. The first, “The transformed Mermaid” describes a very powerful mermaid as a sort of Queen: “Finally, she got tired of the slick throne of the wave, she disliked herself and her merman’s crown”. Particularly, she is sad with being created below as a herring. Jupiter, however, transforms her, now she has thighs and rides along with Neptunus: “She cavorted her stallion; he rode by her side / soon he learned in full gallop / to caress her thighs and kiss her quick”. This erotic description also plays on the Queen’s much-discussed practice of riding in male outfit using a man’s saddle. The third fable, “The frisky Hen”, ups the ante. Now we hear about a hen who attacks and wounds her cock partner so that he must take refuge. She jumps into a pharmacy where she copulates with another, bigger, and fatter cock, looking like an ostrich. Again, the ostrich (Danish “Struds”) symbolizes Struensee. The lesson of the fable mock-innocently speaks about a friend in need and tasting a bit of different food, but few readers would have missed the point. The prize is taken, however, by the fourth fable, “The Dog and the Mincemeat”. Here we meet an English bitch, white and cuddly as a lamb, who lies sick in bed because her master keeps her from breeding. A German quack is called, the bitch is bled, and he ordains her mincemeat from fish as a cure. The doctor goes to the kitchen to prepare the mincemeat, and in the meantime this is what happens:

Our Doctor’s Dog jumped on the bedsheet up;
 He snuggles kindly the lord’s sick bitch
 Injects in her the Drops her Sighs demand.
 She jumps around and barks, she gets quite well
 and gives the Doctor’s Dog as wage her Fish.
 Our Doctor famous was for this uncommon Meal
 That made the Bitch so glad and fresh and kind and light (22-23).

Again, the lesson of the fable pretends the text was about something different – namely that often, it is something else than the official policy that really works. Struensee is here split into two roles: as the official German doctor speaking broken Danish, and as the less official dog, the lover of the Queen. A mermaid, a hen, and a bitch, all of them consumed by sexual desire – nobody had pushed the new freedom this far.

Both Thura and Langebek had dared attack Struensee, and, through him, the King himself, over the summer. Brun and Thura had indirectly approached the delicate issue of the Queen, but nobody had ventured go so directly at her royal majesty as Bynch now did. Brun’s *Woman-Ghost* was a stylistic masterpiece, but in pure shock effect Brun was now left far behind. Bynch’s fables formed the pinnacle of the whoring debate, having slowly built up over three months ever since Thura triggered it in early summer. Much points to the fact that Bynch’s pamphlet was now one of a handful of radical anti-Struensee writings which triggered a Cabinet Order of 3 October, quickly leading to the new restriction of Press Freedom of 7 October. Luxdorph made, in his diary of 27 September a rare note that some “infamous pieces” had

come out, and there is little doubt that *A Couple of Words* was among them. Luxdorph must have read it already on publication day.

Radicalization Culminating: The Scribe Feud and Thura's Jeremiad

What would those other “infamous pieces” have been? During September a small, fast, new debate grafted onto the ongoing erosion of cautiousness vis-à-vis the court in the whoring debate. It was triggered by a much more particular and seemingly marginal problem, the fact that the government had, on 7 August, decreed that from now on the position as official scribes should be given to military personnel only – probably intended as an attempt to professionalize the metier of writing official documents and opening positions for retired soldiers.⁴²¹ This gave rise to an aggressive debate which was probably fueled by the fact that many of Struensee's reforms – the city magistrate, the finance college, the Court and City Tribunal etc. – were also fusions and rationalizations which had rendered a number of positions superfluous, leading people of some merit to lose their jobs. Now, the sacking of well-worn scribes came to symbolize the growing anger over such redundancies. Particularly the first pamphlet was evil: *The Miserable Destiny of the Danish Scribes*.⁴²²

It makes use of the genre of a petition addressed to the regent himself, allegedly motivated by the fact that real, direct supplications no longer make their way to the monarch's gaze, so that the press is now a supplicant's only possibility of voicing his concerns. Here, the idea is launched that “certain persons” deliberately keep subjects away from their rightful access to their King. Angrily, the author protests that someone has persuaded the King that there is no longer any mutual link between King and people. Those persons are the “slaves of lust” – here the scribe complaint grafts itself directly upon the whoring debate. But with such rakes now breaking the connection between King and subjects, the latter are no longer obliged to obey. For those persons may even declare the throne to be vacant. This is the first time this rumor sees print: that Struensee and the Queen aim to go even further than now, to dethrone the King and assume full royal power for themselves. And now, with the firing of the scribes, all serious professions are intermixed with each other. This is a shrewd attack, for it hits Struensee on one of his well-known principles: meritocracy. Now, able and well-worn scribes are dispelled for mere pomade gentlemen. All is mixed into a stew: “If this ragout-master and fabricator of forcemeat, this our supreme national economist, this dangerous enemy of all good old homemade

⁴²¹ Cabinet Order of 7 August: “Fremtidig skal til underordnede Stillinger ved Departementerne tages Folk af Militæretaten”.

⁴²² [anonymous] *De Danske Skriveres ulyksalige Skiæbne, som en Følge af hemmelige Lands-Forræderes Intriguer, oplyst for KONGEN til forventende allernaadigst Forandring*, no place or printer, 1771 (6 September 1771).

products is not, like his predecessor the holy —, chased out of his directory and treasonous project developing, we shall have such evident and markedly experiences thereof, and we, our children and progeny will, to the end of Denmark, have to quaver melodies of complaint” (10).⁴²³ In an additional description of the fate of the scribes, the real responsible is pointed out: it is he who also destroyed the Navy and the fortresses. He should be anagrammed: “A man that evil, who creates, all over the place, so much dissatisfaction and the disaster of so many; a man finding lust in making officials breadless in all estates, he should at least be anagrammed in order to become more known, even if he thereby, apart from one letter, would become a *Ræchel*”. A “*Rækæl*” was a big, clumsy dog, a tall, lazy good-for-nothing, an ugly and awkward object, a scrawny rake. The anagram refers to the tall General Gähler who had served under Saint-Germain reorganizing the army, now chief of the generality and Struensee's top official. Finally, the author prays to God to revenge himself on the traitor. So, the first scribe pamphlet not only implies that Struensee is planning to supplant the King, it also begins directly naming and shaming his guilty acolytes. The scribe debate would continue on a high-octane level through September, pro and con, but nobody was able to match the radicality of the opening complaint.

All of a sudden, however, an independent pamphlet added to the increasing radicalization. It was Christian Thura again, the Truth-Teller, now under a new pseudonym as the prophet Jeremiah. Hence it is an elegy, a complaint, initially aimed against a meek article by one C. W. in the *Magazine for patriotic Writers* no. 73 from early August which had claimed that one should behave extremely cautiously in the new public sphere and take care to argue with reason only.⁴²⁴ The author's explicit counterexample to such mild behavior was the Truth-Teller, nasty, infamous, evil, and seditious in his writings. C. W. promotes a completely different debate ethics, based on a meek version of Christianity more in the pietist lineage than Thura's livid version of classic Lutheranism. This attack obviously enraged Thura who now struck back with his *Letter of Jeremiah* in a long rambling argument.⁴²⁵ The apparently gentle C. W. is really an evil, egoist, hateful, Babylonian, idolatrous, priestly hypocrite who just wants to silence the Truth-Teller. Thura's rage culminates in a daring comparison of Christian VII with the biblical King of Persia, Cyrus: “Cyrus still lives, and is yet a young, healthy man, why should he need helpers? But is he so weak that he is no good at governing, then his weakness must be either in

423 Who the predecessor is, indicated by two hyphens, we do not know, the “holy” might indicate another foreigner with a saintly name: Saint-Germain.

424 The anonymous author gave his name as “C*****r W*****g”, probably the theologian and school official Christopher Welfling.

425 [Christian Thura], *Jeremiæ Brev imod den hykkelske Afguds-Præst, som taler i Magazinet No. 73, skrevet til Forsvar for den redelige Sandsigere, til Opmuntring, Trøst og Troeskabs Bestyrkelse for de danske Israeliter, som endnu leve i Coujoniets Fængsel i Babylon*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (25 September 1771).

the body or in the mind; is the weakness in the mind, then he is not even himself able to select a co-regent, so the co-regent has no authority at all neither to govern nor to order". He goes on to attack Struensee and his ilk for being "atheist, stupid beasts", and, as always, Thura threatens the whole nation with disasters, hunger, pest, civil war, poverty, war, and so on if the readers do not pull themselves together and openly attack these atheist beasts. The Truth-Teller's call for open rebellion is more explicit than ever. But in his argument for sedition, his Cyrus analogy reveals a public secret. Even if expressed in conditionals, Thura openly toys with the idea that the King suffers from "weakness in the mind" – that he is insane. It takes place in the passing, in the middle of demonstrating that Struensee does not have any legitimacy. In close elite circles it had been clear for some time that Christian not always behaved normally and had a rather special psychology. Langebek had already, in his *New Example*, spoken about the "depraved sense" of the King but there it appeared as a result of drinking and carousing, not as an endemic, mental pathology. Thura was probably the first, behind his pseudonyms, allegories, and conditionals, to publish the delicate truth: Christian VII suffered from some sort of weakness of mind.

The 7 October Restriction of Press Freedom

The culmination of the long whoring debate in Bynch's *A Couple of Words*, along with Langebek's *New Example*, the Scribes' complaint and Thura's *Jeremiah* had radically pushed the limits of what could be uttered against King, Queen, and Struensee.⁴²⁶ It triggered a quick restriction of Press Freedom on 7 October. Two days after, it was announced on the front page of *Adresseavisen*:

Because evil-spirited and cheeky persons have, from the law mentioned, taken the occasion to publish some offensive and outrageous writings. The Press Freedom given on Sept. 14 1770 must not be abused thereby to violate other civil laws, which is why all libel, pasquils and seditions writings should henceforth, just like before, be subjected to the punishment decided for it.

In order to prosecute writers who would violate these laws stemming from the Danish Law of 1683, book-printers were now prohibited to print any piece without knowing the identity of the author. If he or she did not know the author, the printer would be responsible for the contents of the writing, so either the author's or the book-printer's name should now appear in each publication. Along with the November de-

426 Suhm pinpointed these pamphlets as responsible for the restriction: "The 7th [...], Press Freedom was restricted, so that it thereby was all but abolished. The writings 'The Truth-Teller', 'New Example of the Freedom to Write', 'The Destiny of Danish Scribes', 'A Couple of Words to Denmark', etc. had been, by the audacity with which they attacked the Queen, Struensee, etc. the pretext". Suhm 1918, 63.

cision of 1773, this would form the legal framework for independent publications for many years to come. The background is not made explicit, but it was already assumed at the time that the outrageous writings to which the Cabinet – Struensee and his closest associates – reacted were the circulating pamphlets against himself and the Queen. The 1770 abolishment of pre-print censorship had never made clear which, if any, among the 1683 laws regulating publications were still valid for post-print censorship. This lack of clarity was now, to some degree, dispelled. The 1683 law's article on books and almanacs was now reactivated, as was the most severe regulation of pasquils, namely 6-3-1 on lese-majesty, with capital punishment after torture. The restriction contained a special addition to the police-in-chief of Copenhagen instructing him to follow the new law – a step in the direction of return to the increasing involvement by the pre-Press Freedom Chancellery of the police in monitoring of the public sphere.⁴²⁷ No wonder that some, like Suhm, now found that Press Freedom was all but abolished. Time would show, however, that Press Freedom was not in any clear or definitive way dismantled by the law. Only three months were left of the Struensee period, and even after the coup, the gradual narrowing of Press Freedom took place by decrees and new legislations rather than with reference to the 7 October restriction. Yet, the restriction immediately changed Press Freedom, terminating its golden and colorful heyday in the first nine months of 1771. The restriction itself became the object of a broad debate with accusations flying back and forth about who among the authors might have triggered it, but pamphlets of a radicality like the four mentioned disappeared, to a large degree, after 7 October. Both the discussion of whoring and of scribes continued unabashed, but now without the associated attacks on King, Queen, and Cabinet Minister.

This did not imply, however, that such attacks disappeared. Rather, they went underground, in orally transmitted rumors, in handwritten flyers or in posters or bulletins on the walls or left at the door of top officials. Much later, Reverdil described the growing fever in Copenhagen in his memories: “The people who had earlier always been praised for its obedience, now entered into a fermentation which gave warnings of future rebellion, and I know of no better comparison than with a sick person whose nerves are in a condition of constant excitement so that the most insignificant case would trigger convulsions”.⁴²⁸ Probably, the radicalization of the anti-Struensee sentiment and the increasing dissemination of conspiracy theories were strengthened rather than weakened by the 7 October law. Earlier, the pamphlets gave a direct reflection of what happened between people. Now, the resistance went underground and became harder to supervise, and the October law was seen by many as one of several signs of weakness in government, of a vacillating regime resorting to panic power politics in vain attempts to stabilize itself.

⁴²⁷ See Jakobsen 2017.

⁴²⁸ Reverdil 1858, 306.

“Fermentation” in the City

The ongoing “Fermentation” in Copenhagen was evident also from the growing, spontaneous activities in the streets. Suhm wrote a status in September: “In this month in particular (but also in the preceding), innumerable pasquils were posted on the castle, on both theatres, on the gate of General Gähler, etc., and thrown into the castle of Hirschholm”.⁴²⁹ Radical pamphlets were a part of a movement which could not, as such, be prohibited. In October there were reports about posters like the one Luxdorph included in his collection: “Poster declaring Count Struensee an outlaw”.⁴³⁰ Luxdorph saw the poster in Gothersgade and copied it for his collection. The poster announced a reward of 5,000 rix-dollars for the killing of Struensee – which should not be done in the presence of the King, but, if it could not be achieved otherwise, then even in his presence. A few days later, a similar poster could be seen on the Church of Our Lady: “Dear Co-Citizens, let us on a certain night kill all German officers opting for Struensee. But the Danish, like the cunning Gæhler, the mad Rantzau, the longnose Hansen, the arrogant Falkenskiold, the monkey Aboe, who support his party, they should be broken by the wheel”.⁴³¹ A classic distinction: the strangers are enemies, but their native accomplices belong to the worse category of traitors, meriting a tougher treatment. Press Freedom had given rise to a new, self-confident liberty to express radical criticism, also of the Struensee government.

Also, in other ways, the radical late summer pamphlets would prove to have a long-lasting effect beyond the October restriction. Some of the theories launched by them provided the germ for the more and more elaborated conspiracy theories circulating through the Fermentation period of late 1771 in Copenhagen. Those pamphlets had marketed the ideas that Struensee and the Queen prevented subjects from contacting their King and kept him isolated, that the two of them harbored ambitious political plans of taking over the throne, to commit bloody purges against their detractors among the population, that the Queen should be banished from the realm, that Struensee lacked any legitimacy because of the King’s madness, that Struensee and his acolytes must be killed, that a counter-conspiracy ought to be organized for this purpose. Such ideas survived and developed further in wide circles of the capital.

⁴²⁹ Suhm 1918, 62.

⁴³⁰ [anonymous], *Placat, hvorved Grev Struensee gjøres fredløs*, September 1771.

⁴³¹ National Archives: Kabinetssekretariatet 1772–1773: Materiale fra Struensees kabinetsarkiv, Chief of Police Bornemann’s copy of 6 October 1771.



Fig. 32: Behind the street saleswoman with her peppercakes, several posters are glued to the wall. In the writerly public of the city, also placards and flyers formed a part, and communication posters from authorities faced competition from less official notices with unknown senders. During the fall of 1771, the amounts of pasquils against the government blossomed, and such poster public with attacks, satire, and libel also continued in the second half of Press Freedom. *A Lady selling Peppercakes*, painting by Peter Cramer, 1778. © Akademiraadet, The Royal Academy of Arts, Copenhagen, photo: Frida Gregersen.

The Cabal against the Cabal

Simultaneously, a secret counter-conspiracy developed, ultimately leading to the 17 January coup.⁴³² Probably, it only found its final shape in early January, but before

⁴³² The different sources to the conspiracy are assessed and compared in Syskind 1972.

that, the formation of the conspiracy group had taken place over many months. Suhm, who was informed about the coup, claims that early probings had already begun at some summer meetings at Queen Dowager Juliana Maria's small court's summer residence in Fredensborg not very far from the royal court at Hirschholm.⁴³³ Juliana and her son Frederik, however, did not seem ready to radical action yet, and according to Frederik's diary it was only five days before, on 12 January, that the two royals finally agreed to participate.⁴³⁴ The proper, independent initiative, however, was due to two rogue nobles, Rantzau and Beringskiold, both of them with personal motives of revenge against Struensee. Rantzau, after having played a prominent role in the new government in the fall of 1770, had felt politically abandoned by his old friend Struensee and had been enraged by the law of 16 March that the payment of debts should be enforced without respect to noble status, a decision disastrous for the debt-ridden count which he had unsuccessfully attempted to negotiate with Struensee. Beringskiold was in the process of losing a manor house he had bought at the island of Møn because he could not pay the instalments and the Danish Chamber of the newly formed Finance College refused him to be exempted. Beringskiold seems to have been particularly active in forging connections between important persons and forces assembling the group, and it might be him to whom Langebek indirectly referred when he said that the necessary group rebelling against Struensee would probably be led by a false and sneaky hypocrite. Maybe the two also had proper, political motives: the original "Cabal" of Saint-Germain, Gähler, Rantzau, Struensee, later supported by the Queen, Brandt, Falkenskiold, Sturz, Holstein etc. – had had the political aim of liberating the King from the constraints of the State Council and institute Cabinet rule like Frederick the Great in Potsdam. Struensee, as we saw, initially was a tool for this group plotting through many years, but after September 1770 he had moved fast and had hardly obeyed his backing group on all points. Most probably, it hardly suited these men that the King, no longer constrained by a State Council, was now increasingly constrained instead by his new favorite, after July 1771 even in a new and unique position of Cabinet Minister.

⁴³³ Suhm 1918, 67; see also Mechlenborg 2003, 121.

⁴³⁴ Based on the diary of the Hereditary Prince, Syskind 1772 (66 on) argues that the coup-plotters had first developed a more defensive scheme regarding how to secure King and court against the conspiracy on which Struensee was allegedly working. Only in early January, then, was the plan radicalized to an offensive, preemptive attack.



Fig. 33: The original initiator to the conspiracy against the Struensee rule seems to have been the intriguing Jutish nobleman Magnus Bering von Beringskiold. Maybe his original intention was just that the Struensee administration would not forgive a debt he had in an estate on the island of Møn, but in all cases he remained central to the coup-plotting group until a few days before action January 17. When he hesitated at the plans of arresting the Queen as well, he was judged unreliable by the others, and a few days after the successful coup they banished him to the town of Vordingborg in the south of Zealand. Now, he turned against the rule he had just supported in establishing, and he seems to have participated in several plans for toppling the Guldberg government until the latter succeeded, in 1783, in imprisoning him for life. Wiedewelt's sketch gives a good impression of the wild and capricious character that hearsay ascribed to Beringskiold. *Magnus Beringskiold*, drawing by J. Wiedewelt, n. d. © Royal Danish Library.

Beringskiold and Rantzau were old acquaintances and probably began scheming around late summer, and the coup group has been able to strengthen itself with reports of the still stronger Fermentation of Copenhagen through the autumn months. Recurring rumors claiming that the two deliberately contributed to fanning the flames under Fermentation by planting rumors and authoring pasquils lack evidence, however, and on the whole, most details in the origins of the group remain vague and uncertain, as few sources survive. Beringskiold had initially attempted to convince sacked top officials from the former government like J. H. E. Bernstorff and A. G. Moltke to participate, but without success, they seemed to have feared for collaborating with unreliable forces and for unintentionally triggering a rebellion against absolutism itself. The two conspirators would have known that their initiative was in need of royal support, which is why Beringskiold at some point, maybe in September, contacted his neighbor in the street of Vimmelskafet Ove Guldberg in his residence. Guldberg was the Cabinet secretary of Hereditary Prince Frederik and had a close connection also to his mother the Queen Dowager. She nurtured great ambitions for her son, and both of them were furious over a number of symbolic cases of negligence from Struensee who had, for example, denied them a seat in the royal compartment at the court theater and avoided inviting them to various court arrangements. The two royals, however, were hesitating and only seem to have been persuaded by a forged document of a plan of Struensee's and the Queen's total assumption of power, planned to take place on 28 January. Reverdil claims the coup-makers convinced none other than Suhm to present such a document to the two royals, but that is not backed by sources. In any case, the two were only finally integrated into the coup group on 12 January, four days before final action. General Eickstedt had an old contact to Beringskiold who seems to have secured his support in late fall. Colonel Köller was said to have joined the group only after the Christmas Eve Feud, and it may have been him who was able to convince the two royals finally to accept participation. He had an old contact to Rantzau and had been offended after the treatment of one of his officers during the Christmas Eve Feud. The decisive military backing was thus secured by picking an evening for the action in which Köller's regiment had duty at Christiansborg castle, while general Eickstedt's dragoons secured the capital. A recurrent rumor tells that the Cabal had meetings in the parsonage of the Holmens Church in Størregade close to Kongens Nytorv, if they did not meet at Beringskiold's or in a carriage driving about town.⁴³⁵

Much discussion has turned around the leadership of the group. Beringskiold slid into the background, especially after a meeting on plan details on 13 January, when Guldberg brought up the question of what would happen with the Queen. Most of them thought she might stay at Hirschholm until things normalized, but Juliana insisted, through Guldberg, on her incarceration at Kronborg, and as Guldberg mentioned the issue with the two royal children, Rantzau should have said "Eyer in

435 As to the meeting-places of the coup-plotters, see Giessing 1849, 56; Høst 1824, II.

die Pfanne” – eggs in the pan – echoing the somber proverb that you cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. The Crown Prince and the Princess must die, is the obvious interpretation, and such ideas shook Beringskiold who decided to withdraw. He did not agree to extend action against Struensee to target the Queen or her kids as well. The day after, at a meeting between the two, Guldberg persuaded Beringskiold to stay, but he did not participate in the final preparations and was no longer a leading figure even if he took part in the seminal events at the castle in the early morning of 17 January.⁴³⁶ Briefly after the coup, he was banished to the south of Zealand, no longer considered reliable. Probably there was no formal leader of the group, but it is evident that Guldberg, as a sort of liaison officer between the royals – who would hardly participate in all meetings – and the rest of the group, came to occupy a privileged position.



Fig. 34: Count Rantzau-Ascheberg’s fate during Press Freedom was fluid and tumultuous. First, in the summer of 1770, Struensee had to persuade his old friend from the Altona days to leave Holstein to show up in Copenhagen and participate in the takeover in September 1770. Formally, however, he had to be placed in an inconspicuous military position in order not to provoke his old ene-

⁴³⁶ Syskind 1972, 83 on. The information stems from Beringskiold’s later writings such as a criticism of Guldberg and his “treacherous practices” authored in prison in 1784. Syskind argues that Beringskiold’s value as a source must be judged higher than traditionally assumed because controllable facts in his account are generally correct.

mies at the sensitive Russian court. In the Fall of 1770, he appeared as Struensee's ally and as the new strongman in the government disarming the old State Council. Then, during the spring of 1771, he was alienated from his old pal and began, presumably already during summer, to conspire with Beringskiold against him. In the very last moment, however, Rantzau vacillated, tried to divulge the coup plans to Struensee and leave the plot behind, but he was pressured to meet at the Castle and, as the leading nobleman among the coup-makers, to undertake the arrest of the Queen. Now, he was celebrated by the new rulers, received a position in the reorganized State Council and decorated with the prestigious royal Order of the Elephant. But the core of the new in power, J. O. Schack-Rathlou, the Queen Dowager, her son, and Guldberg had little confidence in Rantzau and ended up dismissing him already in July 1772 and banishing him from Copenhagen with a pension. He emigrated to Provence, dying there many years later. *Schack Carl Rantzau-Ascheberg*, painting by unknown artist, ca. 1750. © Gut Rastorf, Holstein/ fotostudio-loeper.de.

Many details are uncertain – also because Guldberg probably intuitively understood a basic rule in palace revolutions: *nothing on paper*. There are no sources left documenting the policy, strategy, network, meetings, and concrete action plans of the Cabal group. Guldberg said, many years later: “Difficult it is to justify certain acts in the history of the lordship, without documents referring to Jan. 17 should see the light; and this has not been able to happen and cannot happen”.⁴³⁷ As the historian Claus Mechlenborg argues, Guldberg knew that such documents (maybe) no longer existed.⁴³⁸ Perhaps he himself had let them disappear when he later acquired full authority over the *Gehejmearkiv*, the central archives of absolutism. This indicates that Guldberg played a central role in the coup and that things had passed which might put the court in a bad light.

With our knowledge of the organization of the sermon campaign briefly after the coup (see Chapter 9), Guldberg, supported by the Hereditary Prince, appears as the clever communication strategist of the group with a clear sense of what should be communicated and what not – as well as which information it was better to let disappear completely. It is probable he has also had an eye for whom it was useful to inform about the plans beforehand, such as Suhm and pastor Münter, and who not. In all cases, the coup-makers actively used the circulating Fermentation rumors in legitimizing the coup. Faked, backdated letters from the King to the Hereditary Prince were fabricated, in which the King asks for help because he fears for his life. They were backdated to 10 January which also corroborates that the two royals entered the coup group only by 12 January. It could now be argued that they joined only after having received the King's plea for help.

Interestingly, however, the coup-makers actually seem to have believed, to some extent, in the truth of the circulating theories of Struensee's bloody schemes for revolution, based in the radical pamphlets of August and September, now further developed with hypotheses about a planned killing of the Crown Prince (motivated in the tough, “Rousseauist” upbringing of the Prince ordained by Struensee), the

⁴³⁷ Ove Høegh-Guldberg to P. C. Schumacher 15 September 1789, in Bro-Jørgensen (ed.) 1972, 463.

⁴³⁸ Mechlenborg 2003, 124.

killing of the King, the proclamation of the Queen as regent with Struensee as viceroy, a comprehensive purging among Copenhagen citizens with reference to the abolishment of horse and foot guards and the increasing security around the castle. To what degree these fantastic conspiracy theories have been believed by the coup-makers themselves is hard to decide, just like whether some of them more than others may have believed in them. The historian Edvard Holm judges that Guldberg and Eickstedt, in particular, actually believed such theories, while others among them, in that case, must have exploited the rumors more cynically.⁴³⁹ We can see from the investigations of inquisition commission against Struensee that it was expected it would be possible to sentence him for the existence of such plans. No trace of such schemes, however, was found, neither in the confiscated papers nor in witness testimonials, and that accusation had to be dropped and the prosecution strategy be changed.

It is evident from Guldberg's sermon campaign in January to February 1772, that variants of these conspiracy theories seeped into the priest pamphlets, even if in the typically vague, generalizing form of sermons, where most details are abstracted away and only a ghost of very terrible, imminent, and bloody plans and threats remained. In this sense, there was a strange bridge between the radical pamphlets of late summer giving rise to the October restriction and the theological pamphlet campaign for the coup four-five months later. It was those rumors launched by the former which, in the meantime, grew big and detailed in Copenhagen popular imagination, among lower, middle, and upper classes alike, to end up in the latter in generalized, diluted versions. The most wicked pamphlets thus ended up as ammunition in the theological interpretation of the coup.

Sailors on March and a Reconciliation Ox

The Fermentation process in Copenhagen were nurtured by further events during the fall, sowing increasing distrust between the Struensee government and parts of the population. Already in July, there had been trouble at the naval shipyard Holmen in the middle of the city because of a forced working plan on building and making ready a number of ships for a second, upcoming expedition to Algiers. Denmark-Norway was in a conflict with the Bey of Algiers, under Ottoman protection, who had canceled a contract of sparing Danish merchant vessels from the widespread Algerian piracy in the Mediterranean. Now, the Bey demanded increased payment in order to renew the deal. Algerian pirates not only boarded foreign merchant ships from different countries in order to seize goods and ships, but also to capture the crew and sell them off as slaves. An expedition the year before had seen Danish men-of-war bombarding the city of Algiers, but the Danes had to give up before the

⁴³⁹ Holm 1890–1912, vol. IV.2, 339.

Algerians surrendered because the recoil of cannons threatened to seriously damage the Danish ships themselves.⁴⁴⁰ This humiliating withdrawal had functioned, to Struensee, as an important pretext to the removal of Bernstorff in September 1770, but the reason for war remained unresolved, so the Struensee government continued the earlier government's hostility against Algiers. Intense labor in the preparation for the next Algerian campaign now enraged the ship carpenters at Holmen. The firing of some protesters initially calmed the shipyard, but in September, a group of Norwegian sailors rose again. Due to administrative error, they had not received their salary, and so 200 of them organized a march on the court at Hirschholm in order to present their grievances to the King himself. Before they reached the castle, they were met by a troop of cavalry whose commanding officer, Thøger Aboe, managed to calm temperaments. He promised to present their case to His Majesty who was away hunting and thus prevented from meeting them that day. This promise made the sailors return peacefully to Copenhagen. But at Hirschholm, Struensee had panicked as he heard the news about the approaching sailors. The court was ordered to get ready to leave; the plan was to entrench at Kronborg, if necessary, to flee to Sweden. The protest march to Hirschholm gave rise to a pamphlet *Thoughts of a Norwegian Sailor about the Difficulty to get Access to the King, written to the Comfort of his Brothers*.⁴⁴¹ The pamphlet developed further a theme launched in the Scribe Feud, the suspicion that the Struensee government isolated the King and prevented requests and supplications from reaching him. The Norwegian sailor in the pamphlet demands respect for sailors and insists it must be the King's duty to listen to problems from all sides of society before they grow big, thereby intervening in the ongoing discussion of absolutism. The sailor demands representativity in government – it should not consist of noblemen only.

After the shock of the sailors' march had waned, Struensee got the idea of a conciliatory gesture to reset the court's relation to the Navy. Workers and sailors from Holmen were invited to festivities in the Frederiksberg Gardens outside of the city on 28 September. Beer and wine flowing for free and a fried ox stuffed with mutton and fowl would be served in the common presence of court and Navy, and the King himself would carve the steak in order to symbolize the mutual understanding of the King and his Navy. In popular saying, this arrangement was dubbed "Forsonings-Oxen", the Reconciliation Ox. But just as the court was ready to mount the coaches at Hirschholm, it was announced that the King had fallen ill and could not go to Frederiksberg.⁴⁴² That, however, was just a pretext. The court had received a warning that a conspiracy would exploit the ceremony to take power by assassinating

⁴⁴⁰ The Danish naval expedition to Algiers, Frantzen 1982, 12.

⁴⁴¹ [anonymous] *En norsk Matroses Tanker over den Vanskelighed, at faae Kongen i Tale, skreven til Trøst for sine Brødre*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (27 September 1771).

⁴⁴² The sailors' march and the reconciliation ox: Bregnsbo 2007, 148–149; Holm 1890–1912, vol. IV.2, 298–300; Amdisen 2002, 131. See also Langen 2008, 359–361 and Langen 2018, 51–53.

Struensee.⁴⁴³ Again, the court prepared a flight in panic, until it became clear that existing military security would suffice to protect Hirschholm in case of rebellion. The fact that King, court, and favorites, however, stayed away from festivities gave rise not only to popular disappointment with missing a rare occasion to share the court's splendor but also gave rise to spreading the rumor that the Cabinet Minister was scared and the government not at all as stable as had seemed.

The Theatre Feud, November 1771

Such rumors but increased the Fermentation initiated by the radical pamphlets, and the bubbling unrest in wide strata of Copenhagen called to the surface traditional tensions among the population. That became evident in the swift chain of events known as the Theatre Feud in November 1771, pitting army officers and students against each other in a conflict playing on all possibilities of Press Freedom: handwritten pasquils, pamphlets, printed and performed plays, pub talk, rumors, oral challenges, mobilization, and violence. All this in addition to the central fight among sections of the audience in the Royal Theatre clapping, stamping, whistling – and fighting.

The Italian composer Giuseppe Sarti had, in 1770, leased the theatre for a ten years period and in the spring of 1771, he had staged, with some success, his operette *The Succession of Sidon* with a libretto by the Norwegian author and official Niels Krog Bredal. Subsequently, Bredal was hired as chief of the theatre while Sarti stepped back to a position of economic director. Bredal chose to restage his own *Sidon* piece in the fall season, apparently to inaugurate his term with an established success. On 7 October, the same day as the Press Freedom restrictions, the first issue of a new journal appeared, *The Dramatic Journal*, inspired by Lessing's innovative theater criticism in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.⁴⁴⁴ It was the first periodical for theatre reviews in Denmark-Norway, anonymously published by the young Peder Rosenstand-Goiske, son of his namesake the rationalist theologian. The journal was a pure progeny of Press Freedom, such a thing would not have been possible before, and its first issue contained a devastating criticism of Bredal's play. Bredal mistreated the story, portrait of characters as well as dialogue were miserable, emotions of the persons portrayed were untrustworthy and hypocritical. The staging was machine-like, casting was mismatched, while costumes and decorations were erro-

443 Allegedly, baroness von Bülow had found, in a staircase at the Dowager Queen's court at Fredensborg, a letter containing details of the assassination plans; she was married to royal equerry von Bülow, a Struensee loyalist. Rumors had it that this planned coup involved Beringskiold, Braem, Rantzau and hereditary prince Frederik along with officers such as colonel F. Numsen, captain J. B. Winterfeldt etc. See Biehl 1866, 417 on.

444 [P. Rosenstand-Goiske], *Den Dramatiske Journal*, No. 1., 7 October 1771, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, 1771.

neous. One actor was “cold, dumb, and stiff”, one female dancer was “bad and lazy”. Only one thing survived the scathing review: Sarti’s compositions. The review predicted that Bredal would cry revenge and damnation over the new journal. The young reviewer proved right, even more than he could have imagined.

The actors were offended and encouraged Bredal to seek revenge. Immediately, he took action and wrote a so-called “Afterpiece” titled *The Dramatic Journal or the Critique of the Succession of Sidon, an Afterpiece in one Act*.⁴⁴⁵ After two weeks only, it went into print. Ten days later, Bredal used his position to stage it, immediately after the next performance of *The Succession of Sidon*, 25 November, and he upped the ante by distributing free tickets to persons supporting his case. The Copenhagen public now could read the piece to prepare themselves for the rendering of it on stage, and Bredal seemed certain he enjoyed the support of Copenhageners against his wicked critic. In the piece, the critic is portrayed as a ridiculous, vengeful ghost, jealous of the success of the play, as against the innocent and friendly actors played by themselves. In the days before the staging of the *Afterpiece*, *Adresseavisen* discussed the right to whistle and stamp in the theatre, and several writers compared this right to the newly won Press Freedom. Gradually, two fronts emerged. One was a group of officers who saw it as their duty to defend Bredal. They would not accept that a “hack ridiculed a director and gentleman instituted by His Majesty”, so they would “give the Journalist and his likes a lecture so as to make them want to drop through the floor”.⁴⁴⁶ On the other side were the students supporting the *Journal*, seeing theatre criticism as a natural part of Press Freedom. At student meetings, however, there was not full agreement because some students saw the theatre director and the actors as belonging to the same academic estate as themselves.

The same day as the performance, one of the leading actors, Christopher Rose, wrote a piece in *Adresseavisen* on 25 November, urging the righteous audience to defend the theater against the critic’s offensive treatment. That was an indirect encouragement to show up in the theatre the same evening. As the event approached, students and officers flocked to the Royal Theatre, both groups armed with rapiers, officers in uniforms, students in their traditional black costumes. Spearheading the officers was a tall Hessian colonel Ludwig von Köller, who took the seat at the middle of the first row of the parterre, surrounded by his lieutenants. The main piece, *The Succession of Sidon*, went relatively peacefully, even if interrupted now and then by officers applauding with cries of “bravo!” and students stamping on the floor. But as soon as the curtain went for the *Afterpiece*, officers roared their bravos at every single ridicule of the fictive critic in the piece. Students began yelling and stamping to signal their discontent, which prompted the officers to clap even louder. Many of them had armed themselves by thick deerskin gloves to yield as loud an applause as

⁴⁴⁵ N. K. Bredal, *Den dramatiske Journal eller Kritik over Tronfølgen i Sidon, et Efterstykke i én Handling*, Copenhagen: Møller, 1771 (11 November 1771).

⁴⁴⁶ Quoted from Overskou 1854–1864, II, 473.

possible. Students, on their side, had brought watchman whistles in order to drown out the militaries. The performance had to be stopped again and again. An anecdote told that one student hid beneath the banks of the officers, from there sounding his whistle to disturb the noise of officers clapping.⁴⁴⁷

The frenetic whistling became too much for Köller, renowned for his temper and physical strength. With a stream of German curses and expletives, he ordered his men to kick out the students. They began beating them with their sticks, and soon a general combat between the two groups exploded. In the parterre, fighting became violent. Rapiers were drawn, and one whistler – actually an officer hiding between his opponents – was wounded. Finally, the officers succeeded in cleansing the theatre hall of students, the performance could be resumed, and as the final notes faded out, the militaries yelled “Encore!” and joined the actors in the reprise of the song final. After the show, of course, fighting was resumed in the streets around the theatre, and the police faced a busy night. The next days, the public exploded in commentary of what had happened. Already the next day, *Adresseavisen* contained reportage and comments, flyers were disseminated, and only two days after the performance, the first pamphlet was for sale. Few events illustrated the elementary acceleration of public debate during Press Freedom as did the Theatre Feud. Many asked the question how the officers could be entitled to order the beating of another social estate? A comment in *Adresseavisen* ended with the question “Can pejoratives and the beating with rods make a stupid and poor play tolerable or less foul?”⁴⁴⁸ Students from some of the major Copenhagen dorms demanded Bredal’s resignation before they would return to the theatre. Others demanded a public apology from Bredal for organizing the whole misery. Suddenly, Bredal was on the defense, the student side proved to have the upper hand of the new public sphere. Police-in-chief Bornemann saw the growing public debate as a possible escalation of conflict and prohibited editor Holck from accepting more comments in *Adresseavisen*, just like bookprinters were threatened with the new 7 October law, if they printed further pasquils against Bredal.

447 Luxdorph collected documents relating to the Theater Feud in a separate volume which, for some reason, does not form part of his collection of Press Freedom Writings (KB 55, 43 8°). Unless otherwise indicated, the presentation here of the feud is built on Overskou 1854–1864, 467–478; Bajer 1868, Behrens 1919, 15–25, Kirchoff-Larsen 1946, II, 123–128, Engberg 1998, vol. II, 93–100, Fjord Jensen (et al.) 1983, 350–355. The feud is also treated in Bliksrud 2014 and Arntzen 2014.

448 *Adresseavisen*, 27 November 1771



Fig. 35: The Theater Feud developed around the “Afterpiece” which Niels Krog Bredal had added to his play *The Succession of Sidon*, as a reply to public criticism of the piece. Johannes Ewald acted quickly when he, as a rejoinder, wrote yet another afterpiece, supporting the students’ party. The officers involved, conversely, are depicted as dissolute and brutal types commanded by an obvious parody of Colonel Köller under name of “Bürgerschreck” – Citizen’s Fear. With ample use of German vocabulary – and a young waitress on their lap – the officers plan riots during a solid intake of wine and tobacco. *The brutal Clappers*. Copper by Daniel Chodowiecki in Johannes Ewald: *Samtlige Skrifter*, IV, 1791. © Royal Danish Library.

The next day, 28 November, the next performance was scheduled, on demand from the victorious officers. This prompted Bornemann to intervene, knowing the students planned to amass in large numbers in front of the theatre to face the officers in revenge. Bornemann secretly advised Bredal to cancel the *Afterpiece* with reference to illness among the actors and went to the theatre in person to monitor evening events. Again, violent clapping, crying, stamping, and yelling dominated the performance, and police had to intervene and remove the most active provocateurs. At the entrance, a large number of sailors and craftsmen were gathering to support the students. They had hardly read or watched the play but took the occasion to make a manifestation against the German militaries. Bredal had now long since lost any control with the avalanche he had triggered, and he turned to Bornemann in order to have him issue a poster warning against further fights at the theatre under the threat of arrestation – which he did on 30 November. In return, Bredal had to promise nevermore to stage the *Afterpiece*, nor “any other satire over certain persons or groups [...] no matter how large parties might demand it of him”, but accept plays only which ridicule errors widespread in all mankind.⁴⁴⁹ A long tail of pamphlets kept the fire alive, however, far into December, and the ambitious young poet Johannes Ewald speedily composed yet another *Afterpiece* to the *Afterpiece*, reportedly written in one long movement on a chopping board in his bed, titled *The Brutal Clappers*.⁴⁵⁰ Here, the German soldiers were seen planning events beforehand in a pub, submerged in wine, women, and tobacco, and Köller in particular was satirized as “Bürgerschreck” – “Citizens’ Fear”.

The Theatre Feud was not political in the sense that it involved attacks on King, court, government, that the participants made strong political claims or intervened in the detailed tensions about the right interpretation of absolutism. Still, it demonstrated the existence of groups which unconditionally defended the absolutist King versus groups which did not, and it gave a stunning expression of how far the Fermentation process in Copenhagen had developed through the fall months. Rumors intensified, old tensions were boiling up, and many Copenhageners were increasingly nervous, tense, credulous, mesmerized by rumors, becoming ready for unspecified radical action.

From Tsunamis of Hearsay to the Christmas Eve Feud

A basic condition for the spreading rumor epidemics of Copenhagen in 1771 was that Press Freedom, unlike the Swedish case, did not imply any degree of Information

⁴⁴⁹ National Archives: Copenhagen Police: Politimesterens korrespondanceprotokol 1766–1774, Bornemann to Bredal, 30 November 1771.

⁴⁵⁰ Johannes Ewald, *De brutale Klappere. Et tragi-comisk Forspil, til Brug for den kgl. danske Skueplads*, Copenhagen: Hallager, 1771.

Freedom in the sense of public access to government and political matters. Affairs of state remained “gehejme”, that is, secret, and public information about government deliberations, intentions, and decisions were reduced to the barest necessities: the printing of new legislation in the privileged *Post-Rytter* – sometimes not even that (see Chapter 14). Simultaneously, in a capital where people employed by or otherwise connected to the large court constituted a substantial fraction of the population, it was inevitable that information, maybe incomplete or distorted, seeped out from court and fed into urban hearsay. The institution of a “Flying Corps” to protect the court at Hirschholm, for instance, was rumored to have its roots in Struensee’s panic. Maybe he was going away from court for a period at a health resort? His changes of burial regulations would be extended: instead of chests, people would now be interred in baskets. Or their corpses would be loaded on a barge and dumped at high sea. Rumors could be true, such as the hearsay that Struensee had panicked in his refusal to show up at the Reconciliation Ox. Already around the abolition of the State Council the year before, rumors had begun of doctor Struensee’s ill treatment of the King: every day, Christian would be immersed in ice-cold water, and after that he would be put into a glowing-hot bed, and when he rose from that, something had been put into his drinking-water which made him mad. In his secret observations, Suhm reported many rumors: the King was “always silent, as if thoughtful, becomes skinny and looks sharp, even distraught”.⁴⁵¹ It went so far that the Queen and Struensee beat him up and threw him from one wall to the other when he would not obey their orders. In his helplessness, he had even tried to drown himself in one of the castle lakes. But he would also, from one moment to the next, appear carefree and merry and play with his dog and boys. To ease his temper, Struensee and the Queen put opium in his coffee or chocolate – which would also make him indifferent to what they were doing to him. But it affected him too strongly so that he would be insane for hours, primarily during morning hours while he might be more clearheaded in the afternoon.

The rumors that Struensee planned to take the King’s life grew still stronger. As circumstantial evidence it was claimed that one day, the King had passed his coffee to his hairdresser who had subsequently fallen ill from drinking it.⁴⁵² Already during the foreign journey of 1768, Struensee was claimed to have given the King medications in order to pacify him so that he himself could grasp power.⁴⁵³ During the summer of 1771, rumors grew about the tough raising of the Crown Prince, barefooted and thin. Was Struensee attempting to kill off the toddler prince?⁴⁵⁴

Also, foreign diplomats reported Copenhagen rumors. They had considerable difficulties getting reliable information of what went on at the new court. An English

451 Suhm 1918, 49–50.

452 Hansen 1927–1941, vol. I, XXI.

453 Suhm 1918, 68.

454 Bech 1989, 229.

envoy wrote that even if the new ministry (that is, Struensee and his associates) pretend to have given back to the King his full sovereignty, they really keep him in an offensive condition of slavery and imprisonment. Yet, he reported, the King sometimes expressed a clear awareness of his condition, and he could, from time to time, be found weeping.⁴⁵⁵ As Reverdil returned to the court in 1771, he had observed how gossip and rumors about conditions at court but grew as he approached the realm. The new in power had “transformed the court to a den of plague and dismissed banished and miserable persons all over the country”.⁴⁵⁶ Nothing was immune to their blasphemy. While, under the pretext of cost reductions they had forced thousands of families into poverty, they spent what was saved on voluptuous and depraved purposes. Not only did they live an amoral life, but they sought to dismantle morality completely. Their behavior would invoke heavenly punishment over the country.

A final event now served to bring the city to the point of boiling: the so-called Christmas Eve Feud. In May, Struensee had abolished the Horse Guard protecting the castle, seemingly for reduction reasons and for the principle that no soldiers should enjoy better conditions than others. Struensee had little sense of the pride which the guard had taken in being the King’s own, selected protectors. The guard had special uniforms, was not subjected to standard military punishments, and they took offense. They had been permitted, however, to ask for resignation rather than be automatically assigned to standard regiments.⁴⁵⁷ Now, just before Christmas, Struensee signaled his intention to do the same thing to the remaining Foot Guard. Even his close associate general Gähler seems to have been discouraging him, but on Christmas Eve, the order was signed by the King, and when shown to the guard, mutiny broke out. A group of guards occupied the castle gate at Christiansborg, and rumors spread in the city. Copenhageners took to the streets, and some treated the mutineers with beer, schnapps, and Christmas fare. The case of the guard was becoming the people’s case. Declarations of sympathy from sailors and other soldiers, normally in conflict with the guard, began to pour in. A regiment of some 60 guards began to march to the court, still residing in the castle at Frederiksberg outside of town. They were convinced the King did not support such a blatant injustice. At the castle, an officer promised them they could resign just like the Horse Guard, and with this pledge they returned. But at Christiansborg, guards still refused to leave. Only when the commandant of the city was ordered to dispatch a large army force to the Castle Square threatening to kick them out by force, the guard finally yielded. The seditious atmosphere in the streets only slowly waned, and during the night, repeated clashes between guards, mobs, police, and army erupted. Military insubor-

455 The English envoy’s report: Tillyard 2007, 252.

456 Reverdil 1858, 246.

457 Abolition of the Horse Guard: Krogh 1886, 431–437.

dination would normally be sanctioned by execution, but now, the only sanction was that officers of the guard were refused to keep their uniform.⁴⁵⁸

Again, Struensee had displayed his weakness, and now the general perception was that his government was vacillating. Even among his associates, unrest began to spread, and he was increasingly isolated.⁴⁵⁹ A German envoy wrote: “The hatred of the people makes itself palpable in any way imaginable, and it is no longer any news to hear, at any given occasions, threats of rebellion against the present government who can be, without punishment, be called traitors in public”.⁴⁶⁰ Struensee decided to keep canons ready to defend the castle, if necessary, which only made things worse, as that move would immediately be interpreted, rather than as a defensive measure, as preparations to a coup against King and people. On 6 January, Suhm wrote in his secret observations: “Here is spoken about wonderful and strange things to happen, and there is a rebellious spirit in town. Some citizens whose conditions have been impoverished during this government, are said to have acquired powder and bullets”.⁴⁶¹ A few days later, on 11 January, he reported on rumors about Struensee’s imminent seizure of power: sailors would be imprisoned at Holmen, all persons of some standing would be brought to the castle, the city gates be closed, and the army put on the alert. Then the King would abdicate and pass the government to the Queen, to whom everyone should declare an oath. Suhm had been told that such rumors had been intentionally spread by Struensee and the Queen themselves in order to test the quality of the atmosphere – and citizens should have answered: “We shall never make a vow to that whore!”. Others claimed Struensee would now become regent with a title of Principal of the Realm. Still other rumors claimed that Suhm himself had a role in spreading such rumors, utilizing them to convince the Queen Dowager and her son to take action and join the coup group. Copies of a royal declaration of abdication, supposedly to take place on the King’s birthday on 29 January, began circulating – no original, of course, existed. The German envoy wrote, on 11 January, that rumors were prepared by the anti-party against the government in order to strengthen further the emerging embitterment against it.⁴⁶² As Struensee had put the garrison on alert and made canons ready, fear and anger escalated among Copenhageners, and far into the elite, the conviction about the reality of Struensee’s evil plans consolidated.⁴⁶³

458 Abolition of the Foot Guard: Lövenskiöld 1858, 218–224; Holm 1890–1912, IV, 2, 322–327; Bech 1989, 287–289.

459 On Struensee’s isolation, see Holm 1890–1912, vol. IV.2, 314–316.

460 Bobé 1893, 315. Heinrich Carl Meinig (1736–1812) was a German envoy reporting to the Senate of Hamburg.

461 Suhm 1918, 68.

462 Bobé 1893, 318.

463 Rumors and cannons: Schiern 1870, 685–688; Suhm 1918, 68; Reverdil 1858, 306 and 317 on.

Fermentation was culminating, and as we saw, it was in this atmosphere that the long-winded Cabal against the Cabal took its final shape, its conspiring plans now including, as of 12 January, the necessary royal support.

A Palace Revolution – the Toppling of Struensee

The central idea of the conspirators proved to be the silent arrest of the main culprits during late night, in order to possibly avoid any open clashes. In this, they brilliantly succeeded. On Thursday the 16th at 8pm, as so many times before, there was an invitation to a court masquerade at the Court Theatre in the South Wing of Christiansborg, and most of the members of the two opposing Cabals were there, dancing, drinking, and playing cards. The Hereditary Prince danced the last dance with the Queen. The King was accompanied back to the castle by Brandt at midnight. Around 2 in the morning, the ball ended, and Struensee and the Queen left the theatre together. In Hereditary Prince Frederik's antechamber, the conspirators gathered with him and the Queen Dowager. Here were Guldberg, Beringskiold, Köller, Eickstedt; the two top militaries bringing handfuls of entrusted officers. Rantzau was missing, however, and when Beringskiold went to fetch him in the Palais nearby, he refused with reference to an attack of podagra. Beringskiold had to call two soldiers to have him carried in a porte-chaise to the castle. He could not be dispensed with.⁴⁶⁴

One group now went to the King's bedchamber: the two royals, Eickstedt and Rantzau, accompanied by five officers. The Queen Dowager woke up the King and told him that Struensee and the Queen were planning an attack not only on him but on the whole of the royal house. She produced some papers for him to sign, "as his safety and the well of the whole of the royal family as well as the happiness of the subjects in their entirety depended upon this", as an eyewitness reported.⁴⁶⁵ Rantzau and Eickstedt kneeled by the bedside to strengthen her appeal. The King was paralyzed by fear but eventually yielded to sign the documents. Prince Frederik countersigned them and passed them to Eickstedt who left. The second group, led by Köller, simultaneously made their way to Struensee's bedchamber which they found unlocked. Without any written order from the King which Struensee demanded to see, Köller arrested him. Then came Brandt whose locked door had to be broken up, before Eickstedt and Beringskiold could arrest him. Then it was doctor Berger's turn. The three detainees calmly followed the soldiers down to waiting carriages to take them to cells in the Citadel on the northern edge of the city.

⁴⁶⁴ It later turned out that Rantzau had regretted his participation and attempted to warn Struensee, as late as twice during the very evening before the coup, but unsuccessfully.

⁴⁶⁵ Birkeland 1867, 93.



Fig. 36: The dramatic moment when the powerful Count realizes that all has been lost by his arrest in the early morning of 17 January 1772 became a hit as a broadsheet print. Only a few hours before, Struensee has turned in from the masquerade at the Court Theater. He has thrown his hat and mask on the floor. Now colonel Köller wakes him with his rapier drawn and displays the arrest order (which he did not possess during the real events). Wigless Struensee throws his arms in the air in affect. Escape possibilities are blocked by Captain Malleville and his men. Game over. *Representation of how Count Struensee was arrested (Forestilling hvorledes Græf Struensee blev arresteret)*, copper, 1772. © Royal Danish Library.

The King was now brought to the Queen Dowager's apartment where he was ordered to sign a number of further papers and to copy other papers in his own handwriting. Orders were passed on and beginning in the early morning some 15 Struensee top loyalists were arrested in their homes.⁴⁶⁶ One special order had been copied by the King in his own hand: the arrest order for the Queen. Several versions of the French text are reported, the briefest of which was related by Suhm: "I have found it necessary to send you to Kronborg, as your behavior forces me to do so. I deeply regret this move, of which I am not guilty, and I wish you will sincerely repent".⁴⁶⁷ Now, it

⁴⁶⁶ The arrested comprised Struensee's brothers, council of justice C. A. Struensee and lieutenant G. C. Struensee, general Gähler and his wife Sophie, colonel S. O. Falkenskiold, medical professor J. C. Berger, general Henrik Gude, lieutenant H. C. Hesselberg, admiral Ole Hansen, equerry F. L. E. von Bülow, privy councilor J. C. Willebrandt, lieutenant T. Aboe, Cabinet secretaries David Panning and Johan Zoéga, and Cabinet cashier Frederik Martini.

⁴⁶⁷ The different versions of the arrest order of the Queen, see Schiern 1872.

was around 7 in the morning, and the order was passed to Rantzau who went to the Queen with a handful of officers. As a top nobleman, he was required for her arrest. A chambermaid was sent in to wake the Queen and tell that Rantzau was waiting in the antechamber. She immediately realized something was acutely wrong. Only in her nightgown, she ran to the door to a secret staircase leading down to Struensee's apartment, shouting "Where is the Count? Where is the Count?". Reaching his apartment, she found it guarded by soldiers, and Struensee's valet told her about his arrest. She demanded access to the King, in vain, and after considerable resistance, she gave in and accepted to be taken away on the condition that she could bring her children. After some negotiations she was permitted to take the six months old Princess, while the Crown Prince must stay behind. In a carriage with a lady-in-waiting and an officer, she was escorted through the Northern Gate on the way to Kronborg in Elsinore. It was 9am, and minus nine Centigrades.⁴⁶⁸ The silent strategy of a surprise coup had succeeded.

Half a year sufficed for the development of the chain of events leading from the early pamphlets against whoring and to Struensee's fall on 17 January. The unprecedented collaboration between Struensee's political opponents in court, nobility, and clergy on the one hand and the escalating urban "Fermentation" on the other, showed a new and unexpected, powerful potential of a free public sphere. While pamphleteers and writers had largely supported Struensee's government through the first nine or ten months of his rule, the next six months many of them would turn lividly against him. The political result was a neat, small palace revolution, not a popular rebellion properly expressing the raging passions of Copenhageners, but still there is hardly any doubt that the coup-d'état had not been possible had seminal parts of Copenhagen not turned against the government. The dynamism of Press Freedom had proven unruly and hard to reconcile with the rigid power structures of absolutism, even in a version aiming for some degree of enlightened or opinion-guided sovereignty. Press Freedom had proven a double-edged sword, and even the originator of Press Freedom himself would not be spared as an incomprehensible whirlwind of pamphlets, papers, periodicals, rumors, flyers, posters, clandestine planning, and the reawakening of urban tensions brought the effervescent effects of "Fermentation" to their culmination.

468 For events of the night of the coup, see: Langberg 1972, 25–28; Birkeland 1867; Bech 1989 307–321, Bregnsbo 2007, 156–160; Reverdil 1858, 355 on; Grundtvig 1879, 188–191; see also Langen 2008, 375–378 and Langen 2018, 56–62.

10 The New Order of 1772 – A Clerical Campaign and a Clean-Up Party

A Coup Regime in the Making

A conspiracy had overthrown Struensee, and Queen Dowager Juliana Maria and Hereditary Prince Frederik had seized power. As mentioned, it is not entirely clear how the conspiracy came into existence, but the coup-plotters had been aware from the beginning that an open revolt against Struensee would hardly succeed. Therefore, a strategy of surprise was chosen. It was no use trying to convince the King, so it was a matter of getting his signature on a piece of paper. Now, it had been obtained, and all morning the King was busy signing more orders. Furthermore, the King was forced to write a letter in which he asked the Queen Dowager to free him from the evil people who held him prisoner. A similar letter to the Hereditary Prince asking him to support the Queen Dowager was also produced. The Queen Dowager subsequently backdated the letters to 10 January. In this way, the coup was endowed with a touch of legitimacy.⁴⁶⁹ Only a few people knew exactly what had happened at the castle during the night and morning. All sorts of rumours ran through the excited capital, and in the morning, many people gathered at Christiansborg Palace Square to hear news. Had Struensee deposed the King and installed himself as regent? Or was it Struensee who had been overthrown? At one point during the morning, King Christian VII appeared on the palace balcony accompanied by the Queen Dowager and her son, and he was heavily applauded by those assembled below.

A few hours later, the new rulers forced the trembling King into a velvet carriage with team of six white horses, so that he and the Hereditary Prince could be taken through the main streets of Copenhagen on display. The purpose was to show the population that the new rulers had liberated the poor King from the confinement in which Struensee, Queen Caroline Matilda, and their henchmen had kept him. Many Copenhageners acknowledged this with wild cheers and followed the carriage around on its journey. From the roofs of houses people shouted hurra, and from the windows the inhabitants waved with scarves and hats. Inside the carriage, the terrified king crouched “surrounded by a screaming and howling mob who did not know why it was shouting hurra”, as one observer later recounted.⁴⁷⁰

469 The coup and the occurrences of 17 January 1772, see Bech 1989, 307–321; Bregnsbo 2007, 156–160; Langen 2008, 375–378.

470 Biehl 1901, 121.

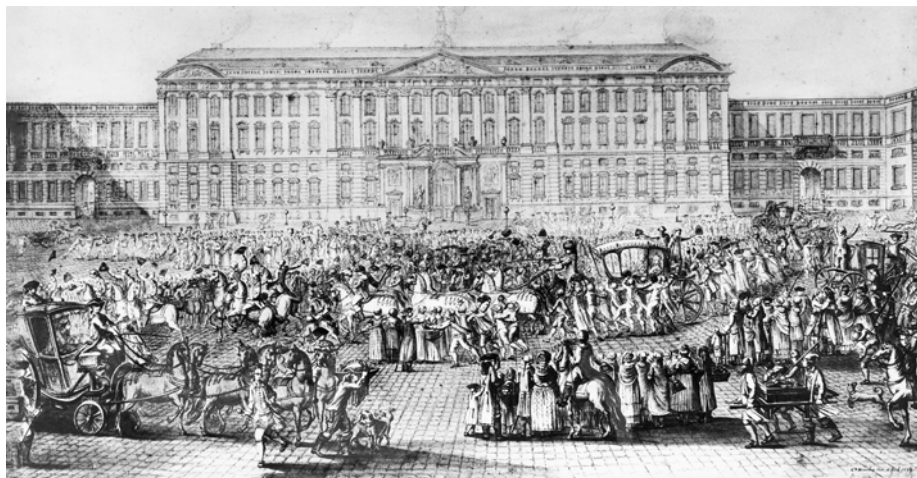


Fig. 37: 17 January in the afternoon, the coup-plotters hastily organized a coach tour for the King through the city in order publicly to demonstrate the legitimacy of the new government they were about to organize. Pulled by six white horses, the King and Hereditary Prince were taken through the main streets of the city, celebrated by the masses, the King still in shock over the morning's events. *Christian VII and the Hereditary Prince in the Coach the Day after the Fall of Struensee*, C. F. Stanley, Copenhagen 1779. © Royal Danish Library.

Although Copenhageners had seen the King being transported around town and cheered accordingly, the city was still low on reports of the exact incidents at court. In his memoirs, the author Knud Lyne Rahbek mentions how friends and acquaintances everywhere went in and out of each other's houses during the afternoon to hear news.⁴⁷¹ Many people stayed out on the streets for the rest of the day while the King returned to the castle and mechanically continued to sign documents which the coup-plotters presented to him. He then gave a reception at the palace and appeared before supporters of the new regime who had lined up to congratulate him on his rescue, and in the evening, the King attended a play in the Court Theatre accompanied by the Queen Dowager and the Hereditary Prince, as if on a normal evening. Outside the walls of the theater, however, lots of people were still out in the streets, and many Copenhageners had illuminated the windows of the houses and put on their Sunday clothes. Here and there fireworks were lit. But underneath the joy something was simmering. Rumours had it that sailors threatened to smash windows around the city if the residents did not illuminate the windows.⁴⁷² The playwright Charlotte Dorothea Biehl was proud that she had persuaded her father not to illuminate their windows in the central Charlottenborg palace; she did not want to celebrate the coup-makers.

⁴⁷¹ Rahbek 1828, 88.

⁴⁷² Rahbek 1828, 88.

Disturbances began at innkeeper Gabel's house in Østergade where a crowd composed of sailors in particular had gathered. The crowd forced its way into the house and systematically began smashing furniture and tearing the house apart. Some effects were thrown out into the street, some were carried away under the cover of darkness. A large collection of 8,000 books belonging to the previous owner of the house, the Schulin family, was stolen. A wine merchant residing in the cellar had a considerable stock of wine and spirits robbed, which was consumed by the agitated crowd. The crowd left Gabel's ruined house and went on a veritable rampage in the surrounding streets, where houses were invaded and ravaged. Attacks were aimed at the so-called "Misses' Offices" or "Virgin Comptoirs", i. e., brothels or pubs, where prostitution in one form or another unfolded under the direction of "cheerful hosts", "punch-innkeepers", "punch hosts", or whatever popular nicknames the owners of such establishments were dubbed. Women present in the houses were dragged into the streets and humiliated, for instance being held under water posts and soaked by ice-cold water in the chilling winter night. Indications of rape also appear in some sources. The houses were demolished; doors and windows were smashed, followed by the destruction of furniture and equipment thrown into the streets. Tapestries were torn down from walls, fixed panels were broken down, floors were forced up, stoves were wrecked or carried off, and household effects were stolen.⁴⁷³ Some of the houses, however, had nothing to do with prostitution. In parallel, the social composition of the attackers expanded as the disturbances developed. The crowd now consisted not only of sailors, butchers, brewers, hackney coachmen, or other "mob-like types", as it was mentioned. According to an eyewitness, officers and citizens also participated, clearly identifiable by their "neat clothing".⁴⁷⁴

During the night, more than 70 houses were attacked and battered. No one intervened and not until midnight did an officer ride from the palace into the streets followed by heralds and a military escort to – in the King's name – calm the situation down. On behalf of His Majesty, he thanked the crowd for celebrating the new government and asked them to go home. This did not help. The disturbances continued until about 4 o'clock in the morning, when suddenly something happened. As the crowd headed for Minister of Finance Schimmelmann's mansion in the nobler part of town, dragoons with drawn swords were deployed to fight the riots. Also, the chief constable's private home and the Royal Assistance House – the public pawnbroker office – were now targeted by the crowd. But the attack was averted, and the crowd disbanded during early morning. Minor unrest continued well into the next day. In

⁴⁷³ Similar incidences in Stockholm have been studied by Berglund 2009. Specific elements of the type of attacks on brothels seen in the case of "The Great Clean-Up Party" in Copenhagen have characteristics in common with what Elisabeth S. Cohen has termed "house-scorning": a range of ritualized urban practices of revenge, defamation and social stigmatization involving attacks not individuals but on houses and dwellings. See Cohen 1992.

⁴⁷⁴ The incidence is thoroughly investigated in Stevnsborg 1980a and 1980b.

the following days, rumours had it that rioters planned “to plunder several houses, including some of distinction”. A diplomatic envoy wrote in a report: “Disorders and acts of violence arising from the hatred and rage of the mob are still feared. It is said that the sailors intended to destroy 13 houses which they considered suspicious, in addition to some others whose owners were supposed to be secret supporters of the accused [i. e., Struensee and his allies]”.⁴⁷⁵ For the same reason, additional military patrols were sent into the streets to keep watch.

Numerous pamphlets began to pour out, presenting narratives of the events soon to be merrily dubbed “The Great Clean-Up Party”. In the praise of the nocturnal riots, the incidents were interpreted – or excused – as manifestations of righteous anger. The people had cleaned up and cleared the table after Struensee’s immoral rule which was associated with the Copenhagen underworld of prostitution. In other words, a moralist manifestation and perhaps even a direct reaction against Lord Mayor Holstein’s privacy bill of 3 April 1771. According to critics, this bill was licensing the practice of prostitution by depriving the police of the right to do house searches. The police were no longer allowed to interfere in what was going on in private homes, just as it was not considered to be police business whether women lived alone or not. Again, the Struensee laws in the field of morality were thus seen as the very precondition for the increasing immorality in the city.

After the arrest, Struensee was incarcerated and chained to the wall by fetters in a cell of ten square meters. An officer was constantly present in the room to prevent the prisoner from committing suicide, and for the same reason, he was not allowed to shave or use a knife when eating. On 20 January, a commission was set up to investigate and prosecute Struensee and Brandt. Some of the kingdom’s most competent jurists and legal officials were given seats in the commission, however, there was one exception, the Queen Dowager’s henchman, Ove Guldberg. Presumably, he was placed in the commission to ensure political legitimation of the new regime and to monitor the work so that the members acted accordingly. He also obtained seat in the other commissions that were set up to examine the papers of the accused and initiate a divorce case against the Queen, respectively. Apparently, he did not try to influence the work of the lawyers. It was probably also not necessary, as all the members of the Commission knew that a swift decision had high priority.

On 13 February, the State Council was reconstructed – albeit preserving some of Struensee’s structural changes, visible from its alternative name, the “Cabinet Council”, and more principally from its continuing rule by Cabinet Orders and the prohibition of members to serve simultaneously in the ministries. Power was still supposed to emanate directly from the Cabinet. The leader of the new council was the King’s half-brother Prince Frederick through whom his mother the Queen Dowager and their court secretary Guldberg gained considerable influence. Other members, however, were a mixed lot: Otto Thott, J. O. Schack-Rathlou, H. H. Rømeling, von Os-

475 Bobé 1893, 318.

ten, and Rantzau. Thott was experienced but now very old, admiral Rømeling had little political experience, von Osten was not in high regard due to having served under Struensee, and Rantzau, despite his central effort in the planning and realization of the coup, was considered unreliable and kept out of all important decisions. After half a year and one year, respectively, the latter two would be screened out and banished from the realm. An immediate sign of political anxiety was the hasty banishment of one of the chief conspirators, Beringskiold, to Vordingborg in South Zealand in the days immediately after the coup. His wavering in the days before the coup as to the destiny of the Queen had created a fear that he might wish to conspire against the new regime in order to reinstate the Queen – so he must go. The new strongman was the conservative nobleman J. O. von Schack-Rathlou called to Copenhagen from Jutland and arriving on 27 January, and it seems as if most issues were now decided between him, the Hereditary Prince, and the Queen Dowager with Guldberg as an intermediary. It became evident in the many cases where Schack-Rathlou or the Hereditary Prince took liberties in the direction of contacting chancelleries, ministries, the police, etc. directly, without formal procedure. None of the four were friends of Press Freedom, and even if pre-print censorship was never reintroduced, their government gradually would improvise a narrowing of Press Freedom with decrees, fines, in one case imprisonment, in another commission court case, all garnished with public warnings and more or less explicit threats (see Chapter 14). Immediately, the new State Council began rolling back Struensee-period reforms, from comprehensive schemes such as the morality program and city administration reforms and to details such as the changing of the Vajsenhus to a trade school and the hospital “box” to receive unwanted infants for state care.

Information Hunger

The demand for information dramatically increased after the coup of 17 January 1772. During the previous year, several writers had grumbled over the pervasive hunger for news and the unbecoming curiosity which, in their opinion, had arisen as a consequence of Press Freedom.⁴⁷⁶ The readers’ need to gratify their curiosity had a negative impact on the quality of the publications. Readers were greedy, and especially young girls demanded news, so they had something to talk about at the tea table.⁴⁷⁷ According to this view, the hunger for trivial news impeded the pursuit of serious topics and useful reading and was believed to have a negative impact on

476 [anonymous], *En ubetydelig Samtale imellem en Skribent og en Forlægger*, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 1771 and Gustophilus, *Velment og nødsaget Erindring til de Danske Fruentimmer, angaaende den nærværende slette Smag i den smukke Litteratur. af Gustophilus*, no place or printer indicated, Sep. 6 1771.

477 [F. C. Scheffer], *En artig Sammenblanding af indeholdende Nyt og Gammelt. 1.) Tungens forskellige Brug. 2.) Beviis, at de sandselige Redskaber hos Mennesket ikke ere bygte paa een og den samme*

especially superficially educated girls. In addition, the truth value of news presented in the Press Freedom Writings was dubious.⁴⁷⁸ The news was nothing more than a pastime carrying pub talk.⁴⁷⁹

Evidently, the spectacular events at court had created a more targeted demand for information on the political situation, and Hans Holck (see Chapters 8–9) seized the opportunity and launched, as we have heard, the novel newspaper *Aften-Posten*.⁴⁸⁰ *Aften-Posten* was created with the stated purpose of keeping the public informed of the changes after 17 January 1772. The first issue was probably on the streets as early as Friday, 17 January in the evening. The King's drive around the city and the violent incidences of the evening are not mentioned in the report of *Aften-Posten* indicating that it was written and dispatched to the printer already in the middle of the day. The title page of the newspaper specifically stated that it was published "starting on 17 January 1772".⁴⁸¹

In the first issue, readers were given a prospect of being informed on political developments in the following issues under the heading "17 January Journal". Since the publishers did not expect to be able to fill the entire newspaper with information about the new development at court, they also planned for presenting other matters, "which the changes of time give occasion for", but never something that would go against decency or being insulting to any person or estate. This incantation can be interpreted partly as a commentary on the previous year's many writings with testing-the-boundaries-content, and partly as a safe bet approach to a new government that might be less enthusiastic about the open public that had developed since the introduction of Press Freedom.

Shortage of information was the pivotal point of the reporting in the first issue. Regarding the events at court, *Aften-Posten* could only inform that they had taken place for "important reasons", but it was exclusively reserved for the King "at his own pleasure to make this publicly known". The secrets of power were unfathomable, and it was not up to common subjects to demand insight into the dispositions of the monarch. So, the writer had to find another way into the events and thus portrayed the prevailing joy over what might have happened, and that the monarch, regardless of lack of information, no doubt had acted as a just king and as father of

Maade. 3.) *Fruentimmerets Sammenkomst i de nyere Tider*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterleverske, 1771 (15 April 1771).

478 [Frederick the Great], *Afhandling om overdrevne Satirer eller indklædte Skandskrifter*, (German original 1759), Copenhagen: Brødrene Berling, 1771 (6 September 1771).

479 Hans Georg Rasmussen, *Betænkninger over de danske Skrivers Arbejde, 1) Hvad 2) Hvortil og 3) Hvorfor de har skrevet, forfattet i Anledning af Skrivefrihedens Indskrænkelse, tilligemed et Vers om de Skrivesyges Udpiibning af Hans Georg Rasmussen, Philosophiæ Studiosus*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771.

480 On *Aften-Posten* in general, see Kirchhoff-Larsen 1942–1962, 134–150; Bering Liisberg 1908, 27–30.

481 Bering Liisberg mentions without a reference that the first issue was published on 17 January; Bering Liisberg 1908, 27.

his subjects. Common joy had its causes, but these too were hidden from the public, this was quite a paradox, which the writer, however, squirmed out of. Even if the reason for joy was hidden – and had to stay hidden as long as the King wanted: “[I]t is unknown to none of us, however, that since the period when the hand of Struensee took the reins of the kingdom, sighs and general discontent have been heard all over the country”. The reporter continued speculating on the terrible consequences it would have had if this abuse of power had not been stopped in time, if Supreme Providence had not “destroyed the most abominable plan whose execution was intended for us”, and liberated the subjects from the yoke of oppression, which was ready for implementation. It was the idea of a hidden plan and an impending tyranny that had justified the coup-plotters’ intervention. The people were dormant while the throne and the land were plunged in darkness. Now a clearing-up had come and blessed were the hands that turned night into day before the eyes of His Majesty. The Queen Dowager Juliane Marie and Hereditary Prince Frederik were “great tools in the hand of Providence” who carried out the divine plan. As is seen, the reporter was not able to explain events, but he could name the royal actors.

In a vivid reportage style, the atmosphere and uncertainty right after the coup are described. Copenhageners flocked to the palace square and the Queen Dowager and the Hereditary Prince displayed themselves in one of the palace windows. The sight of the Queen Dowager and the Hereditary Prince was a visual confirmation of the regime change. After this reporting of the chaotic sociability of confusion, uncertainty, and joy, the writer mentions that it was announced who had been brought to the Citadel and who was under house arrest. The indication of the names of the fallen gave the audience some treats for the processing of the rumours circulating. It is not mentioned in the report who announced the names.

The report emphasizes the importance of Christiansborg Palace square as the central place in the urban cosmos. Not only by virtue of its function as heart of the city and centre of absolutist exercise of power, but also as a place for exchanging news and gathering information, a natural rallying ground for the city’s residents in confused situations in anticipation of some sort of clarification. News was experienced collectively, and information was picked up while being present there. The fact that important meeting places such as Børsen and Holmen’s Church were located in the immediate vicinity of the palace square probably also contributed to this function. In the decades to come and until the palace burned down in 1794, the significance of the palace square was strengthened, not least in connection with popular unrest.⁴⁸²

In an effort to follow the events closely, *Aften-Posten* mixed journalistic innovation with more traditional content. Of the twelve columns dispersed over six pages, the intelligence of 17 January in the first issue makes up just under four columns, while the rest of the magazine consists of announcements about public concerts,

482 For the importance of the palace square as popular meeting place, see Langen 2012; 2017.

auctions, food for children, published books and funny anecdotes, i. e., general content that might as well have been published by any of the city's periodicals. But two sections with separate headings in particular were linked to the magazine's ambition of innovative journalism, namely "Evening Conversations" ("Aften-Samtaler") and "City Rumors" ("Byerygter"). The former section consisted, in the first issue, of a fictitious conversation between two people debating different topics and, of course, referred to issues related to the change of regime. Among other things, it is debated whether some of Struensee's undertakings will have a lasting effect. This type of dialogue is known from countless texts since antiquity, but in this context, it serves as a comment on of what is communicated in the journal's journalistic reports in the same issue.

The latter section, "City Rumors", was included in this merger as an innovation that conveys verbal intelligence without taking responsibility for the content or its sources. In this first issue, rumours are presented generously; that the army's command language will change from German to Danish, that fundraising will be arranged to finance a statue for minister J. H. E. Bernstorff (who was fired by Struensee), that several unnamed persons will receive chamberlain keys, that Bishop Gunnerus (who was brought to Denmark by Struensee to draft a university reform) will be ordered to go back to Norway, and that opera will be banned. The column is not only a reflection of the city's oral culture, but a textualization of the rumours circulating in a dramatic situation of crisis, and thus operating as a transmission of the worries and hopes that occupied Copenhageners in the current situation. From an analytical point of view, it is less important whether the rumors are true or not; the essential is what they reveal about the situation in which they emerged. As mentioned before, rumors tell us something about what various Copenhageners were willing to believe, what was within the frame of the possibility or conceivability. A ban on opera, for example, was now within this frame.

In this way, forms complement each other according to a new textual distribution key, in which reportage, comments ("Evening Conversations") and the black market of news ("City Rumors") collaborate in keeping with unknown, but hardly unimportant, editorial considerations. It was not unimportant whether a piece of information was presented in a report or in the rumor section. Through a formal genre classification (reportage, commentary, rumor), the editors created a hierarchy of information, partly according to truth and probability, partly according to reliability of sources, but at the same time allowing readers to participate in a more informal value assessment of information.

In the following issues, more tangible information about the upheavals was presented. Without revealing the origin of information, an account is given of who arrested whom, after which a list of new promotions and favors is presented. In this way one could see who was now in power and who was in the new rulers' good book. In reportage style, it was once again described how the streets were crowded with people. However, the mob did not know how to hold back, pleasure turned into

rage and more than 60 infamous houses were demolished. Yet, the writer did not dwell at the violent incidences, but continued describing the collective joy. The jubilation of having thrown off the yoke, of seeing the King alive and enemies of the country in prison was unlimited – even among those who were “unconcerned about the causes and consequences of the blissful change”. This indicates that many joined in cheering without knowing what the excitement was all about. The picturesque descriptions of popular joy in the first issues of *Aften-Posten* convened a considerable outburst of textual emotions also tangible in the many writings that were to be published during the following weeks. Causes and explanations became secondary, while manifestations of exuberance and practices of emotions turned out as central to *Aften-Posten*’s reporting and to narratives in many forthcoming Press Freedom Writings. In this sense, the texts were emotional performances, an ostentatious rejoicing with religious and revanchist undertones.

Further official information was published in *Aften-Posten*, for example the names of the members of the Inquisition Commission (no. 3). But especially the considerations in “Evening Conversations” and the unconfirmed information flow in “City Rumors” reveals intimate connection to conversations of urban sociability. In one issue, a rumor is mentioned that Struensee had stolen some precious stones from the royal crown; a rumor which *Aften-Posten* had been able to reject. A voice ironically stated that *Aften-Posten* must have direct contact with the court when it is possible to pass on such intelligence. The reader emphasizes, “these city rumors are quite amusing to read in print”, i. e., as opposed to merely listening to them in the streets or in a pub. The comment thus indirectly reflects on the grey zones between oral and written, between true and false, which was the *raison d’être* of the city rumour column. Where do these guys get their news from, one writer cheekily asked in one issue and suggested taking that kind of news a little less seriously. More solemn were the rumors about the consequences that the change of regime may have for Press Freedom. In the second issue of the *Aften-Posten*, a rumor is mentioned that newspapers would be placed under supervision of the Danish Chancellery, in this way expressing fear of an impending tightening. In a following issue (no. 4, 34) rumors are mentioned about printers having had to “name authors”, which must mean that the Chief of Police wanted clarification on who was behind specific anonymous writings, possibly in preparation for intervening. *Aften-Posten* mentions, however, that they have no information on what the survey among the bookprinters may have led to. In an issue (no. 2) there is a rumor that “a French critique of a certain Danish writing, printed by Stein, have been confiscated at the authors who is believed to be a French actor”. A confiscation was a serious case that evoked memories of a time before the censorship was lifted. This rumor should turn out to be true (see Chapter 14).

As evident from the disclosure of rumors in *Aften-Posten*, fluctuations in the Press Freedom public were followed with close attention. There was a nervous uncertainty about the status of Press Freedom after the fall of Struensee, not least be-

cause the production and sale of writings exploded after 17 January 1772, probably causing a loss of overview for most observers of the public. *Aften-Posten* reports how writing and printing are now booming in Copenhagen. “I see hags running around the streets with baskets full of these new writings”, says one voice in “Evening Conversations” (no. 4, 33). Due to the hard times, however, this voice has not spent much money on such pamphlets. Clearly, palace revolution, rising prices, food shortages, and hectic information activity helped to perpetuate the atmosphere of emergency that had emerged even before the coup.

Writings about the fallen Cabinet Minister in particular sold like hot cakes: “The printers, the sellers of images, and the little verse-makers earn good money on every man’s Struensee; one has sold 9,000 copies of this a kind of trash alone”. One could easily get bellyache from all that nonsense, the narrator concludes. In particular, the printers Svare and Thiele were blamed for uncritically publishing impermissible writings just for profit (no. 3, 27). The expression “every man’s Struensee” is in fact an apt term for the wide range of interpretations of Struensee’s deeds and literary impersonators that would flood the market (see Chapter 11). The author Martin Brun, for example, was able to present an entire catalogue of disparate Struensee figures taking shape in the author’s peculiarly complex production in the intense months after 17 January 1772. Measured in the number of writings and literary attention, Struensee’s fall gave rise to the single most hectic and productive month of Press Freedom.

The first publication appearing after the upheaval of 17 January seems to have been *On the Occasion of Friday, January 17, 1772, the Day of Peace and Salvation for Gemini* written by a theological candidate named F. U. F. Treu.⁴⁸³ The poem was sold as early as Sunday, 19 January for two shillings outside the doors of the city churches, a mere 48 hours after the coup.⁴⁸⁴ The information in this short poem is sparse, the wording inaccurate and the thanksgiving general, which is not surprising considering the rapid production; the general knowledge of the changes was still very limited at this point. Along with Treu’s poem, the *Brief Information on the strangest Event at the King’s Court, Friday, January 17, 1772* and *Thanksgiving of the Twin Kingdoms to the Providence regarding King Christian VII, together with the Joy of the Citizens of Copenhagen of the important Events on the 17th of January 1772* are the earliest publications marketed for sale in *Adresseavisen* after 17 January, already in the issue of Monday, 20 January – characteristically, a report and a thanksgiving.⁴⁸⁵

483 F. U. F. Treu, *I Anledning af Fredagen den 17 Januari 1772, den Freds og Frelsesdag for Tvillingen*, no place or printer indicated, 1772 (20 January 1772).

484 This is mentioned in [I. C. Grave], *Critisk Journal over alt hvad der er skrevet i Anledning af den 17de Januarii*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (26 February 1772).

485 [anonymous], *Kort Efterretning om den mærkværdigste Begivenhed ved Kongens Hof, Fredagen den 17 Januarii 1772*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (Jan. 20 1772), and [anonymous], *Tvilling-Rigernes Taksigelse til forsynet over Kong Christian VII. tilligemed Kiøbenhavnns Borgeres Glæde over*

Strong currents of publications soon followed. Crucial to this dynamic was the fact that after the events of 17 January, thanksgiving services in the churches were held by order of the royal court.⁴⁸⁶ The most famous vicars of the city spearheaded the service of the new government. Traditionally, the clergy acted as spokesmen for the absolutist government, but had been under pressure during the Struensee regime, not least from aggressive Press Freedom writers such as Bie and Brun. Now, winds were changing. Balthasar Münter and Jørgen Hee, who were later to gain much attention and popularity as spiritual advisors of Struensee and Brandt, had both been fined in 1771 for preaching against the Struensee Ordinance of 13 June 1771, which abolished punishments for extra-marital sex.⁴⁸⁷ Now they kept the sore open. They were supported by reputable theologians around the country who were ordered to publish their sermons as well. Nicolaj Edinger Balle apparently did so well with his sermon held in the diocese of Aalborg, that he was called to Copenhagen and, already on 3 March 1772, appointed theology professor by one of the new government's henchmen, Ove Guldberg.⁴⁸⁸ Balle had done the job to the letter. In 1774, he became a court preacher and in 1783 he was one of the first "rationalist" theologians to be appointed bishop.⁴⁸⁹

As we shall see, the priests did not mince their words when describing how wicked thieves had taken the King hostage, and they were successful in establishing a widespread theological-cosmological interpretation of the coup, which was also to be represented and reinterpreted in many non-priestly writings, demonstrating that the coup was the result of a direct divine intervention and that the traitors were, by contrast, the tools of the Devil. This was far from the only interpretive framework developed in the period after the coup, but it was distinctive in that it took the discussion of the coup entirely away from constitutional, political, or personal dimensions. A Danish church historian has pointed out the striking fact that priests, usually appearing as prudent, modest, rational figures, suddenly expressed themselves with passionate violence of unprecedented strength. A contemporary observer bore witness to concrete testimonies of priestly exaltation, describing how the above-mentioned Dean Hee in the Church of Holmen had waved his nightcap out the window and shouted hurra at the news of Struensee's arrest.⁴⁹⁰

de vigtige Tildragelser den 17de Januarii Anno 1772, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (20 January 1772).

486 *Berlingske Tidende*, 27 January 1772, no. 7.

487 Kornerup 1951, vol. 5, 332.

488 N. E. Balle, *De nærmeste Aarsager, som forvolde Religionens Foragt, tilligemed de deraf flydende skadelige Følger, forestillede i en Taksigelses-Tale for den Allerhøyestes nyelig udviiste besynderlige Forsyn [...] af Mag. Nicolai Edinger Balle, Sogne-Præst for Kiettrup og Giøttrup Menigheder i Vester Han-Herred i Aalborg Stift*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (30 March 1772).

489 The clergy and Danish absolutism, see Bregnsbo 1997. Bregnsbo has registered 17 printed sermons for the 1770–1771 period, while the number for 1773–1773 is 45, Bregnsbo 1997, 238–243.

490 Kornerup 1951, 332.

The Sermon Campaign

Shortly after the coup on 17 January 1772, something surprising happened. A stream of clerical pamphlets was hastily put on the market, presenting elaborate theological interpretations of what just happened. They derived from the sermons of celebration and thanksgiving, which the new government had decreed by instruction to the Copenhagen priests a few days after the coup: “His royal Majesty has most graciously commanded that the clergy in all the churches in the city next Sunday must undertake a thanksgiving for the divine guardianship and providence for the King, the royal house and the country”. The government order was published in *Adresseavisen* on 24 January. There are indications that the order was drawn up in collaboration between the Hereditary Prince and Ove Guldberg in the days right after the coup, when the new regime was consolidating by way of castle audiences for the kingdom’s highest civil servants, church, and military. Thus, the bishop of Copenhagen, all the priests in Copenhagen and the theological professors at the University were received in audience on Wednesday, 22 January, an occasion on which the order for the coming Sunday sermons may have been ventilated.

In fact, it was an exceptionally well-organized propaganda campaign for the new government. The clergy, in their capacity of civil servants, was the mouthpiece of the government in the congregations and performed the task impeccably with massive sermons on the Sundays of 26 January and 2 February. On these occasions, the churches were full, perhaps because people expected to receive official information about the events at court. A selection of the sermons, especially by leading Copenhagen priests in agreement with the new government, were soon published, which can be regarded as the new government’s attempt to play a central role in the popular medium of pamphlets. The Struensee government, which had introduced Press Freedom, had never done anything similar, in terms of using the new public sphere of Press Freedom for systematic government propaganda. That this was an organized action is evident from the fact that the priests did not normally act as political pamphleteers, no one had done it before, and few did it afterwards. The propaganda effort aimed not only at legitimizing the new government, but also at establishing a very specific interpretation of the coup, namely as the result of a theological-cosmological struggle in which God had interfered directly in Danish politics, often in the form of a battle with the Devil, incarnated in Struensee and his co-conspirators. This in contrast to the coup construed as a result of political-ideological collisions, of conflicts of interest of social groups or international actors, or of factions and personal intrigues at court and in the Danish elite. To that end, the clergy was the perfect agent. It had the capacity of interpreting what was in fact a rather restricted, bloodless palace revolution, carried out by a handful of people who met in a small apartment, as a world event of cosmological dimensions. Arresting a few people while sleeping in their beds quickly turned into an act of immense, divine courage and ingenuity that surpassed any human possibility. The sermon

campaign was carried out in the very first days of the new government, even before it has been constituted in government offices.

The publication of sermons and similar clerical texts of celebration from the first months of 1772 take up most of the first two volumes of the Luxdorph collection's second series, around 30 comprehensive writings, and thus constitutes a deliberate political exploitation of the new public situation. It was a successful action, measured by how many of the other contemporary pamphleteers actually bought into the theological interpretation or parts of it.

Hee and Münter

The very first to contribute to the campaign with a celebration service was Dean Jørgen Hee in Holmen's Church, the church of the Navy and Admiralty, situated immediately facing the Christiansborg Palace. Hee would soon play a prominent role as Enevold Brandt's spiritual caretaker. As early as Sunday morning, 19 January, two days after the coup, Hee delivered a sermon that was also the first to be published on 27 January, just ten days after the coup. Either he had been busy at his desk after the first intelligence about the coup spread during Friday to have the sermon ready by Sunday morning, or he may have been among the select network briefed on the coup plans beforehand. In the preface, he says that it is the audience – “my beloved!”, as he calls them – who has encouraged him to publish the sermon which he had, following “the above-mentioned incident” and out of a “to God himself best known, divine and patriotic zeal”, given in his church.

The title of his sermon pamphlet derives from the opening speech: “Why have you disturbed us? The Lord will disturb you on this day” (5).⁴⁹¹ It is Joshua's statement to Achan after the conquest of Jericho, in which Achan had stolen a Babylonian robe and a golden tongue, which was discovered by the Lord while the guilty was found by drawing lots. Disturbances can be regarded as disruption in a congregation or in a state, and the worst thing is when top and bottom are reversed and the lowest is put in the highest place, Hee says. This happens when religion is set aside and inferior things like wealth and honor or wicked things like impiety and lust take its place. Then the duties of people are forgotten. Something similar happens when the highest in the state is treated as a contemptible and inferior person. Things are being disturbed in a state when a regent “who willingly follow the words of good advisors”, can be led astray by “the dazzling schemes of bad impellers” to treat those badly whom he ought to treat good (10). In such cases, a just God punishes the nation. This is the standard Lutheran view that wicked behaviour in the population

⁴⁹¹ Jørgen Hee, *Forstyrremes Forstyrrelse, og Mangelens glædelige Forandring, forestillet i en Prædiken, holden i Holmens Kirke over Evangelium paa tredie Søndag efter Nytaar 1772*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (27 January 1772).

is an acute political problem because God will punish not only the specific sinners, but the entire country, e. g., by rebellion, war, famine, plague, etc. This outlook was on the wane during the eighteenth century, but it was exactly what Hee was utilizing to threaten his congregation on 19 January. So, Joshua's question to the offender really means: What evil has the congregation of Israel done to you, so that would bring the wrath of the Lord upon it? Thus speaks every righteous member of a state, who therefore cannot look with indifference at malice, rashness, and disorder.

With this Old Testament leitmotif, Hee makes a tough interpretation of the word of Christ, which is actually reinterpreted as a New Testament variant of an-eye-for-an-eye. It was the Lord who discovered the iniquity of Achan, and the Lord has now done it again, and He has already begun to disturb the disturbers. This is to be found out in the text for the day; "A wretched circumstance pleausurably changed to general benefit and joy" (17) – this is Hee's very general summary of his point and at the same time his way of performing the rather challenging task of interpreting the text of the day, the wedding in Cana, as a parable about the coup. It was a job that required a lot of text pages and a lot of imagination and interpretive activity.

In Hee's interpretation, the lack of wine at the wedding becomes a symbol of the presence of freethinkers. That problem can only be solved by the Lord because it is the very moral foundations of society that are attacked by freethinkers, and so, the miracle of changing water into wine is like curing society of freethinking. Hee represents a radical variant of the theological interpretation of the coup: God's miraculous intervention. Here, too, he reaches back, theologically speaking. Inspired by biblical criticism, current theological rationalism sought to distinguish the rational core of the truth of faith from random superstition in the Bible, concluding that the role of miracles should be diminished if not outright categorized as mere superstition.⁴⁹² But Hee's theological interpretation was exactly claiming that the coup was a water-into-wine miracle of God. But it was no sudden miracle, because some people had actually grasped what was going on even before God's intervention. In this case, like many other clergymen, Hee found himself in an elementary explanatory predicament: if the vices of the traitors were so scandalous and obvious as claimed by most priests, then why had they themselves remained silent and passive before the coup? Hee mentioned that there were some – and most likely he counted himself in – who had "considerations" and knew about things before the coup.

This leads to the sermon's final equivocal treatment of the violent demolishing during the Great Clean-Up Party. In this time of joy and liberation, says Hee, we have seen examples of disorderly conduct which could "hardly be found coarser at the Turks, Tartars, and Arabs", but that conduct he found came out of a "zeal against the rotten limbs in our state which for some time have multiplied, on account of the protection of the before-mentioned lechery and frivolity, all too recognizable and obvious to the disgrace and injury of the state and the anguish of the

⁴⁹² Rationalism in theology, cf. Kornerup 1951, 257–494.

righteous” (46). Hee works himself up on a vengeful level quite far from the meekness of Christ. It is Sunday morning after the Great Clean-Up Party had taken place on Friday night, and there were still smoking ruins and spontaneous auctions of stolen goods taking place in the streets, but although Hee warns against going too far, he shows no sympathy for those “rotten limbs in our state”. In fact, he finds that the aggressors and victims of the Clean-Up Party were no better than the other, “because robbers have as little inheritance and lot waiting in the kingdom of God as whores and pimps”. To this, it must be added that Holmens Church was the church of the Navy and many contemporary sources mention a strong participation of sailors in the Clean-Up Party. Hee was probably conscious of speaking to a congregation with potential sympathy for the action.

The core group of sermon campaigners the following week, on the main day of the thanksgiving on 26 January, received, unlike Hee, a helping hand from the ordained series of texts. Matthew 8:1–13 about Jesus healing, with a single word, the leper and a servant of a centurion, did not require as complicated interpretive maneuvers as the wedding in Cana but was right up the alley: God had listened to the prayers of the congregation and miraculously healed Denmark from a nasty disease. Copenhagen’s most popular priest Balthasar Münter’s thanksgiving sermon in the German church of St. Petri was published in no less than four different versions, including a Danish translation.⁴⁹³ Munter was a “neologist”, i. e., supporter the theological current under the influence of the enlightenment philosophy of Christian Wolff which claimed that most truths of faith were simultaneously truths of reason accessible to arguments.⁴⁹⁴ A distinction was made between supra-naturalism, claiming that these truths needed the support or further development of supernatural revelations, and a purer rationalism, which claimed that most if not all truths of faith could be recognized by reason alone. Münter took the former position.

493 Baltasar Münter, *Text zur Predigt auf allerhöchsten Königl. Befehl am 3 Sonntage nach Epiph. 1772. zu Kopenhagen gefeyerten Dank-Feste*, Copenhagen: E. S. Schröder, 1772; *Dankpredigt über die dem Könige und seinem Volke erzeigte Hülfe Gottes auf Befehl des Königs am vierten Sonntage nach Neujahr in der deutschen Petrikirche gehalten*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (3 February 1772); *Zwo Predigten. Dank-Predigt über die dem Könige und seinem Volke erzeigte Hülfe Gottes auf Befehl des Königs am vierten Sonntage nach Neujahr in der deutschen Petrikirche gehalten und zum Druck gegeben von D. Balthasar Münter. Feyerliche Danksagung [...] zu Odeslohe in der St. Petri Pauli Kirche am 2ten Februar 1772 dargebracht durch Samuel Helmich*, no place, printing house or year; and *Doct. B. Münters [...] Taksigelses-Prædiken holden efter Kongelig Allernaadigst Befaling paa 4de Søndag efter Nyt-Aaer over den store Guds Hielp, som er beviist Kongen og hans Folk*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (14 February 1772).

494 Roos 2013, 3–4; Lausten 2004, 188 on, and Kornerup 1951, 257–494.



Fig. 38: Balthasar Münter was not only, as the vicar at St. Petri Church in central Copenhagen, a leading figure among German-speaking Copenhageners; he also became, with his rhetorical talents and his cool rationalism, a beloved preacher among other strata of the population. The coup events of January 1772 catapulted him into a celebrity and a central character in the new constellation of power. He published many variants of his churchly interpretation of the coup and got the official task of converting the top prisoner Struensee. Later the same year, his narrative about Struensee's alleged conversion became a bestseller. *Balthasar Münter* (possibly representing), pencil and ink, caricature by N. A. Abildgaard, n. d. © National Gallery of Denmark.

In his first prayer, Münter goes straight to the point in a sonorous Old Testament tone addressed to the Lord: “You are not a God who likes ungodly ways, he who is evil does not remain before you” (3). It is a vengeful God, whom Münter evokes. The ungodly are entangled in the work of their own hands, and suddenly they fall from their noble place and are expelled because of their transgressions. The ungodly are quickly annihilated and given a horrible end. Münter goes back to addressing the Lord: You often them rise high and stay silent for a long time, while they, intoxicated with pride, trample your right and commandment underfoot. But at last, you knock them to the ground, and then they are terrified and fall silent. Your help now rejoices all who have, in the distress of time, based their hopes on you. You have blessed them with victory and crowned them with grace as with a shield. The memory of the oppressors will die with them. Not much is heard of mercy and pity for the criminals – a thing to which Münter would actually return.

After reading the text for the day, the first reference to actual events follows: There is probably no-one here who does not know what has happened among us these days, and who does not see the great similarity there is between the glorious help God has given us, and the wonderful healing of the leper, says Münter. The Lord has actually helped. We all walked on the slippery road in the dark night and only knew that the abyss was close. We prayed to God for help, and finally we saw our King, and his happy gaze proclaimed our salvation, and we wept with gratitude and joy. Our souls pay homage to him and we do not forget it. But mere words are not sufficient, they require pious reflections: “holy decisions, Christian deeds, unchanging trust in his wise and gracious providence”. Münter now continues to elaborate on two points: how God has shown us help, and how we should thank him.

In the first part, Münter describes the tribulation and danger we have been exposed to, but immediately he emphasizes not encouraging to hatred and enmity against the unfortunate, whom we all hold to be the founders of our misfortune. Such emotions, Münter continues, would disgrace religion and go directly against our gratitude to God. Here, Münter is considerably more restrained than Hee – a week had passed and Münter does not speak to an audience of sailors with hangovers as did Hee. But Münter cannot present how great things God has accomplished without actually describing the distress that weighted heavy upon us, how deep in misery we were sunken. This leads him to a very elaborate description kept at a characteristic level of generality: Godless people, who did not understand the language of the country, ruled over us (says Münter in German), without knowing our laws, without knowing the principles of wise governance and without experience, they turned themselves into judges and seized the helm of the state. Oh, what damage they have done! How many rights were suppressed! Everyone had to look over their shoulder with anxiety. Without ever becoming concrete, Münter plays on the circulating Fermentation rumors of very terrible plans being hatched by the fallen Counts.

However, if they did do something good, or something that seemed good (for the appearance of human actions is unreliable), the foundation on which any organization of the state must rest was missing. It was not love of God, nor a noble pursuit of the common good or a sensitivity towards the needs of the people. It was in order to subdue everything and to enrich themselves and break the laws of the country and form a party; this was their intention, which wise people could not neglect and which soon became clear to all. Here, too, there were “wise people” who saw clearly before the coup, and we know that Münter could count himself among the conspirators.

In Münter’s interpretation, the Queen Dowager and the Hereditary Prince are God’s tools that saved the King from the hands of his enemies. This point to two variants of the theological interpretation: *Was it the King who was God’s tool, or was it the royal coup-plotters?* With his insider information, Münter is clearly in the latter position. Some argue, Münter states, that our Creator does not care about us and does not care about our happiness and unhappiness and what happens under the sun – this is Münter polemicizing against deism, which was a possible next step from theological rationalism, and which seems to have had its followers in the Copenhagen elites. But the ruler of the world does not slumber, and he who does not sin knows that God will save him (23), Münter argues against the carefree deity of deists. Münter must have estimated the influence of deism sufficiently large among his educated audience that he found it necessary to polemicize against it.

Towards the end, Münter turns the perspective and addresses the participation of the congregation. He argues that the godless prisoners now in the Citadel were *also* God’s tools. God himself had installed the ungodly in order to show the people the consequences of a “reckless, sinful behaviour”, to awaken the people and show them the danger of eternal damnation (28). The godless prisoners were simply God’s means of punishing us for our frivolity. We had become indifferent to God and virtue, we loved the joys of this world far too much, innumerable opportunities for idolatry were offered to us: worldly lust, idleness, distraction – which are, in the end, but boring and disgusting. The entire dramatic spectacle unfolding through many months had in fact taken place in preparation for punishing and chastising the Danish population. Thus, the conclusion is a demand for religious revival. The good work of the Lord must be continued to expel any anxious doubt from the souls.

From the stern start presenting a punishing God that the audience could easily identify with, Münter led the congregation through a disgusting portrayal of the ungodly and their punishment, to gratitude for God’s intervention and on to the congregation’s discovery that all was really their own fault, played out in order to make them go home and reconsider. A rhetorical masterpiece in which the congregation was led on a journey from divine vengeance over the description of the coup without demonizing the ungodly and to the congregation’s self-criticism and revival. This contemplative variant of the theological coup interpretation was quite far from Hee’s

deliberate twisting of the water-to-wine theme and his open entanglement with vengeance.

Schønheyder and Østrup

A third variant was found at Trinitatis Church, the parish church of the University, where the young rationalist Schønheyder presented a scholarly sermon, close to a conceptual dissertation.⁴⁹⁵ The Gospel text is referred to only at one point, instead Schønheyder opens with an ancient pagan quote, which scholars among the audience would have been able to appreciate, namely Terence's famous line: "I think to me nothing human is alien". Schønheyder's rationalism is evident from the beginning: "In our inferiority, powerlessness and unworthiness, let us worship your un-failing greatness, and with an enlightened eye pay attention to the innumerable proofs and reminders which our lives give us of it". It is an enlightened reason that finds evidence and signs of truth of faith in life. Every age presents special events which reveals Providence. The sharp gaze of the righteous and godly discovers this in what may otherwise appear to be mere human deeds or blind fate. He knows that nothing is blind fate, and it is precisely the smallest invisible circumstances that cause the invisible government of God to bring about the greatest changes (17). This is a kind of theological chaos theory. God discreetly turns a button and major events follow. This is probably the rationalist's way of coming to terms with the miracle theory of the theological coup interpretation: God's miraculous intervention is very minuscule and concerns the smallest circumstances, but this intervention triggers the necessary major change. Schønheyder cannot completely avoid the miraculous; it is a necessary ingredient in the theological coup, but he strives to play it down as far as possible. In the same way, he downplays the theme of revenge. With god-fearing sentiment, one must acknowledge that God allowed vengeance to strike on the ungodly, and it is not for man to question God's will.

Now, Schønheyder unfolds his organic social theory in a number of rhetorical questions. From where do people's interrelationships stem? Why do they care about each other and about common peace and happiness? The righteous worshiper knows about the embedding of man in societal hierarchies and, in turn, the place of society in the universe, and he rejoices in appreciating how all of this cosmological and social order derives from the Almighty. This leads Schønheyder, as the only one of the clerical campaigners, to point to the problem of contrasting the theological coup interpretation to the ongoing case against the sinners as a legal procedure. He knows very well that the case must be enlightened by the torch of justice and be-

⁴⁹⁵ J. C. Schønheyder, *Retskaffenhed og Oprigtighed, Guds frygt og Religionens sande Væsen og Hoved-Sag. afhandlet i En Præken paa tredje Søndag efter Nyt-Aar. [Trinitatis Kirke]*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (10 February 1772).

longs “under the investigation of judges”, which must bring to light what is hidden. Yet, he presents the event as a result of evil to his congregation: “What else can I call this but a conspiracy from the kingdom of Satan [...]?” The learned and cool priest ends up, despite his declared belief in the arm’s length of legal justice, producing an image of Satan as playing a central part. But to Schønheyder the rationalist, the kingdom of Satan and idolatry have turned against enlightenment. The ungodly “had deliberated not only on the tranquility and prosperity of the country, or on the honor of the crown and the royal house; they had done nothing less than deprive the unhappy fatherland of religion and its enlightenment, virtue and order with all its beneficial effects, to defile the shrines of duty; they wanted (for this was their wisdom and religion) to introduce the doctrine of mockery and the idolatry of the lustful” (18–19). Enlightenment is on the side of religion and the royal house, not on the side of the ungodly who cultivate but hedonism and mockery of religion. Now we must not, Schønheyder continues, with “a hypocritical and deceitful feast of thanksgiving, become traitors to our father, to our own bliss”. Only with righteousness – Schønheyder’s favorite word – we can confess our own threatening and perverted depravity. Like Münter, Schønheyder ends up directing accusations down into the nave against the congregation, which he simultaneously embraces within his “we”.

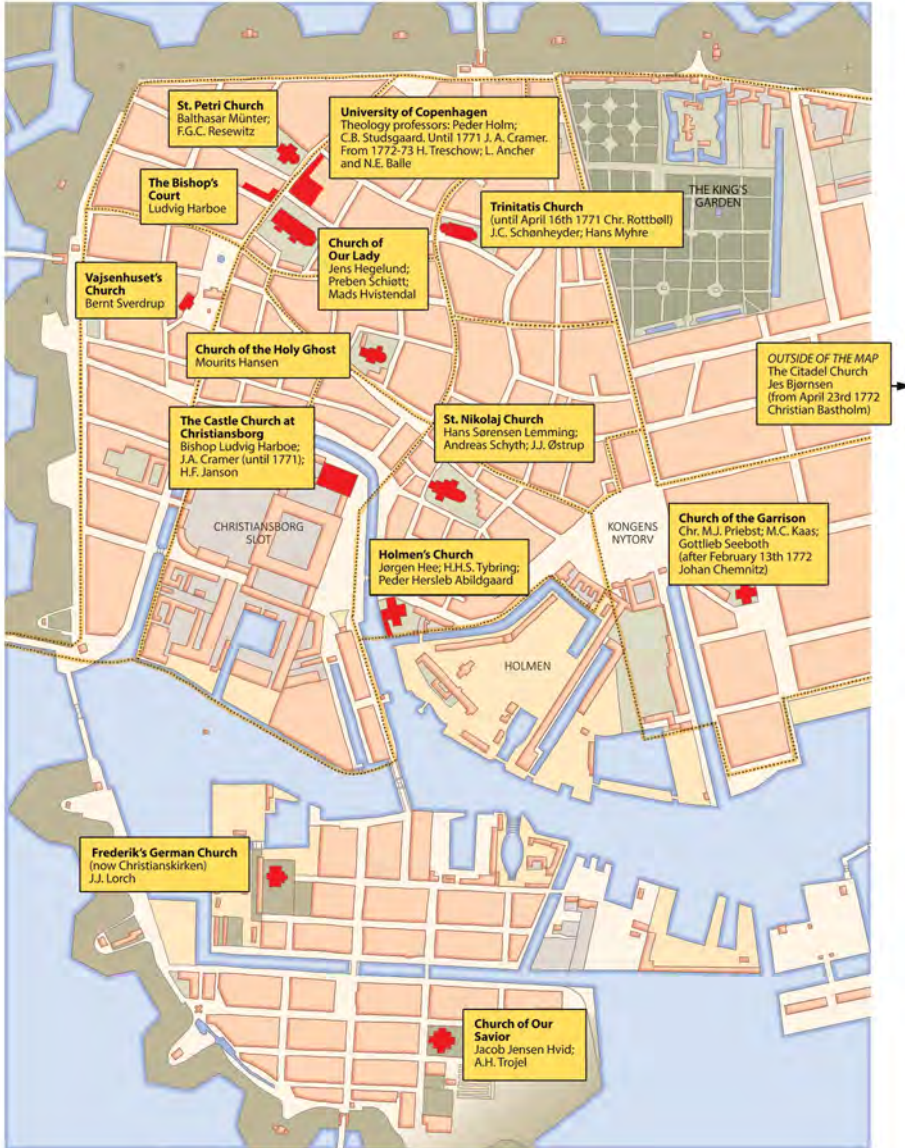
Münter and Schønheyder’s cautious and more or less rationalist handling of the revenge motif was to be seriously trumped by Jørgen Østrup in Nikolaj Church.⁴⁹⁶ Østrup’s sermon is an unsophisticated construct: it has two parts only, the first is on the Lord’s revenge, the second is on that warning and consolation which can be interpreted from the Lord’s revenge. Like Münter, Østrup sets out in Old Testament style. What distinguishes Østrup from the other campaigners is that he never really leaves the Lord’s revenge. In more than half of the 40-page sermon, he piles up Old Testament evidence of the Lord’s righteous wrath. The Lord’s vengeance is realized by the sinners’ own feet “stumbling and falling over the offense of innumerable temptations and indignations” (8). These are not mere accidental events as one might think, but the result of perfect wisdom and righteousness, “because they haste forward with wickedness, hastened by the Prince of Darkness and the desires of their own rotten hearts” (9). After blowing out this rude revenge rhetoric over twenty pages, it comes to Østrup’s mind that it might seem strange that the clergy did not react a little earlier to events which require such an evident and extensive divine act of revenge. Østrup thus undertakes the most comprehensive excuse among the sermons of why the clergy had remained passive. Østrup admits that the Struensee government did not actually intervene against the church, but this was just out of cunning because they had saved exactly that abuse for their finale! Similarly, Østrup is

496 Jørgen Østrup, *Herrens visse Hevn Guds Folk til Advarsel og Trøst. Forestillet i en Prædiken til Aftensang i St. Nicolaj Kirke Paa den Fierde Søndag efter Nyt-Aar 1772*, Copenhagen: H. J. Graae, 1772 (10 February 1772).

the only one of the priests who refers to the new pamphlet public with its lampoons and pasquils – probably he refers to the writings of Brun, Bie, and Bynch mocking the clergy – which are interpreted by Østrup as but a prelude to the intended, definitive political purge of the clergy.

Østrup does point out that man is prone to hatred and revenge and emphasizes that revenge belongs to the Lord. This is the standard theological position, strongly unfolded by Münster, but Østrup cannot keep his nose in the track. He continues with the common idea in Lutheran orthodoxy that even if ordinary believers are not allowed to take revenge, public authorities or government may do just that, because they are both justified and commanded by God to do so. This is indeed elementary Lutheran state theology, but none of the other priests had mentioned it – naturally, because it was neither divinely sanctioned authorities nor government who had taken revenge on 17 January. Regular authority and government were in the hands of the King and his favorite Struensee, and the coup-plotters did not possess any god-given power of formal authority. In a sense, the entire *purpose* of the theological interpretation of the coup was to hide this embarrassing fact by shifting the focus from human agents – and their mundane status and intentions – to a divine level where it became irrelevant who incarnated the authorities.

But this rhetorical blunder on Østrup's part is only the beginning of an even more radical closing of the sermon. The starting point was that "one's own revenge without the command of the authorities is a sin" (30), but in the course of one page of subtle dialectic, Østrup is led to argue that even though it was not right that "robbery and looting took place out of reckless zeal" in some houses in the city, it still had the character of just revenge. Well garnished with Old Testament quotes, Østrup simply justifies the violence, looting, and vandalism of the Great Clean-Up Party as the Lord's own activity. Østrup spoke in the St. Nikolaj Church, in the middle of the prostitution neighborhood, the very center of the Great Clean-Up Party, and he ended up celebrating the cleaning process taking parts of his own congregation as its victims. Even if action against the prostitutes had been undertaken by evil persons, so Østrup, it was still a righteous act, because it is a privilege of God to utilize evil persons for the good: "It is not the first time that the consternation of Providence lets one evil torment the other, so this was the law of retaliation". Østrup did not possess the theological subtlety of a Münster or a Schønheyder, but maybe his blunt conclusion came closer to a widespread sentiment in clergy and population alike.



Map. 4: Clerical Copenhagen. The most important churches, priests, and theologians around 1770. Preachers are ranked from vicars to chaplains (hospital and prison priests not included). Non-Lutheran temples are represented in the map of Institutions of Copenhagen (Chapter 2). © Karoline Stjernfelt.

Harboe and Janson

The main event of the great sermon thanksgiving on 26 January, however, took place in the Christiansborg Palace Church, which produced no less than two publications, by the German palace priest, H.F. Janson and none other than the bishop of Zealand, head of the Danish-Norwegian church, old Ludvig Harboe. The two texts represent the theological coup interpretation as officially as possible, with royal participation, as Janson proudly states on the title page, while Harboe is more discreet. Also, the two sermons display the scope of the theological interpretation, from mild to severe. The bishop starts out with a meek title emphasizing peace and salvation.⁴⁹⁷ Among the priests, the bishop is the one who raises the theological interpretation to the highest level of generality, so high that the danger of vagueness comes near, while any actual information on the causes of the coup is left behind. Instead, the bishop provides a lengthy analysis of which kind of people seeks peace and salvation and what God answers to them. Harboe's focus is on the entire nation rather than on the particular devils at court: "Yet who is so foreign among us that they have not seen how evil, wickedness, and blatant sins by the shamelessness, by their outrageous transgressions and seductions have taken over? For in these days people have sought glory in infamy, taken pride in sins, as they were in Sodom, without being ashamed" (22).

By constantly reaching back in the biblical text and generalizing the sin to the entire people, Harboe actually takes the focus away from the current case. Have not many been led astray by the naughty to believe that the word of God was but a fable, a poem? (23) The day of rest has been spent in the most futile way imaginable. The youth rests in the mud of lust and is infested by a "cheeky crowd". Evidently, these are standard moral chastisements, but in the big picture, Harboe is no fire-and-brimstone preacher, and the reader has to look carefully to find the relevant nuances in his sermon. After a long meditation on the concept of divine peace, Harboe ends by addressing directly the King, present in the palace church. He knew the King since he was a kid, had presided over his confirmation, wedding, and crowning, and does not imply any responsibility on his part, if not by mentioning the valuable tools that God had chosen in the royal house for his action. That was an indirect nod to the Queen Dowager and her son, also present in the palace church.

If Harboe was caressing, his younger German colleague H.F. Janson turned to blows. Janson, like Harboe, was theologically orthodox, but where Harboe's overarching theme in the Palace Church was the peace of God, Janson sets out the exact

⁴⁹⁷ L. Harboe, *Herrens vor Guds Tale om Fred og Frelse til et Folk, der søger ham, forestillet i en Prædiken, som blev holden udi Christiansborgs Slots-Kirke paa tredje Søndag efter Hellig Tre-Konger 1772 [...] Efter Befaling til Trykken leveret af L. Harboe*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1772.

opposite in his evening sermon: the avenging God.⁴⁹⁸ Janson goes straight to the point with a quote from Romans (12,19): “It is mine to avenge; I will repay, says the Lord”. God’s vengeance is in fact one of His central, essential qualities: Among God’s greatest perfections, one of the most sublime and divine is that He is a true judge and avenger in all areas of creation. Not only does He not accept godless beings, He also reveals his wrath and criminal justice over every godless being and the injustices of men. As dreadful as it may sound in our ears, God is a righteous judge and a consuming fire, who sharpens his sword and bends his bow pointing its arrow at the corruption of those who will not repent. This quality cannot be missing in the glory of the Majesty, without that he is no perfect god.

Janson realizes, as the only one among the clerical campaigners, a contradiction that must be addressed: We are admonished by the apostle not to avenge ourselves of the painful feeling of injustice, not to nurture any glee towards those who have harmed us. Janson explicitly sees that the demand for revenge violates the New Testament ethos of turning the other cheek. However, he states, rejoicing in God’s vengeance on evil is not forbidden when it comes to saving the common cause: the entire human society. A seminal difference is thus introduced between individual private revenge, which is under the mild jurisdiction of the apostle, and social revenge where God must intervene. The latter is surprisingly described in an enlightenment rhetoric that returns again and again in Janson’s sermon: it is the *common good* that legitimizes the vengeance of God. In a certain sense, this is a state-of-emergency-argument. When faced with injustice and insult, the Christian must humbly listen to the apostle, but when the common good itself is threatened, resorting to other means is legitimized. In fact, this means letting the vengeance of God achieve its effects through the true believer. None of the other clerical campaigners so clearly addressed this tension in the theological coup interpretation. This emergency argument is directed at the destruction of societal morality in general. And it is sin, the contempt for God, his name and his holy laws, the disorder of lust, which is the terrible source, that has, from the kingdom of darkness, from where it sprang, wrought so many kinds of misfortune among men. Also, Janson terminates his sermon by addressing the King directly: “No angel of the abyss, no tool of Hell may ever again tear You away or darken You!”. He does not refrain from playing out the devil card directly to the face of His Majesty. In many of the sermons, the preachers have to walk a knife’s edge between attacking the King for his complicity in what went on and celebrating his allegedly brave and divine reaction in the coup events. Janson solves this difficulty by simply shifting quickly between the two. In a certain sense, one might add, the two have quite different addressees: his criticism addressing the King as a person, as a sinful, human individual, as the friend and benefactor of Struensee; his celebra-

498 H. F. Janson, *Die richtige Freude der Christen über die göttliche Vergeltung des Bösen. Eine Predigt am 4ten Sonntage nach Neujahr, [...] vor dem Könige und den Königlichen Herrschaften in der Christiansburger Schlosskirsche gehalten*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (10 February 1772).

tion addressing the King as a king, as office, as institution. Must have been a tough day for the anxious King in the palace church – not a strong believer, he had to face a clerical celebration considerably tempered by not so subtle allusions of connivance.

The sermons of Harboe and Janson simultaneously mark the extremes of the theological coup interpretation. Taken together, they almost form a good cop-bad cop routine. The former speaks of peace attained by God's intervention against the ungodly. Using many Old Testament examples and references to people's general dissipation, Harboe almost dissolves the evil in Struensee: Evil has always been there and thrives among people today, and the cosmological struggle against it has always been waged. God's current intervention is, of course, praised, but part of a long chain of events. Janson, by contrast, places the emphasis on revenge and ultimately addresses the King as an implicit accomplice in what had taken place, rather than pointing to the congregation as other campaigners had argued. The new government was not in every respect well-disposed towards King Christian who could be seen as a partial accomplice in what had taken place during the Struensee reign, and the palace priest in his sermon was publicly giving voice to this sentiment directly addressing the King present in the church along with the leaders of new regime.⁴⁹⁹ All in all, the ceremony in the Palace Church on 26 January thus gave an idea of the strength of the theological coup interpretation: the elasticity of the theological categories made it possible to unproblematically range from the God of peace to the God of vengeance and from sin as an eternal condition to impudent wickedness as an acute political problem.

The Theological Coup

The nationwide sermon campaign and the many subsequent pamphlets constituted a united, successful media effort by the new government in the first months of 1772. Thanks to the new possibilities of Press Freedom, the extensive verbal propaganda in the churches could be turned into popular pamphlets for the new market of cheap prints. The most important sermon pamphlets were published in a haste; the sermon of Hee was already published on 27 January, followed by Münter's on 3 February, and those of Schönheyder, Janson, and Østrup on 10 February. The Danish version of Münter's sermon followed on 14 February; Priebst's was not announced for sale until 17 February, but these were remaining copies for sale after it had been distributed free of charge among the Garrison Church congregation (40). Later, Bishop Harboe, a number of provincial priests, and many other ecclesiastical thanksgiving orations followed in print.

⁴⁹⁹ The sovereign King, of course, was elevated over any formal prosecution, but the new in power did not refrain from punishing his person. His beloved dog and the two boys he had as playmates, were taken away from him, and servants were instructed not to reply to his requests.

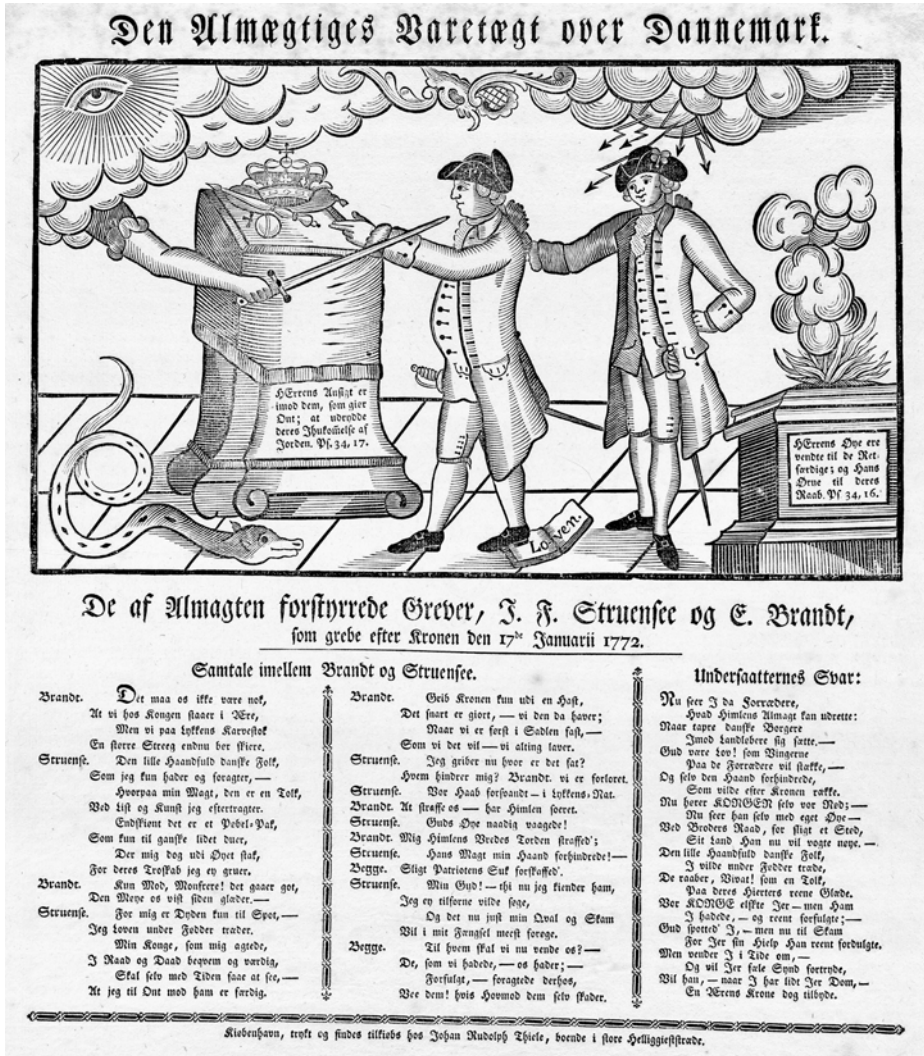


Fig. 39: Broadsheets might also illustrate the theological coup interpretation. Here, God intervenes with sword and lighting against the two Counts who, allied with the Biblical snake, trample the law underfoot and reach out for crown, scepter, and orb. In the dialogue between the two, they develop their evil scheme until they directly experience the divine intervention “Brandt: The Thunder of heavenly Wrath me punished; Struensee: His Power prevented my hand –”. The final choir of subjects in the text reminds the two traitors what heavenly power is really capable of. Simultaneously, however, the two may still hope to receive a “Crown of honor” if they prove able to convert and repent in due time. *The Protection of the Almighty over Denmark (Den Almægtiges Varetægt over Danmark)*, woodcut, Copenhagen 1772: Thiele. © Royal Danish Library.

One may wonder whether the readership buying *Philopatreas* and *Ole the Smith* was identical to those purchasing print editions of the sermons. But without a doubt, the campaign was massive and successful which can be seen from the fact that it succeeded in diffusing the idea of the theological coup to wide circles in the new public. Many other pamphlets came to assume this interpretation in various ways, and the leading review journals were enthusiastic.⁵⁰⁰ The theological interpretation even pops up in the writings of the likes of Brun and Bynch, whether this was for market reasons, because of a newly awakening pious sensitivity, or out of simple fear of ending up on the wrong side which had suddenly become the side of Satan. Perhaps the success of the campaign can also be measured by the fact it was not followed by subsequent counterarguments or pamphlet polemics. One of the hallmarks of the Press Freedom Period were, as we have seen, its many controversies, the *Philopatreas* debate being the most well-known. But there was no critical reaction to the sermon campaign, whether this was due to general agreement or fear of falling out with the new rulers – or perhaps both.

Common to the sermons discussed in this chapter is that the theological coup constitutes a general framework of understanding. The preachers were careful not to describe concrete actions, mention names (with the exception of members of the royal family), never to refer to actual laws that were violated, distinct intentions or plans of the wicked etc. That was left to city rumours, to the Commission, and to the imagination of popular pamphleteers. It is a kind of division of labour in which Schönheyder is the only one who admits to the legal problem; in his sermon he problematized the judging in advance of the accused by inserting them in a cosmological narrative where they embody satanic criminals acting not only against King, people, and society, but against God himself.

The only names mentioned in the sermons are members of the royal family: the King, the Queen Dowager and the Hereditary Prince, who became, in turn, objects of an almost shameless avalanche of flattery. They are attributed incredible qualities, power, and insights, they are deified as being the tools of God in the coup and are compared not only to the most esteemed historical figures, but also to mythological figures from antiquity, even to biblical figures.

The coup interpretation of the preachers constitutes, in a sense, a theological setback insofar as it is based on a theory of miracles: The coup was a miracle, a wonderful event that transcended what humans would have been able to accomplish. In the theological tensions between supra-naturalism and anti-superstitious rationalism wanting to purify faith from superstition, it pulls in the former direction. Something similar applies for the use of the Devil in the sermons. In this period, the literal belief in the Devil was receding. Internationally, the discussion had been going on for a long time, in Denmark, the debate over Hell was breaking out during Press Freedom (see Chapter 6), and in 1783 even the supra-rationalist Guldberg would take

⁵⁰⁰ *Fortegnelsen*, 1772, no. 148, 149, 150, 156, 157, 158 and 206 and *Critisk Journal*, 25, 30–31.

steps to abolish exorcism at baptism, and thereby ending a discussion that reached back to the seventeenth century.⁵⁰¹ The theological coup revived a Devil who, as in the age of Luther, would lurk around town, mingling in concrete worldly struggles by representative angels of Hell like Struensee and Brandt, that is, not a distant prince of darkness or an allegory of man's own sinful tendencies, but an acute, present force of actual, evil agency.

On the other hand, the theological interpretation of the coup represents a renewal and reaffirmation of the basic notion of absolutism and God-given sovereignty, that King and government are in fact chosen by God and thus possess supernatural powers, that God is the King of kings, and that divinity is present and directly visible in royal actions. The King – as a person – may well be individually deceived or pacified by evil, but then there are other forces in the royal house, the guardian angels Juliana Maria and Prince Frederik, who are able to step in and incarnate the will of God. The non-royal coup plotters, the actual initiators such as Guldberg, Köller, and their ilk, in turn, go under the radar, appearing marginally or not at all in the theological coup interpretation. In this sense, the theological coup also serves as a folding screen hiding the actual coup-plotters – and their plans, intentions, and disagreements – from public scrutiny and protecting them from becoming new attack targets in the public. It was clear to everybody how Struensee had been become chief target of public attacks during the autumn of 1771, and it was probably a deliberate strategy of the coup-plotters to keep a low public profile to avoid any similar incidences.

Nevertheless, the sermon pamphlets also reveal some of the variables embedded in the theological interpretation of the coup. Should the wicked be dealt with using Old Testament wrath and barbaric punishment turned against their satanic behaviour, or should they rather be the subject of pity and attempts at repentance? Could the intentions of the wicked be understood, analyzed, and criticized, or were they beyond comprehension? Was the ultimate guilt to be placed with the wicked themselves, with the underlying Satanic forces or rather with the Danish nation of believers, whose extravagant and decadent way of life had paved the way for the usurpers? Had their malignant nature been clear to any clear-eyed observer during the Struensee regime, or was a divine intervention needed before anyone even understood what was going on? A particularly intriguing plasticity was the balance between of the three divine tools: the King, the Queen Dowager, and the Hereditary Prince. Was it the King's personal efforts that led to the showdown with the favorites, or was it in fact the other two who intervened and took the King out of his naivety, out of his blindness and even complicity? All of these alternatives could be elastically contained in the theological coup.

Thus, the theological coup is a very general and flexible scheme that allows for many different clarifications, which was probably a strength in the spring of 1772.

⁵⁰¹ Kornerup 1951, 383.

But even though the structure of the scheme was theological, the campaign was political, which is clear from observing the chain of command. The order was political, the execution theological. This was possible because the church's autonomy was quite limited. From their foundation in the sixteenth century, the Lutheran churches were organized as state churches with the clergy as salaried government officials and the ruling prince as supreme bishop. In this structure, the church would receive orders from the state and had to act accordingly.⁵⁰² If the church had had any genuine autonomy, even regarding the content of faith, the government could not have been expecting to be able to send an order for the preparation of a theological thanksgiving. In that case, one would imagine that the church would convey its own interpretation of the past events that did not necessarily coincide with those of the court and the government – ultimately, an autonomous church would be able to refrain from choosing sides in the dispute or even potentially supporting the other party based on a different theological analysis. Such a possibility was not at all on the table in 1772. It was a foregone conclusion that the church complied to political power, not only because one of the leading coup-plotters was a theologian and there was a large degree of understanding between the plotters and top clergy, but more elementarily because the church was a state institution. It had to obey absolutist directives, even when, as in this case, demands were made for action that dictated gratitude for divine intervention and thus implied beliefs such as the assertion of the existence of miracles. There were small signs of protest among the priests, such as bishop Harboe's late-appearing pamphlet which said, on the title page, that it was printed "on command". But even he, as leader of the Danish-Norwegian church, had to comply.

The sermon campaign was effective not only in elevating the fallen Counts to evil on a cosmological scale, but also in deifying the new government and not least: intimidating and disciplining the new free public that had proved seduced and too wild under the rule of the wicked Counts. It was, in a sense, the first political spin campaign in Danish history in an open public.

The Great Clean-Up Party

Parallel to the massive clerical campaign explaining the morning events of 17 January, quite a different surge of pamphlets assumed the task of trying to fathom the strange events of the evening. The popular celebration of Struensee's downfall in the streets of Copenhagen turned into a riot during which more than 70 "disreputable houses" – suspected brothels – around the city were attacked by the crowd. A significant feature of the numerous broadsides, penny prints, and pamphlets which were published shortly after the incidence, was the number of detailed narratives

⁵⁰² The compulsory element is discussed in Bregnsbo 1997, 239 and Kornerup 1951, 332.

unfolding the determined vandalism and the destruction of the contents of the houses. It is clear from reading the texts that an effort to ascribe meaning and significance to these events – and often justify the atrocities – was a basic intent in most of them. It was a common assumption that the prostitution business had benefited from the reforms of Struensee which legalized adultery and forbade police raids in private houses. This was considered a helping hand to the brothels by protecting them against thorough police investigation. Prostitution was illegal and since the beginning of the century, successive chief constables had waged one war after another against brothel-keepers and “loose women”. However, in April 1771 the Struensee-appointed Lord Mayor von Holstein – as mentioned earlier – had declared that “anyone has the right to enjoy absolute liberty in one’s own house without being prevented – neither day nor night – by the police from doing private business”.⁵⁰³ To specify this order, the Lord Mayor indicated in more detail that the Chief Constable was not to worry about any business taking place in private houses, nor was he – and this was more controversial – to be concerned if “a woman lived independently or not”.⁵⁰⁴ This was a clear break with common attitudes towards Lutheran household regulations, and moreover it ran contrary to the prevailing idea that a woman living on her own was to be regarded a vagrant (*Løsgjænger*) or even a prostitute, if she was not tied to either her father, her husband, or another householder.⁵⁰⁵ One could easily argue that this initiative was aimed at protecting independent and self-supporting women against social stigmatization and unwarranted interference from public authorities, but after the fall of Struensee it was framed in many pamphlets as a serious blow against morality.

A special trait of these pamphlets is their very close frame of reference and local anchoring, and that these texts, although traditionally categorised as literary texts or fictional narratives, were closely related to real life experiences in urban space. There is a strong sense of implicit spatial perceptiveness present in the way the anonymous authors communicated with the urban readership. A locally embedded micro-geographical knowledge was pivotal to the readers’ perceptions and understandings; many of the texts would have made little sense to a reader ignorant of the very specific topographical details presented. In that sense, the readership was primarily defined by its knowledge of certain localities rather than being defined by traditional categories such as social class, taste, or level of education. The general scholarly agreement that urban space is relational and socially produced can be augmented by observations on how textual representations of space are embedded in complex entanglements between print culture and urban social practice.

503 Copenhagen City Archive: Magistratens almindelige øvrighedsforretninger, Struensees kabinet-sordrer m. v. 1770–1772, Bill of 3 April 1771, signed by Lord Mayor U. A. Holstein.

504 Copenhagen City Archive: Magistratens almindelige øvrighedsforretninger, Struensees kabinet-sordrer m. v. 1770–1772, memorandum written by Holstein in German (undated).

505 On vagrancy and households, see Koefoed 2017; Jacobsen 2008; Henningsen and Langen 2010, 61–66.

Fear and Violence

Sound and destruction run through many of the publications; “noise and roar” fill the ears, while windows are broken and violent fists are knocking in doors.⁵⁰⁶ Objects are smashed, wallpaper and panels are torn down, stoves are dismantled, and floors are broken up; the reader is confronted with a sensory bombardment, a chaos of screams and destruction. One pamphlet describes the looting and not least the subsequent sale of pilfered goods, even a reference to the prices of stolen items is meticulously made.⁵⁰⁷ Sales and handling of stolen objects take place without intervention, no one dares to interfere. Anxiety is presented as the most common emotion, most strongly among the prostitutes who fear for themselves with pounding hearts: “Surely, the hearts of the night nymphs clapped away”. In one pamphlet it is suggested that the mob was sent out by unidentifiable ringleaders to punish the nymphs for their “audacity and boldness”, now they are on the run. Residents and guests in the houses experience the attacks “with the greatest fear”.⁵⁰⁸

In many publications, the participants in the incidence are simply referred to as “Pøblen”, the mob – using this broad term at random and as occasion required – or with an apologetic understatement like “encouraged common people”.⁵⁰⁹ The city’s sailors, however, are often mentioned as the primary instigating factor in the disturbances often expressed in titles such as *The happy Entry of the bold Power of the Royal Dockyard into the beautiful Houses on the extraordinary Day of St. Anthony – the “bold Power of the Royal Dockyard”* referring to the ravaging sailors.⁵¹⁰ In *Poetic Description of the Destruction of the By-Streets and the Great Damage that happened in the same Place on the Night of the 18th of January, 1772*, the narrator steps aside on the streets in order not to come across sailors who are making a terrible noise as

506 [I. C. Grave], *Frøken-Cantorenes udødelige Navnes ynkelige Ruin, Forfatted i Riim under den Melodie: De Røvere skulle at stiele gaae, saa langt i fremmed Lande. See Peer 7. Kiempe Vise*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772; [anonymous], *En saare mærkværdig Spaadom om Grev Struensees formastelige Forbrydelse, og den derpaa fulgte almindelige Forstyrrelse, som skede Natten imellem d. 17de og 18de Januarii 1772. nu funden i en af Sparbondes Dragkisteskuffer og siden til Trykken befordret af en Nat-Pikkeneer*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772.

507 [anonymous], *Nyeste Beskrivelse over Hun-Cantorenes Udfeyelses-Fest paa den Extraordinaire Flyttetid i deres Gader som skede ved Creti og Pleti, om Natten til den 18de Jan. 1772. [...] Kan af Liebhavere synges som Jephtas Viise*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (17 February 1772).

508 [anonymous], *En saare mærkværdig Spaadom om Grev Struensees formastelige Forbrydelse, og den derpaa fulgte almindelige Forstyrrelse, som skede Natten imellem d. 17de og 18de Januarii 1772. nu funden i en af Sparbondes Dragkisteskuffer og siden til Trykken befordret af en Nat-Pikkeneer*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (Jan. 27 1772)

509 [anonymous], *Sandfærdig Beskrivelse over De betydelige Forandringer og mærkværdige Tildragelser i Kiøbenhavn Fredagen den 17 Jan. 1772*, Odense: Kongl. Privil. Adresse-Contoires Bogtrykkeri, 1772.

510 [Martin Brun], *Den brave Holmens Magtes glade Indtog i de smukke Huse paa den mærkværdige St. Antonii Dag 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (24 January 1772).

they multiply in number: “Up and down the streets/ screaming and shouting/ they gathered in clusters and rows”.⁵¹¹ The sailors snoop about and find who they are looking for and no one is safe. Whenever something is smashed or stolen, shouts of hurrah fill the streets. Another pamphlet mentions how houses became “victims of the burning joy and wrath of the sailors”.⁵¹²

Even after the Great Clean-Up Party had ended, some sailors apparently remained in a state of rage. According to a report in *Aften-Posten* (1772, no. 3), units of dragoons were patrolling the streets to maintain order several days after the riot and on one incidence a sailor would not give way for a dragoon. Finally, the dragoon rode down the sailor, but even when the sailor lay under the horse and in mortal danger, he was so mad that he grabbed the hind legs of the horse and yelled several curses at the dragoon “displaying the highest degree of rage”. Another source mentions how the participants in the riot developed an intense revengefulness against the dragoons (“those mounted grooms”) who eventually cleared the streets at the end of the riots. The reason for this anger was said to be annoyance over losing further opportunities to loot.⁵¹³ The anger was probably also related to traditional conflicts between different urban communities of honor. During the eighteenth century, army and naval units, various corps and enforcement authorities in Copenhagen were in a tense and permanent state of conflict with each other, sometimes erupting in violent confrontations.⁵¹⁴

Alcohol is mentioned as having played a major role in the riot because drunkenness makes people “miserable”, as one pamphlet put it.⁵¹⁵ During the riot the mob became “frantic”, assaulting people in the streets and demanding money for more liquor from passers-by. At the pubs, the rioters demanded grain schnapps which was controversial due to the ban on this type of alcohol during winter periods. The rioters drank themselves silly after which they were ignited with bitterness and left the pubs to go mad. Many innocent houses were attacked, no one dared to resist, and, as mentioned, it is often implied that the mob was “commanded”, i. e. remotely

511 [anonymous], *Poetisk Beskrivelse af smaae Gadernes Ødelæggelse samt den store Skade som sammesteds skeede Natten til den 18de Januarii 1772*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (4 February 1772).

512 [Martin Brun], *En kort, men oprigtig Beretning om den saa kaldede smukke Cecilies hastige Fløt-tetid, merkverdige Efterladenskab, forskrækkelige Qvalmer, og betydelige Tab. samt Nymphens meget rørende Svane-Sang og Afskeds-Aria [...]*, Copenhagen: Thiele, 1772 (28 January 1772).

513 [anonymous], *Den paa sin egen Regning flyttende Trops bedrøvelige Udtog af de smukke Huse Natten imellem den 17 og 18 Januarii*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (13 March 1772).

514 For conflicts and urban communities of honor in eighteenth-century Copenhagen, see Henningsen & Langen 2010, 194–237.

515 [Martin Brun], *De betydelige Forandringer ved det Kongelige Hof, som af Kiøbenhavnns Indvaanere med Glæde hørtes og saaes, Fredagen den 17 Januarii 1772. Tilligemed en kort Beskrivelse om Pøbelens Opførsel samme Nat. Kan og synges som: Sørge-Takter, sorte Noder etc.*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (27 January 1772). In a number of publications Martin Brun waged criticism towards the culture of alcohol, which he believed was causing a number of social problems in the city.

controlled by unknown instigators. At this point, the writer introduces a well-known figure in eighteenth century urban folklore, namely the character of hidden ringleader in urban disturbances. A rumor had it that one of the coup-plotters, Beringskiold, wearing a laced hat had initiated the first action, the attack on Gabel's house in Østergade, by smashing the streetlamp outside the building with his rapier, as he exclaimed: "This house, the English Brothel, is now forsaken".⁵¹⁶



Map 5: "Cleansed" brothels in the Øster Kvarter neighborhood. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

The Great Clean-Up Party began on 17 January 1772 in the evening, in a building not at all housing a brothel, Gabel's Mansion in Østergade. From there, ravaging spread to the "Small Alleys", that is, the nearby streets around the St. Nikolaj Church where much Copenhagen prostitution was centered. Cadastres marked by red indicates a "cleansed" brothel in the building, not that the whole of the building served as a brothel. Information is presented on Gedde's neighborhood map of Øster Kvarter from 1758. Later during the night, the Great Clean-Up Party spread wider in the city to a number of further brothels, real or alleged.

⁵¹⁶ Høst 1824, vol. 2., 524. C.D: Biehl later implied that the reason for Beringskiold's banishment a week after the coup was a consequence of his involvement in the riot, Biehl 1865–1866, 440.

The stolen goods were sold openly in the streets, and when the King's dragoons tried to stop the enterprise and urged people to go home, they were ignored by the mob: "The urge to steal burned so fiercely, that almost no one heard them". Nothing could be done and no one could feel safe: "In short, the mob did not calm down, / despite orders and soldiers. / Every man in his house feared, / for violence and the power of robbers".⁵¹⁷ Another pamphlet also commented on the idea that the participants in the riot were ruled by people who did not themselves belong to the mob.⁵¹⁸ Once Mrs. Venus and her worshippers had been protected by distinguished people – "laced hats" – but now such distinguished people are wild as cats who do damage and control the course of the battle at a proper distance: "They command those, / who assaults us / with vigour and dash". On top of that came the brewers who used to bring beer to the residents of the brothels and who now participated in the ravaging. The same was true of butchers "and other red caps, who do us such harm" – a red, knitted cap was the traditional headgear of craftsmen and labourers. Here, a picture is sketched of an alliance between both distinguished and common people against pimps and prostitutes. Other writings made a distinction between sailors and mob in their descriptions. Not that there was much difference in their behaviour, but the social distinction was apparently an issue that had to be made explicit. This separation was also present in the view of the chief constable, as he wanted to investigate the violent events not least with a view to preventing further excesses. He wrote to the Admiralty, requesting that the sailors be kept on a short leash. He could present evidence that the sailors had in fact interfered with the mob in looting and destruction. The aim of the chief constable was preventive, as it "will deprive the mob of the greater part of its strength, if it was possible to separate the sailors from the mob and make it keep calm".⁵¹⁹ Apparently, the chief constable thought that the sailors endowed the mob with muscle, power, and determination.

Prostitutes under Attack

The references in the writings to prostitutes (whores, scrubbers, flounders, nymphs, etc) are followed in several contexts by very misogynist narratives, malicious glee over the now homeless prostitutes and wishing for their future confinement in pris-

517 [Martin Brun], *De betydelige Forandringer ved det Kongelige Hof, som af Kiøbenhavns Indvaanere med Glæde hørtes og saaes, Fredagen den 17 Januarii 1772. Tilligemed en kort Beskrivelse om Pøbelens Opførsel samme Nat. Kan og synges som: Sørge-Takter, sorte Noder etc.*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772, P. 8 (27 January 1772).

518 [anonymous], *Den Danske Frue Veneris Klage-Sang. I Anledning af den Forstyrrelse, som skeede Natten imellem den 17de og 18de Jan. 1772. paa Hendes Tempel paa Østergade, samt og de andre Smaa-Capeller*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (7 February 1772).

519 Danish National Archives, Copenhagen Police, letters of the chief constable 1766–1774, 18 January 1772.

ons and houses of correction. Some writings, however, are more comic than actually malicious in their description of the abused women as in *No. 2 Continuation of the Ruin of the Misses' Offices*:

The Pork Pussy grabbed her hip pads
 And even her fake tits
 That is, she cried, a devil's night
 I do not understand this at all.
 Madam Big Gob opened her wide gob
 I will never forget
 The Black Ass yawned
 and the Countess wanted to go home.⁵²⁰

The Pork Pussy, Madam Big Gob, The Black Ass, and the Countess were well-known prostitutes whose names appear in several writings. Despite their comical elements, it must be remembered that such descriptions are based on violent assaults and criminal looting.

From comic rhymes, the writings move in a more somber direction, where nudity in particular is a recurring feature in the description of the humiliated women. In one pamphlet, prostitutes are deprived of everything right down to their attire and are forced to flee naked into the freezing city.⁵²¹ Fine clothing cannot protect them; they are torn off the women and sold, leaving nothing but the naked bodies. In *A few Words from the continuously homeless Night Nymphs to Count Struensee*, the women turn to Struensee asking what to do after his fall.⁵²² They blame him for their pitiful condition, linking their misfortune to his rise to power. When he became a count and “put aside every boundary”, it began to go wrong. Once again nudity is a theme: “Shall we now walk naked, /shall we wear nothing, /shall we bear shame for all, /with what shall we feed ourselves?”. A particularly gleeful and malicious pamphlet describes how women – “these delicious and slender mandrakes and decoys” – are dragged out of the houses and undressed, after which they are forced under the street water pumps getting “their rumpled hair and bare breasts” drenched.⁵²³ The icy water and the winter-frozen streets are contrasted to the warm living rooms and the hot punch that the women were accustomed to. Everyone – great and small – are

520 [I. C. Grave], *No. 2. Fortsættelse af Frøken-Contoreernes Ruin. Under samme Melodie som Det forrige*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772.

521 [anonymous], *Poetisk Beskrivelse om smaae Gadernes Ødelæggelse samt den store Skade som sammesteds skeede Natten til den 18de Januarii 1772. Sangviis forestillet under sin velindrettede Melodie*, Copenhagen: Moren Hallager, 1772 (4 February 1772).

522 [J. L. Bynch], *Et Par Ord fra de endnu huusvilde Nat-Nymphes til Grev Struensee, forfattet i deres sidst holdte Conseil i Dukke-Skabet, og til trykken befordret af En drukken Engelskmand*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (10 February 1772).

523 [anonymous], *Sandfærdig Beskrivelse over De betydelige Forandringer og mærkværdige Tildragelser i Kiøbenhavn Fredagen den 17 Jan. 1772*, Odense: Kongl. Privil. Adresse-Contoires Bogtrykkeri, 1772.

done for. The writer dampens his narrative by concluding that “this disturbance took place without the shedding of innocent citizen-blood” and that the incidences really took place “without much alarm”. Clearly, the abused women are not counted among the innocent citizens, just as vandalism and looting do not qualify as “alarm”. Such trivialization and banalization of the abuses function, in a sense, as their legitimation.

The degrading representations of naked women are taken a step further in Brun’s *The Loss and well-deserved Destiny of the Copenhagen Procureesses and Prostitutes*, when describing how prostitutes are even raped by the ravaging mob:

The poor flounders weep
 a whore stands naked
 the rogues are delighted
 to get for free
 what used to be so expensive
 that money couldn’t buy
 now the rupture occasioned
 that they could get it for free.⁵²⁴

There is no compassion to be found in this pamphlet. The same is true for Brun’s *A Brief but sincere Account of Cecilie’s hasty Relocation*, which tells the story of the harlot Cecilie.⁵²⁵ She knows the Great Clean-Up Party from her own experience, because she too was forced under the street pump by sailors. Her hairstyle has been messed beyond recognition by sailor hands. Her head has turned square from flogging, pushing, pressure, and squeezing. Her cheeks have turned rosy from slaps in the face, her neck and chest are stained like a tiger (!) from street dirt and stones that have been thrown at her. Her hands are no longer kissed, and her feet have stopped dancing. In a concluding poem, Cecilie herself explains: “Ah, consider! Now I shall dance / my way into prison with my tuft / no more wiggling about / in the city with my body”. The body of Cecile is not just an object of customers’ (her “little doctors and favorites”) amusement and desire, but also of unrestrained violence of the sailors and not least the author’s contemptuous textual abuse that permeates the pamphlet. Brun’s cynical approach to the Clean-Up party in these pamphlets seems an acquired position; in an earlier pamphlet immediately after events, he took a different point of view, attacking rather the excesses of the mob:

524 [Martin Brun], *De kiøbenhavnse Rufferskers og Pioskeres Tab og velfortiente Skiebne*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (10 March 1772).

525 [Martin Brun], *En kort, men oprigtig Beretning smukke Cecilies hastige Fløttetid merkverdige Efterladenskab, forskrækkelige Qvalmer, og betydelige Tab. samt Nymphens meget rørende Svane-Sang og Afskeds-Aria [...]*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (28 January 1772).

The drunken and wild mob
 Ignited with embitterment
 Against certain houses here,
 attacked and ruined them
 One after the other they assaulted
 as if acting from a list
 some had to pay for old enmity
 but others were innocent victims

It seems as if Brun opportunistically changed his opinion after the popular mood.⁵²⁶

The crass type of representation is also found in the pamphlet, *The Swan Song of the now abandoned and hated Night-Nymphs*, which, without the slightest empathy and by using images of cut-off hair and nudity, implies the violence that the women have been subjected to: “We are totally deprived of freedom, / we cannot do business, / our hair has been shaved off, / now we have to walk naked”.⁵²⁷ The pamphleteer continues to describe how the bodies of the women – necks, breasts, hands, mouths, lips, loins – are no longer touched, kissed or squeezed; instead, the bodies are now filled with sorrow and anxiety only. Now, the beds and duvets are gone, so the women must lie naked on straw. In other words, their bodies are now degraded from the warm beds at the “punch hosts” to the straw bed of public humiliation. These unpleasant descriptions of the assaults on the women served as entertainment. The pamphlets on the Great Clean-Up Party were masculine domain and have clear pornographic elements in the descriptions of undressed bodies and rape. It was not explicit porn, as known from contemporary tales of French court life, it was a kind of revenge porn, where the reader could feast on representations of destruction and naked prostitutes.⁵²⁸

In a supplement to the pamphlet *A Song by one of the City’s Nymphs*, there was short autobiography written by the fictitious female narrator from Holstein.⁵²⁹ She was born to decent people, but her father died in a workplace accident when she was a child. The family was defrauded by a Jew, which led to money deficiency and because of that the girl was sent off to a chaplain uncle who trained her in everything a young woman needed to know. At the age of 13 she was confirmed – and more than that – by the uncle, which caused the aunt to send the girl away. On the boat trip to Copenhagen, she shared the berth with the skipper. Arriving in the big

526 [Martin Brun], *De betydelige Forandringer ved det Kongelige Hof, som af Kiøbenhavns Indvaanere med Glæde hørttes og saaes, Fredagen den 17 Januarii 1772. Tilligemed en kort Beskrivelse om Pøbelens Opførsel samme Nat.*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (27 January 1772).

527 [anonymous], *De nu forladte og forhadte Nat-Nymfers Svane-Sang*, Copenhagen: Morten Halager, 1772 (4 February 1772).

528 On pornographic narratives of eighteenth-century French court life, see Darnton 1995.

529 [anonymous], *En Vise af en af Stadens Nymfer, som beklager sin og hendes Søstres Nød over Greve Johan Friderich Struensens hastige og nedrige Fald [...] Tilligemed hendes Levnets-Beskrivelse til Dato*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.

city, with the help of the skipper, she found employment in a brothel where she often received counts and gentlemen. It was days of wine and roses, punch was flowing, but she wanted to work independently, left the brothel and pawned her clothes at a Jewish pawn broker at usury.

She met a certain doctor (guess who) whom she had known in Holstein. He was an honest man, as long as he was prosperous. “He helped me into the King’s Garden, where I diverted myself with the greatest pleasure that summer; I swear I earned so much that summer”; even more than the Jews were able to take from her in usury. There was plenty of money to be made in the garden.

She was on a short journey away from the city during the Great Clean-Up Party, but she returned the day after the riot, hurrying down to the alleys where her “sisters” lived and was shocked by the destruction she saw. She was about to faint, but luckily a sailor came by and poured a bucket of ice-cold water in her so that she could freshen up. She was considering placing an ad in the newspaper to track down this friendly man in order to appreciate his help.

Now, she has become pregnant and travels back to Holstein. She hopes that some of the gentlemen she met last summer will send her clothes and money for the child. “I will therefore bid farewell”, she concludes, “with the utmost reverence all who have known me in the King’s Garden last summer, Counts as well as *petit-maîtres*”. All the usual elements are present in this narrative; excessive consumption and punch in the brothels, the *petit-maîtres* of King’s Garden, and the sailors’ actions during the Clean-Up Party. In this example, however, Jews are added to the gallery on several occasions.

Though the girl of the narrative is fictional, she moves around in an actual urban micro-geography. In many writings, women are very concretely connected to specific locations in the city. Several publications list places and people; street by street, house by house, person by person are exhibited to readers in a form that appeals both to those readers able to recognize houses and persons, and to those readers who simply want to be entertained by descriptions with sexual content. In *The remarkable Will of Struensee*, no less than 65 brothels are mentioned in a laconic line-up of streets, landlords, and staff in numerical order – all of them appointed as heirs to share in Struensee’s fortune after his death.⁵³⁰ This can be regarded as a source of local Copenhagen micro-geography of the time. Among the heirs are (listed by street, number, and name of landlord and/or prostitute):

“Lille Kongensgade. 3. Holm, The Painter Office or the Painted Pussy”.

“Laxegaden. 50. The Carpenter Widow, Madame Poor Pussy”.

“Dybensgade. 47. The Butcher, Madame Crooked Gut”.

“Ulkegaden. 57. Miss Eagle, the yellow pussy”.

“Nellikegangen. 62. Lise, the Swedish Cucumber”.

530 [anonymous], *Grev Struenses mærkværdige Testamente, opsat af ham selv og confirmeeret af Lucifer*, Copenhagen: P. H. Höecke, 1772 (5 February 1772).

Twelve names are listed from Dybensgade alone, a small alley in the city center. Occasionally only place names such as “The Flower Office” or “The Pomade Office” or personal names such as “Madame Pickle Pot” or “The Kitten” are mentioned. Names, nicknames, and places stand as uncommented entities creating a varied picture of this underworld that many would seemingly recognize and others simply let themselves be entertained by. As can be seen, the author has not allowed himself to be limited by prevailing, unwritten rules of public language: Words like “pussy” and “cunt” – Danish “fisse” and “kusse” – appear regularly.⁵³¹

In *The pitiful Ruin of the immortal Names of the Misses-Offices*, places are presented in the form of a song containing short narratives of the destruction and the humiliation of the inhabitants in every single house.⁵³² Here, regular street names are not used, only place names and the residents’ *noms de guerre*. Lemon-Sophie is carried out on the street in a sheet, at the Flower Office the sailors have picked the flowers where maidenheads used to dance, at the Pomade Office punch bowl and glasses are knocked off the table, Trine the Elf screams in anger, while Madam Buck Naked takes a convicted liar named Brun under her arm and disappears. This pillorying continues in the second issue of *The Ruin of the Misses-Offices* (the title had slightly changed) in which the Crooked Gut, the Kitten, Madam Slime Pussy and many other well-known characters once again appear in the verses. The songs of the two pamphlets describe the material destruction and the anxiety of victims in bold terms with the names of those involved functioning as central linguistic focal points. The attackers are anonymous, the victims are named, while the acts appear as almost natural events following a logic of their own. The scenarios are constructed as cheerful humiliations in which the entertainment consists of a sexualized insult and abuse of women. It is an interesting fact that these pamphlets were probably authored by the Norwegian theologian I. C. Grave, displaying a surprisingly detailed knowledge of local prostitution lore.

In the pamphlet *The miserable Execution*, the street names are once again dominant and the specific places are listed in numerical order.⁵³³ The text is staged as a series of levied economical appropriations on a total of 56 houses and gives rise to satirical comments to general contemporary conditions by the description of se-

531 The most comprehensive list of attacked houses is not to be found in any published publication, but in the diary of author Søren Rosenlund (aka Junior Philopatris) listing nearly 80 houses, complete with cadastral numbers, which enables a topographical overview of the riot. Danish National Archives, Manuscript Collection, IV. General History of Denmark-Norway, N 15, unpaginated diary of Søren Rosenlund.

532 [I. C. Grave], *Frøken-Contorenes udødelige Navnes ynkelige Ruin, Forfattet i Riim under den Melodie: De Røvere skulle at stiele gaae, saa langt i fremmed Lande. See Peer 7. Kiempe Vise*, Copenhagen: A.F. Stein, 1772.

533 [J. Bynch], *Det ulykkelige Udlæg, som skeete uden Dom og Execution Natten imellem den 17 og 18 Januarii paa de 56 Ponse-Contoirer og Ølkipperer, samt Betienternes Ubarmhiertighed imod det smukke Kiøn, som gjorde Forretningen*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 7 February 1772.

lected objects in the houses. However, it is predominantly the sexual specifications that characterize the levied executions:

No. 24. The Pomade Office in Ulkegade. A magnificent blossom apron through which one can see the tits and thus giving appetite, and pricked coat and skirt garnished with imprinted lemon peels.

No. 31. Madame Franzen. A clean bed without whore stains, Danish liquor in bottle for sailors, and a French in another one with flounders for *petit-mâitres*.

No. 32. Grethe Nine-Fingers. Quite a few lemons bought for punch, plenty 15 schillings which were to be the husband's daily allowance, so that he would stay away from home not standing in the way of those who wanted to put the tenth finger into her.

At that time, lemon peels were used as diaphragm contraception and the sexual references are quite explicit and increasing throughout the text in the form of easy-to-understand images of holes with foaming soap, hard thrusting billiard cues, spurs that are good for riding lazy bitches, and so on.

The implicit expression of locality was activated in the texts' representations of houses and the fate of the inhabitants during the riots; a movement from latent to explicit. At the same time, the writings served as guidebooks to the escalated course of destruction. In principle, a reader could get hold of such a pamphlet and walk through the streets on a vandalism sightseeing to look at the ruined houses and read a short story about each place.⁵³⁴ In Martin Brun's *A nice Conversation*, the narrator is exactly a vandal tourist of this type, perhaps the pamphlet even has some auto-fictional traits.⁵³⁵ Reading the pamphlets reveals that it is hardly possible to attribute to the "the mob" one specific motive for the riot, e. g., moral outrage, economic indignation, poverty, drunkenness, criticism of the Struensee regime, support for the coup-plotters, etc. Different mobsters may have had different motives. But one thing was clear: the misogynistic and transgressive narratives clearly indicate that Press Freedom was entering a new phase of aggressive rhetoric mixed with radicalized moralism.

Gabel – A Scapegoat and his House

In the following, we shall investigate how one particular man and his house (and the household effects belonging to it) were exposed to public contempt in the representations of the Great Clean-Up Party.⁵³⁶ This literary expulsion – in the wake of the

⁵³⁴ The law scholar J. H. Schou reported much later from such a city walk tracing the ravaged buildings; see Giessing 1849, 64.

⁵³⁵ [Martin Brun], *En artig Samtale imellem en gammel Jydsk Rofferske og en gammel Siællandsk Bondemand, som havde en Kurv paa Nakken og raabte med Æg*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.

⁵³⁶ Some parts of the following paragraphs have previously been published in Langen 2020, 72–84.

real one – was done with clear reference to prevailing assumptions and rumours present in the urban public sphere. The pamphlets confirmed certain ideas of morality and justice, establishing the house of inn-keeper Johan Jacob Gabel in the main street of Østergade as a contested place in the urban space of Copenhagen.⁵³⁷

It was no coincidence that The Great Clean-Up Party took its beginning at the house of Gabel in Østergade. As mentioned in Chapter 9, Johan Jacob Gabel had, the previous summer, obtained permission to serve alcohol and organise entertainments as well as hosting a gambling tent in the King's Garden – the only major public garden in Copenhagen. In the eyes of some Copenhageners, this arrangement had led to a vulgarization of the public life in the garden. Moralistic pamphleteers were criticizing what they interpreted as a challenge to the traditional social norms of conduct in the garden and the alleged sexual debauchery was seen as undermining this ideal space of civil sociability. This transformation was construed by the pamphleteers as emblematic of the Struensee regime – not least in light of the rumours of Struensee's love affair with the Queen. The lively entertainment in the lit-up tents (as well as the more hidden activities behind the bushes in the garden) was regarded as a reflection of immorality at court. Thus, Gabel was a well-known figure in the urban lore during the latter part of the Struensee Reign.

Gabel was born in 1730 in Alsace and served in the French army before moving to Denmark where he settled as a licensed victualler in Copenhagen. He worked as a publican in different public houses in the following years, and as food supplier to the Danish army, until he became a publican in the King's Garden during the summer of 1771.⁵³⁸ Besides his engagement in the garden, he acquired permission to establish a combined coffee house and hotel. For that purpose, he bought a central city mansion from count Frederik Ludvig Schulin. It was Struensee who had commissioned Gabel to buy the house in Østergade and convert it into a hotel of international standard for persons of rank and travellers of distinction. Struensee even granted Gabel a loan from the royal treasury to help him finance the project.⁵³⁹

This arrangement was subject to popular interpretation. According to the rumors in the city, Struensee wanted a high-class brothel for himself and his favorites – meaning that Gabel was nothing more than Struensee's front man and procurer. Furthermore, Gabel's daughter was working as a chamber maid for Queen Caroline Matilda and, according to hearsay, Struensee had an eye on the daughter which was the real reason why Gabel was favored.⁵⁴⁰ Gabel undoubtedly enjoyed a favor with Struensee, which is evident from the fact that Gabel had been allowed to settle at the royal palace of Christiansborg.

⁵³⁷ On contested spaces/places, see Low and Lawrence-Zúniga 2003, 15.

⁵³⁸ On Gabel, see Bobé (ed.) 1925 and Bobé 1900, 158.

⁵³⁹ Hansen 1916–23, I, 254 and II, 258 and 269.

⁵⁴⁰ On these rumours, see Høst 1824, II, 523.

As we shall see, Gabel was represented in the post-coup Press Freedom Writings as a symbolic deputy of Struensee, and the physical attack on Gabel's house, as well as the ensuing textual attack on his person, seems also to serve as a vicarious post festum attack on Struensee himself, a scapegoat ersatz of the real thing. Gabel appears in several of the pamphlets published right after the fall of Struensee and he is referred to as “the master of the brothel keepers' guild”, as “Struensee's favorite” and as “the brother-in-law of Struensee, his great patron”.⁵⁴¹ Gabel – wittily called Mr. Babel – was also mentioned as the first and most prominent person in a long line of well-known characters in the prostitution business in Copenhagen.⁵⁴²

The prominence which Gabel allegedly enjoyed with Struensee was the topic of a pamphlet drawn up as a fictitious letter to Struensee from the brothel keepers of Copenhagen dating before the minister's downfall. The brothel hosts were outraged and felt that their privileges were violated because they had found out that a house in Østergade was to be established as “the residence of all sensual pleasures”. They had heard that Struensee would cover all expenses setting it up and that the owner of the house would be granted a “monopoly or sole right to do, what so many families up to now have earned their living from – and recently have lived abundantly from”.⁵⁴³ This was unfair competition in a contested field, but the criticism was not limited to economic considerations.

The envisioned moral decay and depraved behaviour of Gabel was represented in another pamphlet of the period in the form of a fictitious tale of a young orphan girl who travels to Copenhagen to move in with an elderly married couple who are old friends of her deceased father.⁵⁴⁴ A gentleman living in the neighbourhood starts greeting the young girl and walks past her window on a regular basis. He is a courteous man, splendidly dressed, and he presents himself to her pretending to be one of her unknown relatives. He persuades the old couple to let the young girl move in with him in his house. He can offer her better living conditions than she has with the two oldsters. But shortly before she is set to move in, the gentleman's house is smashed on 17 January. The identity of the gentleman is disclosed to the reader: he is none other than Gabel. People in the neighbourhood tell the young girl that she

541 [anonymous], *Grev Struenses mærkværdige Testamente, opsat af ham selv og confirmereet af Lucifer*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (5 February 1772); [I. C. Grave], *Nyeste Beskrivelse over Hun-Cantoremes Udfeyelses-Fest paa den ordinaire Flyttetid i deres Gader som skede ved Creti og Pleti, om Natten til den 18de Jan. 1772. Kan af Liebhave synges som Jephthas Viise*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (17 February 1772); and [I. C. Grave], *Frøken-Cantoremes udødelige Navnes ynkelige Ruin, Forfatted i Riim under den Melodie: De Røvere skulle at stiele gaae, saa langt i fremmed Lande. See Peer 7. Kiempe Vise*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772.

542 Henrik Stevnsborg and John Christensen 1982; Henningsen and Langen 2010.

543 [anonymous], *En Supplique fra de Kiøbenhavnske Jomfrue-Huuse, som skulde have været overleveret til Greve J. F. Struensee*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (24 February 1772).

544 [anonymous], *Den lille C***s Glæde over at hun slap frie fra at blive forført fra *B*s Voldsomheder samt hendes Taksigelse til Forsynet som ved en ny Tildragelse hialp hende til at bevare sin Kyskhed og Ære*, Copenhagen: L. A. Svare, 1772 (13 March 1772).

can now feel safe, and she thanks the Lord for her salvation from this evil man. The story clearly addresses the imagination of the – in this case probably mainly male – reader; what would have happened if the young girl had moved in with Gabel?

The dark fictitious descriptions of Gabel as in this pamphlet or the satirical representation of him in other Press Freedom Writings reflected real-life resentment, although most of his antagonists would never have met him in person. Nevertheless, this anger against him was so comprehensive that Gabel, shortly after the riots, was instructed by the King's Cabinet to leave the city to protect himself from the "rage of the mob".⁵⁴⁵ For a short period Gabel lived outside Copenhagen but soon he left and settled in Glückstadt where he became employed as a customs administrator. His daughter was ordered to stay in Copenhagen, probably so that she could testify during the case against Struensee.

In contemporary sources, the house of Gabel is mentioned without any explanation or comment on its ownership, indicating that the building and the owner were well-known in the city. The historian P. F. Suhm wrote in his private journal that the sailors of the Royal Navy had sacked Gabel's house in Østergade "of which it was said that it was to be organized as a major whorehouse". Even Holck's Copenhagen Directory (1773) mentioned that Gabel was under heavy suspicion for wanting to turn his house in Østergade "into a temple in Venus' honor".⁵⁴⁶ The above-mentioned controversial Press Freedom author, Søren Rosenlund, wrote extensively about Gabel and his house in a quite eccentric manuscript that was never published. He claimed that Struensee and Queen Caroline Matilda were supplying Gabel with English prostitutes. This idea – which seems to have been quite widespread among Copenhageners – was a clear reference to the fact that the Queen was a sister of King George III.⁵⁴⁷

Press Freedom Writings made of the house in Østergade a contested space and represented it as a place of sin in a similar fashion as the King's Garden where Gabel (as we heard) had obtained a license to serve alcohol and provide opportunities for gambling – which was regarded by moralist pamphleteers as conducive to disorder and immoral conduct. One pamphlet written as an elegy performed by "the Danish Mrs. Venus" mentioned "the temple of Østergade" and in yet another pamphlet the connection between the house in Østergade and the King's Garden was the topic of a lengthy piece of poetry.⁵⁴⁸ The reference to the King's Garden reappeared in another

545 Danish National Archive: Kabinetssekretariatet, Schumachers koncepter til kgl. kabinetsordrer 1772–1773, 24 January 1772.

546 Suhm 1918, 72. For further contemporary mentionings of Gabel see Bokkenheuser 1901–1902, 6; and Biehl 1865–1866, 441, note 1.

547 Danish National Archive: Manuscript Collection: IV. Danmark-Norges almindelige historie, N 15, upaged diary and Royal Library: *Danmarks Saga udi Kong Christian den Syvendes Tiid fra hans Födssel Ao 1749 til 1772*, NKS 1120k, unpagged, entry under 17 January 1772.

548 [anonymous], *Den Danske Frue Veneris Klage-Sang. I Anledning af den Forstyrrelse som skeede Natten imellem den 17de og 18de Jan. 1772 paa Hendes tempel paa Østergade, samt og de andre*

poem in which Gabel was called forth as the very manager of morally corrupt social life in Copenhagen.⁵⁴⁹

Gabel's house is also the pretext for a fantasy brothel represented in a story in which Struensee – following orders from his mentor the Devil – is writing his will.⁵⁵⁰ A part of Struensee's remaining fortune is to be used to establish “a great house in one of the most beautiful streets in the city [i. e., Østergade]” in which 30 of the most beautiful and fierce virgins between the age of 14 and 18 are to be installed. The house will have its own private wine cellar and will be named “The Home of Pleasure”. The rooms in the house are to be of different sizes and decoration depending on the age, beauty, and station of the inhabitants. The most beautiful are to live in the largest lower rooms, and when their beauty fades, they must move further up the building into smaller chambers. There will also be differences between the food and care enjoyed by the residents, just as they will dress and decorate differently. Each room must be provided with a number and a portrait of the occupant above the door. The most beautiful will live in No. 1. The rooms will be equipped with good beds and linens. The residents are to be kept separate and will not be allowed to visit each other, in fact, the house is to function rather as a nunnery with a prioress as manager. If a resident is rebellious, she will immediately be thrown into the streets. The girls are allowed to stroll, however, in a garden to be laid out in connection with the house.

The description of this fictional brothel is a rather stale male sexual fantasy: “All men will be allowed to visit the girls whenever they want to, and the girls must not be unwilling to serve the men whatever they are asking them to do”. For these services the men are to give a “douceur” which will be paid to the nunnery's cash box. The fictional will continues, mentioning the considerable sums that are to be paid to Struensee's (and the Devil's) “loyal clients and male and female slaves” with Gabel as one of the main beneficiaries. After the sale of Struensee's belongings, the income is to be shipped out of the country; a detail which addresses common mercantilist fears about the reasons for declining national prosperity. The will is confirmed and countersigned by the Devil. The lines between the fantasy brothel and Gabel's house almost seem to vanish. The author was able to create a narrative of Struensee's will and the fantasy brothel because Gabel's house was already established as a contested place in the minds of the readers and was easily recognizable despite the fact that the account was fictitious.

Smaae-Capeller, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (7 February 1772); and [Martin Brun], *Den Forlorne Gabels Forgyldte Svane-Sang*, Copenhagen: P. H. Hoecke, 1772 (14 February 1772).

549 [anonymous], *En tilforladelig Efterretning over de største og fornemste Ponche-Mænds Eftermæle, samt deres Fortrydelse over det Antal af de endnu tilbageblevne og paa Sahlene siddende Nymphes*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (14 February 1772).

550 [anonymous], *Grev Struenses mærkværdige Testamente, opsat af ham selv og confirmeret af Lucifer*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (5 February 1772).

The fall of Gabel was celebrated as was the demolition of his house. The pamphleteers gloated over the news about “the house of Gabel being the victim of the burning joy and anger of the sailors” – thereby accentuating again the idea that the attacking crowd had consisted mainly of sailors. One author pointed out that no one would ever forget the night “when the nearly invincible Gabel’s Castle (or The Female Fortification in Østergade) was taken by storm”.⁵⁵¹ The wrecking of the house was praised as a patriotic act carried out by loyal subjects.⁵⁵² The vandals were referred to as fine fellows praised by the King and the city for their deeds:

Here was Gabel’s coffee house
and beautiful rooms of punch
trampled down to gravel and grit
by the hammers of the brave
Our King and the entire town
pays respect to the brave
honest subjects are pleased
and the whores are dismayed

During the Great Clean-Up Party, the house of Gabel was transformed from a luxuriously furnished establishment into a ruin (“trampled down to gravel and grit”). This was an image explicitly present in many pamphlets. One pamphlet told the story of a superstitious peasant who lost his eggs in Copenhagen. He was convinced that the eggs had been stolen by the devil (a frequently employed metaphor for Struensee). “If the devil [i. e., Struensee] has taken my eggs, he can have the basket as well”, said the peasant and threw his empty basket through one of the broken windows in Gabel’s vandalised and abandoned house.⁵⁵³ We heard about another pamphlet telling the story of a girl from Holstein, who earned a living as a prostitute in Copenhagen – among other places in the King’s Garden where she profited from Gabel’s transformation of the garden. After a short trip to her native land, she returns to Copenhagen right after The Great Clean-up Party and she is more than astounded by the sight of Gabel’s wrecked house.⁵⁵⁴ In another pamphlet the author asked what

551 Respectively [Martin Brun], *En kort, men oprigtig Beretning om den saa kaldede smukke Cecilies hastige Fløttetid, merkværdige Efterladenskab. Samt Nymphens meget rørende Svane-Sang*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (Jan. 28 1772); and [Martin Brun], *En Engelsk Supken til Struensee i Anledning af den, der har i Avisen komplimenteret Faderen til det uskyldige Foster, kaldet Den brave Holmens Magtes glade etc.*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (10 February 1772).

552 [Martin Brun], *De Kiøbenhavnske Rufferskers og Pioskernes Tab og velfortiente Skiebne formedelst uforsagte og niedkiere Undersaatter Forlystelser til Glædes-Tegn den 17. Januarii 1772*, Copenhagen: P. H. Hoecke, 1772 (10 March 1772).

553 [Martin Brun], *En artig Samtale imellem en gammel jydsk Rofferske og en gammel Siællandsk Bondemand, som havde en Kurv paa Nakken og raabte med Æg*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.

554 [anonymous], *En Vise af en af Stadens Nymfer, som beklager sin og hendes Søstres Nød over Greve Struenses hastige og nedrige fald ... Tilligemed hendes Levnets- Beskrivelse til Dato*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772

“the raging mob” had left behind after invading the house? The answer was “Nothing. No windows, gateways, doors, tables, chairs, cupboards, beds, clothes, stoves, fireplaces, ceilings, floors, stairs, panels, tapestries, nothing but the stones in the walls were left”.⁵⁵⁵ The house in Østergade was nothing now but an empty ruin.

It is well-documented from contemporary diaries, notes and legal documents that the material destruction in Gabel’s house was extensive. The probate court in Copenhagen drew up a detailed survey of the damages in every single room in the house.⁵⁵⁶ But before that happened, the pamphlets created fictitious inventories of the removed and ruined artefacts and furniture as indicators of the conditions and character of Gabel’s establishment. In one pamphlet the inventory is staged as a legal appropriation:

Appropriated at the office of Mr. Babel: Several silver candlesticks with half burned candles, a silver tea urn with half boiled water which was on the stove, 12 teacups decorated with portraits of all sorts of English whores [...] a glass chandelier in a thousand pieces [...] several magnificent painted portraits of his particular mademoiselles [...] several playing cards used last summer, which have ruined many a man’s welfare [...].⁵⁵⁷

Clearly, the objects were represented as symbols of Struensee’s immoral regime as well as the social and economic consequences felt by the population. For example, gambling had been permitted with – as it was imagined – dire social consequences for Copenhageners (“several playing cards used last summer, which have ruined many a man’s welfare”). Another pamphlet was staged as an inventory of the objects found on the street right after The Great Clean-Up Party which were now to be sold by auction. The objects were poetically represented in a combination of material description and textualized grievances; “a silver cup filled with women’s weeping”, “a large glass cabinet full of anxiety”, “a bureau filled with infidelity and self-interest”, “a large bundle of complaints”, and “12 baskets of regrets”.⁵⁵⁸

In such pamphlets a sense of action and authenticity was created by describing abandoned warm dinner meals, unopened oysters, and bowls of hot punch as an illustration of the hurry with which the residents and the customers had left the attacked houses. In woodcuts depicting scenes from The Great Clean-Up Party, pieces of broken punch bowls are lying on the floor to indicate in which spatial locale the

⁵⁵⁵ [anonymous], *Upartiske Tanker over den voldsomme Medfart, som Natten imellem den 17 og 18 Januarii indeværende Aar 1772, vederføres de mange saa kaldte Jomfru-Huse i Kiøbenhavn i Pennen forfattet af en gammel Magister Philos*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (3 March 1772).

⁵⁵⁶ Bokkenheuser 1901–1902, 8–11.

⁵⁵⁷ [J. L. Bynch], *Det ulykkelige Udlæg, som skeete uden Dom og Execution Natten imellem den 17 og 18 Januarii paa de 56 Ponse-Contoirer og Ølkipperer, samt Betienternes Ubarmhertighed imod det smukke Kiøn, som gjorde Forretningen*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (7 February 1772).

⁵⁵⁸ [anonymous], *En Satyrisk Fortegnelse paa en Deel Pretiosa, Guld, Sølv, Tin, Kobber, Messing og Jernfang, Trævahre, Linnet, som er funden paa Gaden Fredagen den 17 Januarii, og som ved offentlig Auction skal bortslges den 32. Jannuarii*, Copenhagen: P. H. Hoecke, 1772 (24 January 1772).

scene is taking place. The punch bowl was a key signifier: brothel-keepers were called “Punch Hosts” and brothels were referred to as “Punch Offices” in urban slang of the period.

The household effects were also mentioned in a pamphlet written as a conversation between two men who were agreeing that the furniture in Gabel’s house reflected the unlawful profit, gained by Gabel and other brothel keepers from the politics of the Struensee government in times of economic crises.⁵⁵⁹ In fact, unemployment increased considerably during the Struensee reign and the city was haunted by severe food-shortages in the winters of 1770 to 1771 and 1771 to 1772. It was believed that the only group among the population in Copenhagen who made money during this time of crisis was the prostitutes and the brothel keepers. The social critique was directed against the customers too. One of the men in the dialogue maintained that the reason why the brothels were luxuriously furnished was so that customers would feel at home – implying that the customers were men used to surrounding themselves with luxury.

Only a few critical voices towards The Great Clean-Up Party were heard among the Press Freedom Writings. In a few pamphlets, the sacking was described as morally reprehensible and humiliating. One author poked fun at the social characteristics of the clothes worn by the plunderers. It was described with irony how printers were planning to produce a series of wood cuts in honor of the mob picturing the looters. One cut would be made picturing a person wearing a leather coat and a leather cap carrying a leg of pork in one hand and a piece of a stolen stove in the other. Another would picture a person wearing a brown jacket and wooden shoes carrying a barrel of wine and a stolen silver punch ladle (once again a reference to the “Punch Offices”). A third one would be showing a person dressed as a peasant carrying a bundle of stolen household linen.⁵⁶⁰ Without exception the characters mentioned carry the distinctive marks of the common people.

In another description of the sacking, the perpetrators are socially and morally characterized by their names. Niels the Fast-Mover, Ole the Butcher, Eric the Insatiable, Jochum the Rascal, Turpentine Morten and Martha the Eel are taking part in the riot with the sole purpose of looting. No political implications of the incidences are relevant to this “swarming, raging and out of imaginary joy cheering squad”, as the anonymous author explains.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ [Martin Brun], *Den brave Holmens Magtes glade Indtog i de smukke huse paa den mærkværdige St. Antonii Dag 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (24 January 1772).

⁵⁶⁰ [Martin Brun], *Den Forlorne Gabels Forgyldte Svane-Sang*, Copenhagen: P. H. Hoecke, 1772 (14 February 1772).

⁵⁶¹ [anonymous], *Den paa sin egen Regning flyttende Trops bedrøvelige Udtog af de smukke Huse Natten imellem 17 og 18 Januarii*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (13 March 1772).



Fig. 40: The brothels went under nicknames such as “Misses’ Offices”, their owners as “Punch Hosts”, and the smashed punch bowl became a central symbol for the Great Clean-Up Party, in picture as in writing. This print takes the point of view of the “nymphs”, yet without any tangible compassion on their part: “Oh! Too bad! Us poor nymphs now! / Unfortunate punch bowl! / Why do they smash you so hard? / And cast a spell on us? / Now no pardon for our fine clothes / Now the mob crowd rages / Now all goes wildly wrong / Imprisoned is our friend!” – their friend is Struensee who, in the imagination of hearsay, held a special, close connection to the nymphs. *The Smashed Punch Bowl (Den knusede Ponce-Bolle)*, broadsheet print, 1772. © Royal Danish Library.



Fig. 41: In this satirical print, a nymph is busy changing her “nymph splendor” with mourning garments because of “poor imprisoned Struensee”. In this brothel, however, the punch bowl is not broken; it seems things are normalized after the vandalizing of the Great Clean-Up Party, and in the alcove in the background, business continues as usual. *Alamodic Mourning Dress (ALAMODISK SORGE-SÆT)*, copper broadsheet, Copenhagen 1772. © Royal Danish Library.

Despite a few critical voices, the wrecking and the plundering seem to have been regarded as acceptable to most pamphleteers. It was described how furniture was carried from Gabel's house without anyone interfering. Even the night watchmen closed their eyes and ears.⁵⁶² One author stated that it was alright for the plunderers to sell the stolen furniture because they were “unlawful goods” – meaning that the brothel keepers had purchased the goods with money unlawfully earned in a time of high prices and financial decline.⁵⁶³ Furthermore, the pamphlets made considerable effort to justify the trespassing and vandalism of the rioters by describing (and as-signing) the house as belonging to a liminal zone between public and private.

It appears from the bill of sale drawn up when Gabel bought the house from count Schulin that it cost the quite large sum of 9,500 rix-dollars including expensive furniture and mirrors also comprising “stoves, tapestry, fixtures” and a fountain in the courtyard. Thus, Gabel acquired an already furnished, luxuriously decorated and fully equipped house from Count Schulin, who actually lived in the house all up until November 1771. The bill of sale was signed on 11 December 1771 and recorded by the probate court as late as 23 December 1771. So, the house had only been in Gabel's actual possession for little more than a month when it was demolished and plundered during The Great Clean-Up Party. It had hardly been possible for Gabel to redecorate the house in this short time span, so most likely the furnishing and decoration was the same as when Count Schulin sold it.

Furthermore, the detailed survey of the damages drawn up by the probate court in Copenhagen in February 1773 reveals two important things: first, that the destruction was so extensive that it was impossible to save any of the original splendour, and second, that the furniture and decoration dated back from the time before Gabel took over the house. In Press Freedom Writings, the furniture and decorations were represented as a materialisation of the moral corruption and socially unfair consequences of the Struensee regime. In reality, it was the sold-off splendour of Count Schulin.

There seems to have been a strong entanglement of local everyday spatial experiences and popular imaginary influencing the fictional narratives in Press Freedom Writings. Rumors and local knowledge played a significant role in the making of the micro-geographical representations in the grey zone between fiction, slandering, and running commentary presented in Press Freedom Writings. The man, the place, and the things – Gabel, the house in Østergade and its contents – as represented in the pamphlets were products of reconceptualizations of the Struensee regime more than it were regular reflections of realities. The actual destruction and the spatial

562 [I. C. Grave], *Nyeste Beskrivelse over Hun-Cantorernes Udfeylses-Fest paa den ordinaire Flyttetid i deres Gader som skede ved Creti og Pleti, om Natten til den 18de Jan. 1772. Kan af Liebhaveere synges som Jephthas Viise*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772.

563 [Martin Brun], *Den brave Holmens Magtes glade Indtog i de smukke huse paa den mærkværdige St. Antonii Dag 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (24 January 1772).

transformation of the magnificent house into an unsaleable ruin became an effective topos in the distinctive literary universe of Press Freedom Writings. If one had not been present in the streets during the night of 17 January 1772, curious Copenhageners could go out to see the ruin by following the indication of location and they could read about the goods and the life which had filled the rooms. In a little over a month the house in Østergade became a contested place solely because of the owner's well-known connections to Struensee and his role as some sort of a public entertainer in the King's Garden, while the actual destruction of his house was interpreted and justified through references to rumors, imaginations, and the logic of Copenhagen urban culture. As if in a Gestalt shift, the building was transformed from a noble house to an imagined brothel and finally into a dark ruin in the Copenhagen streetscape. The noble house and the ruin were concrete physical places, while the brothel existed only in narratives of the Press Freedom Writings.

It had become an integral part of the culture of Press Freedom that authors wrote reflexively about their work and continuously reviewed other authors and their dealing with specific topics. This was also the case with the writings about the Great Clean-Up Party which were met with harsh criticism in *A Scolding of certain Writers*.⁵⁶⁴ The author gives writers a dressing-down because the representations of the riot and destructions were written with the sole purpose of pleasing the mob and making money for the writers. The published list of houses and names was beneath contempt and just revealed how evil persons these writers were. The writers had literally gorged in the destruction of the houses and considering the detailed knowledge the writers had of the events, it was obvious to wonder if not they themselves had taken part in the looting. The writings just wanted to “cut wounds in wounds” and was guilty of sowing discord among the readership. In *Fortegnelsen*, many of the writings suffered severe blows. Common to the criticisms of these writings was that they did not relate to the rationale behind the riot, but only considered the execution of the disturbances. But what was at stake in the evening and night between January 17 and 18, as well as in the writings' representations of the incidences?

Taken at face value, the writings immediately provide a widely distributed explanation of the reason for the break-out of the Great Clean-Up Party. It was a moral reaction to the immoral nature of the Struensee regime: a cleansing of the unclean, a showdown with the parvenus, a mockery of the fallen. But is that the full explanation? Danish historian Henrik Stevnsborg has examined deeper social and economic implications in the riots and compared the Great Clean-Up Party with other European brothel storms in the eighteenth century.⁵⁶⁵ A possible contributing motive for the unrest was the heavily rising prices and high unemployment rate that prevailed during the Struensee rule, not least as a consequence of economically liberalizing

⁵⁶⁴ [anonymous], *En Snuppet til visse Skribentere*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (18 February 1772).

⁵⁶⁵ Stevnsborg 1980b.

laws introduced by Struensee in an attempt to stimulate market forces. In addition, there was a food shortage due to failure of crops and frozen waters which had made the winter of 1771 an ordeal for poor Copenhageners. The price of one pound of rye bread had almost doubled in the autumn of 1771, while the market price of Danish rye exploded during winter. For an urban worker or journeyman with family to feed it was hard times when an even larger part of the salary was spent on food and fuel.

In this tense atmosphere, many apparently imagined that punch-innkeepers, brothel hosts and prostitutes relentlessly made money despite hard times. In this way, they were lumped with grain speculators, moneylenders, “customs officials and more Egyptian pester bailiffs, who evidently exploit the nation”, as one pamphleteer wrote.⁵⁶⁶ These were the kind of antisocial pariahs that the crowd settled the score with at the news of Struensee’s arrest. The fact that residence of the Minister of Finance and the house of public pawnbroking were among the potential targets for the rioters, support the explanation that the riot also stemmed from frustrations with the financial situation. The riots were serious, in fact, the city had never before or since experienced such extensive destruction during civil disturbances. But for Copenhageners, the events remained unprocessed, as a traumatic event that had to be repressed so that the ecstatic joy of Struensee’s fall and the religious thanksgiving for the coup could fill out the entire picture.

The Clean-Up Party differed from the popular unrest of the following decades by not turning into a conflict between city dwellers and authorities. Disturbances of the period typically crystallized in clashes between groups of, for example, craftsmen, students, or citizens on one side and military, police, or night watch on the other. Occasionally, the clashes even stemmed from frictions between different government corps, e.g., between guards and watchmen, and to this was added the ever-present crowd, which was often referred to simply as “the mob” when authorities and courts were trying to unravel the matter after some disturbance. But the Clean-Up Party was a Copenhagen civil war in which law enforcement was taken out of the game, and where the enemy did not consist of people with visible characteristics such as uniforms or spiked maces. Chief constable Bornemann was, of course, very keen on getting to the bottom of the details of the Clean-Up Party. A few days after the riot, he wrote to the Danish Chancellery and proposed the setting up of a commission to investigate the events. The Chancellery never answered the request, the Clean-Up Party was never investigated, and a few months later Bornemann submitted his resignation. Only the peculiar and opaque words of the Press Freedom Writings remained to draw a muddy picture of the events.

566 [anonymous], *Draaber imod Qvalm og Sorg for de skadelidende Brødre og Søstre, som den 17 og 18 Januarii bleve ruinerede. Distilleret af en gammel Søster, som med et oprigtig Hierte tager Deel i deres tilføiede Skade. H...K...*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (15 July 1772).

11 Struensee The Monster

The Spontaneous Campaign against the Fallen Cabinet Minister

Simultaneously with the ecclesiastically endorsed version of events presented in the sermon campaign, and the flow of writings on the Great Clean-Up Party, a virtual flood of broadside ballads, poems, penny prints, and pamphlets poured out, contributing to the making of a popular narrative of the reasons behind the implementation of the coup. In the following, we shall explore central elements in these writings indicating how commonplace historical references and ideas of political monstrosities played a significant role as interpreter of the acts of Struensee, producing a narrative which would consolidate the legitimacy of the new regime. By comparing Struensee to well-known historical political offenders, Struensee was given a prominent seat in a Parnassus of evil. Struensee was depicted as a political monster to whom regicide and usurpation were integrated parts of his political ambitions.

Besides the frequent descriptions of Struensee being a free-thinker and blasphemer, the main trend in the popular songs and pamphlets was the representation of the fallen Cabinet Minister as a would-be murderer or regicide. Oftentimes, this was communicated in forms of non-personalized references as was the case in one ballad describing how a scheme against the life of the King was laid out by “The monster standing in his Cabinet”.⁵⁶⁷ In another song, it was stated that the Devil was planning a blood bath in the Royal House.⁵⁶⁸ In some cases, this theme was expressed in the form of poetic celebrations of the fact that the King was still alive, implicitly understood that someone had been seeking his life.⁵⁶⁹

Another trait was numerous historical parallels or references to commonplace European political monsters or figures of evil. The French regicide François Ravailac, would-be assassin Robert-François Damien, Oliver Cromwell, all-time behemoths like Nero, Caligula, and Attila – or biblical characters like Haman from the book of Esther, thus, the Queen Dowager by contrast playing the role of Queen Esther. Actually, a verse in one song made a detailed comparison between these two queens.⁵⁷⁰ In one poem, the reader was introduced to the fictitious voice of Struensee

567 [anonymous], *Fryde- og Seyers-Sang paa vor allernaadigste Konges Christian den Syvendes Fødsels-Dag, den 29. Januarii 1772, som en Frugt af Guds Frelse den 17de Januarii i Aar. [...] Under Melodie: Enhver som bærer Navn af Dansk og Norsk*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (28 January 1772).

568 [Martin Brun], *Fandens Fortvivelse over sit Riges Forstyrrelse den 17. Januarii*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (28 January 1772).

569 [anonymous], *Dronningens Eftermæle for den 17de Januarii 1772*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (27 January 1772).

570 [anonymous], *Tanker til at synges til Kongens høje Fødselsdag den 29 Januarii 1772. af troe Undersaatter. Melodien kan være: Min Philander Tiden minder*, Copenhagen: Godiche, 1772 (4 February 1772).

himself proclaiming his kinship with Damien and Ravaillac: “One Damien, one Ravaillac / two French regicides / similar scoundrels / I outdo them among Danes”.⁵⁷¹ Some songs were even more explicit in portraying the evil agency of the would-be regicide, for example in this song describing the atmosphere before the execution of Struensee:

Now, the sword of justice is about to cut off the arm of a murderer
which daringly was raised against the anointed
which put a murderer’s knife against the throat of David,
but of which the edge has been blunted by the Almighty.⁵⁷²

The song contains further references to Struensee’s “murderous hand” and even “the murderous knife in hand”, and Damien also appears in a line: “The murderous spirit will be put to rest, and every Damien will be given a scare”. A peculiar warning to all future would-be regicides. Obviously, Damien was a frequently used character because he did not succeed in killing Louis XV in 1757, like Struensee did not succeed in killing Christian VII. Obviously, the Damien character was no stranger to the general Copenhagen readership.⁵⁷³

Yet another song celebrated that “the life of the King was saved from the most treacherous murderer’s knife”, while still another stated that Struensee liked to bath and swim in the blood of princes.⁵⁷⁴ A poem printed on the occasion of the King’s birthday on 29 January– 12 days after the arrest of Struensee – celebrated that the King was still alive in spite of the murderous plans of Struensee. Luckily, Queen Dowager Juliana Maria had interfered and saved the King and the monarchy.⁵⁷⁵ One author knew that Struensee’s “death will not be good, because he craved royal blood”, while another one announced – in verse – the disclosure of the minister’s

571 [anonymous], *Gienlyd af den forrige Greve Johan Friderich Struensees Klage, over sit formastelige og høyt ugudelige Forsæt, hvorhos han spaaer sig selv sin forventede Død og retfærdige Straf hørt fra hans Fængsel d. 29. Januar 1772 og indrettet at synges som: Jeg er saa gammel og jeg har Saa længe tient i Amors Krige*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (17 February 1772).

572 [anonymous], *Grevernes Struensees og Brandts Tanker ved at see sit Rætterstæd Schafottet, og Deres Advarsel til de omkring staaende Store og Smaae*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (29 April 1772).

573 Besides newspaper reports, the story of Damien was presented to Danish readers in the anonymous 80-page booklet *Konge-Morderens, Robert Franz Damiens’ Levnets, Sags, og Døds Historie, oversat af Original-Acterne og Forhørerne ved hans piinlige Proces, saledes som den er ført for Hof- og Parlements-Retten*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare (no year of publication).

574 [anonymous], *Bønder-Pigernes og Karlens Fryde-Sang, over Deres Haab i en Frydefuld Sommer, under den oplivede, haabefulde og naadige Kong Christian den Syvende. Under den bekiendte Bonde-Melodie: Hop! hop! hey! Min søde Siel! Jeg her leve skal din Træl etc. Opsat paa alle Deres Vegne af Skoleholderen i Brøndbye*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein 1772; and Jacob Jacobsen, *Forræderes rette Carachteer og værdige Straf, Riimviis forestillet i Grev Struensees Eexempel. Af Jacobo Jacobi D. S. C. St. M.*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (13 February 1772).

575 [anonymous], *De troe Israeliters Glæde over deres Befrielse fra Hamans Kløer. Tilkiendegivet i Anledning af Dagen den 29. Januarij 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.

murderous plans.⁵⁷⁶ Examples similar to such phrases are numerous and appear without any remarkable stylistic variation in the many pamphlets, ballads, and penny-prints.

In addition to the evocation of the figure of the would-be murderer, the literary making of Struensee as a usurper was a predominant feature. Again, references to historical persons were commonly used. Well-known robbers such as Frenchmen Mandrin and Cartouche were mentioned to underline the thievish activity of Struensee – implying that he had tried to steal the crown from the King while he actually stole the heart of the Queen.⁵⁷⁷ In one pamphlet, the imprisoned Struensee allegedly confessed to “the open theft of the crown”.⁵⁷⁸ Furthermore, in describing the business of the usurper, the example of Oliver Cromwell appeared in many songs, and the poetic indication of the prevailing belief that Struensee planned to let himself be proclaimed Lord Protector was a direct hint to Oliver Cromwell.

There are numerous mentions of Struensee and his unidentified co-conspirators, for example “Struensee and his plot” or “Struensee and the shameless band who conspired with him”.⁵⁷⁹ Sometimes, information was more distanced as when saying that “plots and leagues has dispersed” or – once again – the picture of Struensee’s hand reaching for something, for example “the ferocious hand of shamelessness reaching for the helm of state”.⁵⁸⁰ Other authors were not beating about the bush when describing the ambitions of Struensee. One pamphlet asked: how could Struensee be so mad as to even imagine that he could become King of the North, while another one described how the Devil convinced the minister that he could become “monarch of the realms”.⁵⁸¹

576 [anonymous], *Poetisk sandfærdig Efterretning om de Fire Statsfangers Gebærder, Ord og Leve-maade i Arresten*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772; and [anonymous], *Grev Struenses Første Bekiendelse*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (21 February 1772).

577 Louis-Dominique Cartouche, robber and gang leader in Paris, broken on the wheel in 1721; Louis Mandrin, a famous highwayman, rioter and folk hero of South-Eastern France, executed in 1755. Both of them enjoyed a Robin Hood-like reputation of stealing from the rich and giving to the poor.

578 [anonymous], *Grev Struenses Første Bekiendelse*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (21 February 1772).

579 [Martin Brun], *Glade Tanker paa Kong Christian den Syvendes glædelige Geburts-Dag 1772. Under den Melodie: For Kongen af Preussen vi etc.*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (29 January 1772).

580 Josias Bynch, *Følelser paa Kong Christian den Syvendes Fødselsfest den 29de Januarii 1772*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (11 February 1772).

581 [anonymous], *Fastelavnsløberne, eller de gale Mennesker, som et Portrait af de den 17.de Januarii 1772 i Citadellet arresterede Personer*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (4 March 1772); and F. Randrup, *Et frelst Folks hellige Pligter for Guds herlige Frelse af en yderlig Nød. Forestillet i en Prædiken over Evangelium paa femte Søndag efter Nytaar, holden for Reerslev og Ruds Vedbye Menigheder til Erindring om, og Taksigelse for den guddommelige Frelse, [...] af Friderich Randrup, Sognepræst for bemeldte Menigheder i Løve Herred i Siælland*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (12 May 1772).

One song celebrated that the people were blessed with the opportunity to lay eyes on the King again – contrary to the previous period, where Struensee had allegedly kept the King away from his people. One of Struensee’s means to manipulate the King was apparently his use of medical expertise. In one of the pamphlets, it is mentioned that a peculiar powder was given to the King in order to sedate him and pave the way for Struensee’s seizure of power.⁵⁸²

The political traitor par excellence in Danish-Norwegian history, Corfitz Ulfeldt, appears on and off as a reference or even in company with Struensee.⁵⁸³ Ulfeldt had served in high positions under Christian IV, but as his son Frederik III succeeded him in 1648, the two clashed and the King sentenced Ulfeldt to death in absentia; he had fled to Sweden while his wife Leonora Christine was imprisoned for life at the royal castle in Copenhagen. In a poem, Martin Brun underlines the importance of keeping a thorough grip on Struensee, so that he can be punished and does not escape like Ulfeldt: “But he must be tortured within that realm/ Which met him in his sins”, Brun demands.⁵⁸⁴

Ulfeldt is also emerging in a bizarre narrative (in German) in which Struensee and his executed friend Enevold Brandt are transported by boat to the Land of the Dead.⁵⁸⁵ They disembark in a landscape of shadows complete with snakes and savages, in which enraged furies are punishing all evil ministers and all those who have filled the world with horror by their evil deeds. Here, Struensee and Brandt come across Cromwell, Ravailac, the Duke of Aveiro (who was executed for conspiracy against the Portuguese King in 1759) and “hundred other scoundrels”, who have been arriving lately. Struensee here catches sight of Corfitz Ulfeldt among a group of villains and approaches him. Ulfeldt steps back. Even though he is a political criminal like Struensee there is a huge difference between them; Ulfeldt died from natural causes, while Struensee was executed – that is; suffering a dishonorable death by the hand of the executioner. Nevertheless, Struensee maintains that the two have a lot in common. They both ingratiated themselves with a King and brought the kingdom on the very brink of the abyss – and Struensee reminds Ulfeldt how he was actually executed in effigy. Brandt also approaches and greets Ulfeldt, who sarcastically exclaims how surprised he is to see both of them here in the land of the dead –

582 [anonymous], *Grev Struenses Første Bekiendelse*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (21 February 1772).

583 Morten Hammer, *Christelige Følelser udi hellige Sange paa disse alvorlige Tider; i sær paa begge Grævernes Siele-Forfatning. Samt nogle oversatte Psalmer af Klopstock og Gellert og Dronning Caroline Mathildes Psalme; ved Morten Hammer Pastor Helsing & Valbye*, Copenhagen: F. C. Godiche, 1772 (19 May 1772).

584 [Martin Brun], *En Nye Viise, om den Nye Haman. Synges som: Hvo veed hvo nær mig er min Ende*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (10 February 1772).

585 [anonymous], *Gespräch in dem Reiche der Todten, zwischen den beyden ehemaligen Grafen, Johann Friedr. Struensee, und Enevold Brand, und zwischen dem ehemaligen Dänischen Reichshofmeister Corfits Ulfeldt*, no place or printer, 1772.

then man is not a machine after all, as he says. Here, as in several other texts, La Mettrie with his *L'homme machine* was used as emblem of atheism and materialism, which the opponents of Struensee attributed to the Cabinet Minister (see Chapter 12). In this particular situation, Struensee answers that he has now accepted the existence of eternity, after which he directly approaches La Mettrie who is suddenly also present – at least in spirit – here in the Land of the Dead: “and you, La Mettrie, your wretched spiderweb has now been torn away from my eyes” (5).

Now, Ulfeldt performs a lengthy monologue about his own greed and treason, while Brandt suddenly tells the story of Griffenfeldt (yet another fallen Danish royal favorite from the seventeenth century) and, by request of Ulfeldt, takes to Struensee accounting for his own deeds.⁵⁸⁶ The most well-known of his reforms are listed chronologically and without any condemnation. Evidently, the author is well-informed about the administrative, legal, financial and military changes during the Struensee reign. He then stages a discussion between Struensee and Ulfeldt on the reforms and their implementation in a strikingly matter-of-fact tone. Nevertheless, the point seems to be that their reforms were inevitably regarded as morally offensive and were carried out much too fast. Struensee continues to relate the story of his life, and several of the more purely fictitious elements of his thoughts, plans and deeds featured in other pamphlets, reappear in the fictive autobiography presented here. Obviously, the author has been using as sources the broad supply of Struensee-narratives flooding the market. The Struensee pamphlet industry was now feeding itself.

A main characteristic of the historical comparisons in the pamphlets is the fanaticism attributed to the figures to whom Struensee is compared. Except for the two French robbers, they are political monsters: regicides, tyrants, and traitors. A whole branch of pamphlets is comparative international monsterology. The monstrosity of Struensee is explicitly expressed in several pamphlets in which he is referred to as for instance a “presumptuous monster” and even as “the monster of depravity” and, as we saw, as the monster standing in the King’s Cabinet or as “the pitiful monster who built his shameless seat next to the throne”.⁵⁸⁷ In a pamphlet entitled *Evening Thoughts*, Struensee is mentioned as “a beast or more likely a monster”, while he, in

586 Peder Schumacher, ennobled as Griffenfeldt, was a long-time courtier who rose to Chancellor of the Realm under Christian V in 1673. During a war with Sweden, Griffenfeldt was suspected of high treason, and in 1676 he was sentenced to be executed. On the very scaffold, however, he was saved by the King’s pardon, and instead he served life-long imprisonment.

587 [Josias Bynch], *Et mærkværdigt Brev til Grev J. F. Struensee fra hans fader. En Oversættelse*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (3 February 1772); [anonymous], *En fornemme dames Bebreidelsesbrev og Torden-Vers til Grev Struensee i sit Fængsel*, Copenhagen: P. H. Höecke, 1772 (20 March 1772); [anonymous], *Nordens Fryde- og Seyers-Sang paa vor allermaadigste Konges Christian den Syvendes Fødsels-Dag, den 29. Januarii 1772, som en Frugt af Guds Frelse den 17de Januarii i Aar*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (28 January 1772); and J. C. Schönheyder, *Retskaffenhed og Oprigtighed, Guds-frygt og Religionens sande Væsen og Hoved-Sag. afhandlet i En Præken paa tredje Søndag efter Nyt-Aar*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (10 February 1772).

the pamphlet *Continued Testimony of the Joy of the North*, is described as a viper in the King's bosom.⁵⁸⁸ To begin with, he is merely a miserable worm hiding his poison, his cunning, and his sting. But soon he rears up his ugly head, breaks the door to the Cabinet and strikes. Struensee is – once more – “a monster”.

In a quite malicious fable, it is described how Struensee, already as an embryo in the womb, tortures his mother.⁵⁸⁹ Her suffering is so severe that she is ordained a powder easing her pain, but it does not provoke an abortion as was the intention. Instead, Struensee is prematurely born because of a shock the mother suffers while watching some soldiers killing pigs. Struensee now falls from her mother like an egg from a hen, and his mother's Catholic maid squeals from fear. Baby Struensee swiftly crawls under a table “like a dog uttering strange sounds”, scaring the two women. His mother does not, at first, realize that she herself gave birth to this creature but is convinced that it fell out of the maid. Because the maid is Catholic, she could supposedly “give birth to a monster”. The creature eventually crawls towards his mother and pulls her skirt, and she then realizes that it is in fact her child. But because he is hairy all over the body and making sounds like a billy-goat, she cries bitterly and doubts whether she should have the child baptized at all.

In this fable, monstrosity and devil-likeness are presented as a satire, but in most cases posed in the pamphlets there is not much fun to them. The monstrosity of Struensee can be detected in his emotional inhumanity – for instance, he laughs when other people cry.⁵⁹⁰ In eighteenth-century discourses on monstrosity, monsters are often characterized by their joy at the pain and destitution of others, which was considered unnatural and inhumane. Even worse is the indifference towards the pain of others. It is not the cruel act in itself that is monstrous, rather the accompanying emotional indifference. The contrast to human compassion is manifest through the disregard for or even the evil joy felt in other peoples' pain.⁵⁹¹

588 [anonymous], *Aften-Tanker, i anledning af den for nogle bedrøvelige; men for begge Riger glædelige Syttende Januarii 1772. af den som Altid bær sit Aag*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (February 24 1772); and [anonymous], *Vedvarende Vidnesbyrd om Nordens Glæde over den 17de Januarii 1772. Samlet af de fleste Stræders udviiste Fryde-Tegn over den da skeete Forandring ved Hoffet*, Copenhagen: Godiche, 1772 (7 September 1772).

589 [Josias Bynch], *Den forrige Barberer og Kabinetsminister J. F. Struenses mærkværdige Liv og Levnet skrevet paa Tydsk af F. E. G. Biersaufenfrend, Mag. Philosoph. fra Krainvitz. Siden oversat paa Dansk af ChristenNielsen Jyderop, Mag. fra Aars*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (21 February 1772).

590 [anonymous], *En deilig Nye Viise om hvorlunde de store Grenaderer finge Erter og Flesk, paa Slottet Christiansborg udi Struenses og Brandts Tid, samt hvorlunde Danner-Kongen ved sine stolte Riddere lode dennem lægge i Bolt og Jern. udi Begyndelsen meget lystig; men siden meget ynkelig at læse og siunge som Holger Danskes og Buurmands Vise*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (13 March 1772).

591 On eighteenth-century monstrosity, see Steinberger 1997 and Landes & Knoppers 2004.

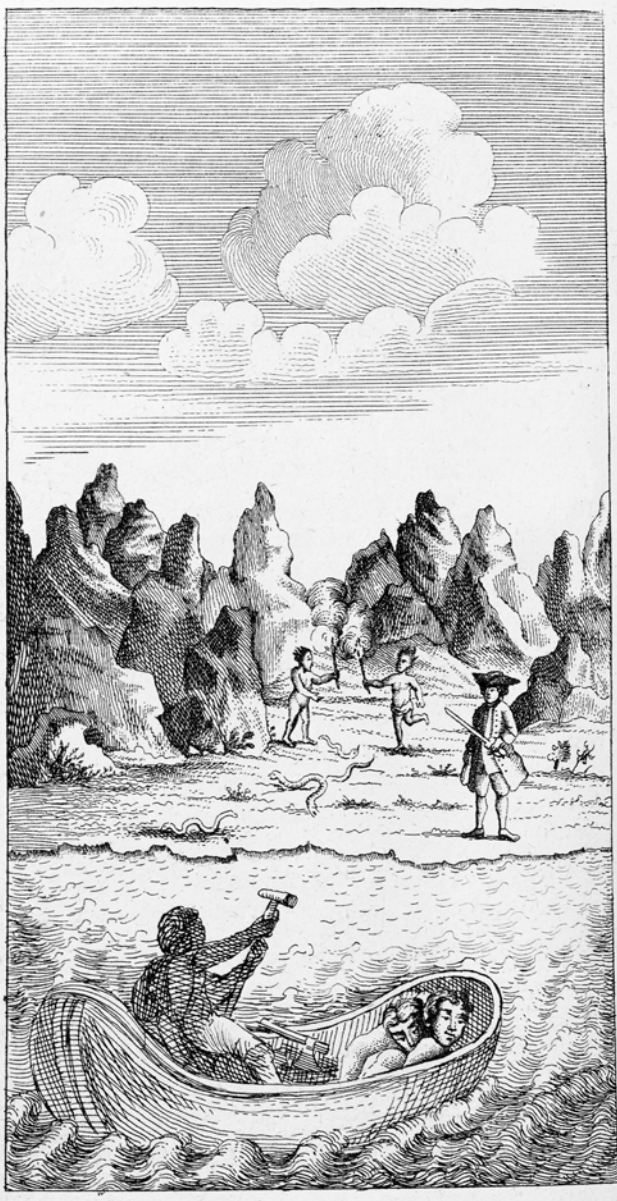


Fig. 42: In a German pamphlet, Brandt and Struensee meet and converse with their despicable Danish predecessor, Corfitz Ulfeldt, in the Realm of the Dead. An accompanying copper shows the henchman ferrying the two over the river to the Underworld which is depicted as a rocky desert populated by snakes and wild men with torches, supposedly ready to torment the newcomers. A receiving official with drawn rapier is a bit harder to interpret, maybe a state liaison officer to grant the right reception of the two, From [anonymous], *Conversation in the Realm of the Dead*, Copenhagen 1772. © Royal Danish Library.

The historization of the Struensee character was tied to the pending showdown with the fallen minister and served a specific purpose. The writings placed Struensee in a historic curio cabinet with political criminals, tyrants and assassins. Perceptions of his ruthless behaviour, despotic mentality, and murderous plans characterize the representations, only rarely relating to his political reforms, but rather regarding his conduct and entire being as a consequence of pathological monstrosity. While the sermon campaign of the clergy transformed the interpretation of Struensee from the political sphere into a theological framework, the historizing texts created a profane political narrative of tyranny and crime. In a sense, Struensee was rapidly disconnected from the present and taken to the historical dunghill of the past. Struensee's alleged historical kinship with political criminals, tyrants, and wicked philosophers helped to endow, by contrast, the new government with moral superiority and made the acts of the coup-plotters appear a historical necessity. Struensee belonged to the villains of the past, while the coup government represented a new era. While the sermon pamphlets took care of situating Struensee in the perspective of eternity, the historizing pamphlets placed him in a timely perspective – but in both cases as an actor of evil.

A Family Affair

The story of Mrs. Struensee giving birth to a hairy monster points, despite its caricatured nature, directly to an important tension in the spring 1772 literature on Struensee, namely the fact that he was the son of a pious and well-respected clergyman with an impressive career within the Danish church. The father-son theme was more than a tidbit for the writers: the pietist bishop vs. the ungodly subversive progeny. The selfish and atheist Struensee's confrontation with his own upbringing and the father's worldview is dealt with in *Comprehensive Intelligence on the Secret Conspiracy* in which it is explained how “this righteous and pious father had used all his effort” on the upbringing and education of his son, but from early on everyone could see that Struensee Jr. was “inclined to all vices and a life of licentiousness”.⁵⁹² His father had tried to subdue the son's evil inclinations, without any effect, and as soon as Struensee was no longer subjected to his father's discipline, his “evil nature” became all the more evident (see Chapter 12).

Most of the Struensee pamphlets came out in the interregnum before his execution in late April. In one publication, with a fictional Struensee as the author, he

592 [anonymous], *Udførlig Efterretning om den hemmelige Sammenrottelse, som lykkelig blev aabenbaret i Kiøbenhavn Natten imellem den 16 og 17 Jan. 1772. da ved Guds Bistand formedelst de Sammensvornes Fængselse, en betydelig Ulykke blev afvendt [...]. Tillige en kort Berætning om E. Brandt og J.F. Struensees ynkværdige dog salige Ende og sidste udstandene Dødsstraf*, Copenhagen: J.R. Thiele, 1772 (5 May 1772).

claims that he was born of “proper and honest parents”.⁵⁹³ But as so often happens, a straight tree may produce crooked branches, indeed, daily experience shows that decent and godly people often raise children who resemble them in no way. Struensee himself is the best example of this, and his parents had no part in the direction his life had taken. His parents had tried in every possible way to save him and improve his depraved nature. According to the pamphlet *The Prophecy of Count Struensee’s Father about his Son, published by Niels Klim*, his parents seem to have been of the same opinion.⁵⁹⁴ The father “of such a monstrous son” addresses the public to give assurances that he is not to blame for the accidents caused by his son. In most paragraphs of the text, however, the father speaks directly to his son. He explains how several dark predictions ever since the boy’s early childhood made him do all that he could to teach him good moral character and piety. But he quickly discovered that the boy had the heart of a wolf and a fox, not of a human being, thus, yet another example of the de-humanization of Struensee which was so prevalent in many pamphlets, now making him an animal predator. In addition, his father continues, it was unforgivable that Struensee also corrupted his brothers. This is a specific reference to Struensee’s older brother Carl August, who had, before Struensee sent for him to join him in Copenhagen, turned away from his theology studies at the University of Halle to devote himself to philosophy and mathematics. Struensee had made the name of his old parents “a disgust for Denmark – indeed, for all good, righteous people”. His father mourns his wicked and evil son who, in his sinful audacity, was unable to resist temptations and lust. He hopes that the possibility of his son’s conversion still exists, but the shame will never go away.

In a series of publications staged as epistolary texts, the family drama continued. Stern expressionism characterizes yet another letter from father to son in which accusations accumulate.⁵⁹⁵ Struensee had refused to listen to his paternal exhortations and to let the Holy Spirit settle in his heart. The father now has become gray-haired from his son’s wickedness and now grieves over his “mocking spirit”. Struensee ought to weep blood because of his own evil, loathe his own deeds and ask for forgiveness. In the future, no humanitarian will be able to mention the name of Struensee without the greatest disgust, no godly man will tolerate any attention or tenderness towards his legacy. As in the first letter from his father, the realization is highlighted that the Struensee name will be forever defiled. The publication was, two days after it was put up for sale, followed by a proclamation to the general public in *Adresseavisen* on 3 February, that the pamphlet “is fictional, and has by no

593 [anonymous], *Fortsættelse af Græv Struenses Liv og Levnets Historie i sær om det Politiske; tilligemed et offentlig Forsonings-Brev til det i højeste Maade forurettede danske og norske Folk*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (10 March 1772).

594 [anonymous], *Grev Struenses Faders Spaadomme om sin Søn udgivet ved Trykken af Niels Klim*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (10 March 1772).

595 [Josias Bynch], *Et mærkværdigt Brev til Grev J. F. Struensee fra hans fader. En Oversættelse*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (2 February 1772).

means the General Superintendent as author”.⁵⁹⁶ The notice was signed “Niels Klim”, the same pseudonym mentioned in the title of pamphlet. Niels Klim was the name of the protagonist in a famous Gulliver-like novel from 1741 by Danish author Ludvig Holberg.

While Struensee’s mother was reduced to a weeping and praying woman in the first letter from father to son, she acts with powerful expressivity in *A peculiar Letter to Count Struensee from his Mother*.⁵⁹⁷ “My miserable son”, the fictive mother writes in the opening of the letter. Already when the unborn Struensee was lying in her womb, she had strong pains and predicted that he would become contentious and cause his parents “grievances of heart”. Their godly upbringing was counter-productive and created but unpremeditated hardening in the son. She regrets that she did not, in the same way as his father, resort to corporal punishment in order to subdue and eradicate the root of his wickedness, which she had sensed very early. Exclusive emotional bonds between mother and child are accentuated when she reproachfully writes how her worried vigil-keeping at his cradle has been rewarded with a wound in her heart that causes so much pain that tears roll down the letter as she writes. When she considers the sorrow he has brought, she nearly wishes that he had never come into this world – and yet not. She just wants him to find faith so he can embrace death like a long-awaited brother and behold the angelic army that will rush towards his soul. The theme of pain is a significant feature in the letter which is presented as a sort of tender counterpart to the father’s harsh condemnation. Furthermore, the mother expresses self-reproach; she could have acted differently, even if it would have put her in a dilemma as a mother and a woman.

The Struensee voices of the pamphleteers remained silent to his mother’s emotional rhetoric. Instead, several writers let Struensee respond to the letters of his father. In the first reply letter, Struensee reacts with toughness and pride.⁵⁹⁸ He is angry that his father’s letter is nothing more than twaddle. He mocks his father, calls him an old fool, a hypocrite, and cannot bear to hear his father’s talk about justice. He just echoes the talk and shouting of the mob. The father has no reason to be ashamed of a son who reached the highest position in the country, and furthermore, the father should not pity his current situation. Just as he used to be in high places, he has now fallen deeply – but it is his own life, and he is in no need of mourning. In the future, there will be people who will admire his courage and abilities. Quite opposite to these proud statements is the next epistolary reply from Struensee to his father with its submissive and remorseful tone.⁵⁹⁹ His father is right that he was one

⁵⁹⁶ *Adresseavisen*, 5 February 1772.

⁵⁹⁷ [Josias Bynch], *Et mærkværdigt Brev til Grev J. F. Struensee fra hans Moder. Fordansket ved Oversætteren af hans Faders Brev*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (14 February 1772).

⁵⁹⁸ [anonymous], *Grev Struensees mærkværdig Svar paa hans Faders Brev. Efter hans Begiering besvaret*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (11 February 1772).

⁵⁹⁹ [anonymous], *Svar fra Struense i Fængselet paa sin Faders brev. Oversat*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (7 February 1772).

of the “most wicked men on earth” who mocked away – “no Jew could speak more abominably of Jesus, the Messiah, than I”. Where did this come from? From a deist, he learned to deny the immortality of the soul. He soon had other teachers: La Mettrie taught him that man has no free will, that he is merely like a clockwork, and that God does not exist. Epicurus and Spinoza further confirmed this to him. Without religion, he could now concentrate on cultivating ambition and moral laxity like Julius Caesar. In any case, his excessive ambition is as boundless as that of Caesar’s. But he also resembles Caesar in other ways. Just like Caesar did some good things, so did Struensee, e. g., the law on the Shoe-Brushes. At the end of the letter, Struensee goes into a flagellant mode with surprising self-awareness, calling himself Lucifer’s firstborn, a loose lecher, an abominable beast, yes, and more horrible than anything else, a royal assassin. Struensee thanks the Queen Dowager for preventing a royal assassination. As is seen, commonplace references to philosophers and historical figures are activated, this time with a little dash of antisemitism.

In the pamphlet *The commencing Tears of Struensee and the Prayer said to his Father*, a tear-soaked emotional rhetoric similar to the mother’s letter to Struensee is prevailing.⁶⁰⁰ The letter from the father has brought Struensee to tears, and he is grateful for his father’s tender admonitions. Actually, it goes so far that Struensee curses the day he was born and that he brought sorrow to his father. “I have despised God, I have not been faithful to my King, I have brought grievance to a dear father, I have defiled myself”, he writes. Every part of the traditional patriarchal line of command – God, King, Father – has been soiled by this shameful subject, in fact, the subject has even sullied himself. Struensee knows that prospects are not too good for his salvation, but nevertheless, his father’s letter has led him to turn to God.

As seen, the epistolary form is the favorite genre in these writings about Struensee and his parents. Unlike the many fictitious letters that were a regular feature of spectator-styled periodicals and the first wave of the Press Freedom Writings, these letters are not anonymous; on the contrary, their exposed sender personas are an important part of the textual staging. This allows for using the letter as a window to the (fictitious) writer’s innermost feelings, a revelation of deep experiences and reflections. The letters are presented as personal and confidential communication into which the reader is allowed a unique insight, i. e., a window to the private struggle and possible self-examination of the writer. At the same time, it reveals an interesting aspect of Press Freedom: one could easily publish fictional texts pretending to be written by real, living people, not only public figures like Struensee but even his parents. Neither they nor any authority intervened in this abuse of their names, except for the mentioned brief notice in *Adresseavisen*. The new government seems

⁶⁰⁰ [anonymous], *Struensees begyndte Taarer og frembragte Bøn til sin Fader*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.

to have been satisfied with this rapidly emerging Struensee literature which painted, by and large, a bleak picture of the state prisoner (see Chapter 12).



Fig. 43: Several broadsheets represent the Devil taking care of the fallen Counts. Here, Struensee grabs the tongue of a hermaphrodite Devil, exclaiming: “You are my right man / Now, I take you on”. The accompanying text emphasizes the shame inherent in the fact that the future must remember not only miscreants such as Struensee, but also Brandt, Falkenskiold, Gähler, and their devilish plot. There is a tension in the theology of the text, however: the conspiracy was devilish, but Struensee believed neither God nor Devil, and only now, the freethinker is compelled to realize the existence of the two: “A higher being I, as Self-God, did not believe, / Yet, now I am forced (even if I hardly will) / To believe there is a God – and especially a Devil”. *Representation of the Imprisoned in the Citadel ... (Forestilling af den i Citadellet Friderichshavn den 17de Januarii 1772 indbragte Stats-Fange, Forræder Johann Friderich Struense)*, woodcut, Copenhagen 1772: Thiele. © Royal Danish Library.

In late spring after the executions, *An original Letter to Count J.F. Struensee from his Father* was published, in fact it was a Danish translation of a German letter from the father which was dated in Rendsborg on 4 March 1772 and gave the impression of being the real thing to a much larger extent than the previously published paternal

letters.⁶⁰¹ “Grieved at heart” the father writes and expresses his sorrow in standard Christian phrases. A greeting is passed from the weeping and praying mother. The letter is kept in a relatively subdued tone, giving it a semblance of authenticity. This presumably genuine letter ended the string of fictionalized versions. The monological nature of the letters reinforces the sense of isolation and distance. Struensee is locked up in his cell, his parents live on the fringes of the realm in Holstein, far away from their son. A vain attempt to shorten the mental and geographical distance is made by referring to the emotional bonds that will, by definition, always exist between parent and child. And in one case, it allows the author to follow a classic theme of son rejecting father – although in the shape of a fictitious narrative.

A Libertine Machiavellist

Not only did the fictitious Struensee write letters to his family, old friends received mail as well. At least if one is to believe the pamphlet *German Original and Danish Translation of a Letter from J.F. Struensee to Count Rantzau Ascheberg*.⁶⁰² In the letter, Struensee writes to his old friend acknowledging Rantzau’s conviction of the danger the King was believed to have been in during Struensee’s rule. It is a striking passage because the rumors of this danger are no longer mentioned as a truth but are reduced to a circumstantial assumption. The often presented – and to the coup-plotters decisive – narrative of the King as being confined and in mortal danger due to Struensee’s plans is rejected by the author behind this fictitious Struensee letter. In this sense, the writer goes, albeit indirectly, up against the vast majority of writings praising the new government for having saved the constrained King and the staging of the coup as a liberation of the King.⁶⁰³

Another letter has a larger group of recipients, namely the entire population of Denmark-Norway. In *Public Letter of Reconciliation to the deeply wronged Danish and Norwegian People written by the former Cabinet Minister Count Johan Friedrich Struensee in Prison*, Struensee clearly acknowledges his self-preoccupation, his self-love,

601 It is a Danish translation of the letter which, in Münter’s conversion report, is conveyed as being handed over from Münter to Struensee during the 7th conversation, 14 March 1772. The letter was published more than two months later (27 May 1772) than the other epistolary texts and might have been published with the undertaking of Münter to sharpen the attention to his announced publishing of Struensee’s conversion. See Adam Struensee, *Ein original Brief an den Grafen J.F. Struensee von seinem Vater*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772; and Adam Struensee, *Et originalt Brev til Grev J.F. Struensee fra hans Fader. Af det tydske Sprog oversat*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (both 27 May 1772).

602 J.F. Struensee [?], *Tydsck Original og Dansk Oversættelse af et Brev fra J.F. Struensee til Græv Rantzau Ascheberg*, Copenhagen: P. H. Höecke, 1772.

603 Fabricius 1935. The argument of the constrained King has historically been actively used by many revolutionary parties – hueguenots, frondeurs, and the English parliament during the Glorious Revolution – by claiming to represent true conservatism.

his arrogance, and his lust.⁶⁰⁴ He is tormented by the blows that his awakening conscience gives him and takes Press Freedom as an example. The writer takes advantage of Press Freedom, introduced by himself, to portray his vices and daring: “I hoped it [the Press Freedom, eds.] should be used to build memorials in my honor on which posterity would read my name in golden writing in the book of time – but when I started believing this, the hymn of the hypocrite sounded in my ear” (23–24). Struensee continues to reveal that he was “full of murder and inflated with fancy” and grabbed for “forbidden things”. In a final remark, he arrives at the conclusion that it is the Devil who has driven him.

In *Continuation of the Life and Times of Count Struensee specifically about the Political; as well as a public Letter of Reconciliation to the most severely aggrieved Danish and Norwegian People*, Struensee once more addresses the people in a letter dated the Citadel, 20 February 1772.⁶⁰⁵ To show his kindness towards the Danes, he writes the letter in Danish, even though he despises that language. The letter is laid out as an autobiography in which Struensee declares that he differs in every way from his righteous and godly parents, and that his evil nature has, in the course of time, become worse and more corrupt. He continues explaining how he studied, defended his dissertation, became a city medical officer in Altona and how he liked female companionship. He cured previously uncurable diseases especially among women, and everyone who has seen him must know that he is “fit to help the needy”. He is the father of a number of children that he does not know, but it is of no concern to him, because the most important thing is to help increase the population. This is based on a specific piece of reasoning: 1) he was able to gratify his desires, 2) it increased the number of midwives and children and, thus, generated more income to him as a doctor and consequently more pleasures. It was a win-win situation.

Struensee describes himself as a man of honor and says that he has perfected the art of making himself loved, helping him to win the heart of the King and Queen and rise through the ranks. Because of the Queen’s special favor, he becomes a count. But he senses “from the damned writings which came out” that he was not well-liked by “the common man” (11). Press Freedom Writings are, as evident from the beginning of the pamphlet, highlighted as an important agent in the popular deconstruction of the Cabinet Minister leading to regular hatred against him. This makes him launch a counterattack; he creates a new corps to replace The Royal Guard and protect the King from the people, at the same time conveying to the King that his subjects were “unfaithful and rebellious”. In fact, he feared for his own life and “the assault of the furious people”. Instead of being faithful to the King, who

604 [anonymous], *Offentlig Forsonings-Brev til det i høieste Maade forurettede danske og norske Folk; skrevet af den forrige Kabinetminister Græv Johan Friderik Struense i hans Fængsel*, no place of publication, 1772 (10 March 1772).

605 [anonymous], *Fortsættelse af Græv Struenses Liv og Levnets Historie i sær om det Politiske; tilligemed et offentlig Forsonings-Brev til det i høieste Maade forurettede danske og norske Folk*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (10 March 1772).

was so merciful to him, he followed his “evil nature” and “evil inclinations”. He admits to creating his ordinances to dazzle the subjects, he has never in his heart worked for their welfare. He investigated the nature of the people and found out that most people were like him: they are irreligious, do not believe in heaven or hell, god or devil, but live according to their “impulses of desire and sexual instinct”. Therefore, he gave everyone the freedom to live as they pleased – “to fornicate, drink, gamble, dance and more, with impunity”. But now, he must admit that he was mistaken about the Danes, as it was primarily the strangers who “made use of the given permits and amusements; they may well be called Danes, as they belong to the Danish crown, but are not genuine natives” (14).



Fig. 44: Several writings demanded the erection of monuments of shame for the fallen Counts in Copenhagen. This woodcut draws the consequence, depicting satirically such a monument. “The traitor Johann Friderich Struensee to eternal shame and disgrace”, goes the inscription, and shame is emphasized by the surrounding illustrations. To the right, the moment of execution with the axe in the air, to the left the scaffolds at Vester Fællad with the remnants of the two displayed on breaking wheels – both of these vignettes added to an earlier version of the print from before the execu-

tion. A copulating pair of dogs reminds about Struensee and the Queen's shameful intercourse; dog as well as man underline contempt by defecating on the monument, and to the right, a strolling lady explains the implications of the monument to the next generation. The accompanying text broadens, in a display of self-criticism, shame from Struensee and his ilk to cover all of Denmark which must now reproach itself for so having allowed itself to become the target of scorn. *Shame-Memorial about 17 January (Skam=Minde af den 17 Januarii)*, woodcut, Copenhagen 1772: Hallager. © Royal Danish Library.

Besides this somewhat peculiar construction of Struensee the German giving voice to strong anti-German sentiments, the pamphlet is a psychological interpretation of meaning being ascribed to his reforms and to the delicate fact that the detested Struensee had actually contributed to the well-being of the Danes. In this autobiography, he presents himself as an unscrupulous womanizer, never doing anything of not to his own benefit. Libido and self-interest were at the bottom of every act – this conclusion involving a quite exceptional explicit reference to the Queen – the interpretation ending up joining the habitual narrative of the evil counsellor standing between King and people.

As in this pamphlet, the anti-German element was quite prominent in many portrayals of Struensee. The severe attacks on Struensee were multiple and were often presented in imaginative, fable-like tales of his life like the previously mentioned pamphlet, *The peculiar Life and Times*, in which the infant Struensee is a hairy monster uttering goat-like sounds. In the continuing story of Struensee's early childhood, his wet nurse refuses to have the three-year-old Struensee in her bed because he cannot keep his hands to himself. Already as a child, he displays the characteristics of a lecher, which becomes even more explicit when he starts school and cannot stay away from the girls. Besides the myth of his uncontrollable libido, the anti-German component appears when his education is described; his teachers have silly German names like Zacharias Mehlfhyrer and Jeremias Schlegenthal. The first teacher beat the boy thoroughly every day because he is such a poor reader. One day, the teacher loses self-control and bites the boy in his behind so Struensee gets a permanent mark – readers can see for themselves, when Struensee is executed and his naked body parts displayed after parting. Boy Struensee is thrown out of school and placed in another without any girls, then on to a third one where he is again severely punished by a strict teacher. However, Struensee does learn Latin because he is drawn to the erotic poetry of Ovid. Struensee tests this poetry in practice on the teacher's daughter, Sischen Maria Dunerwetter, and again he is relegated home to his father.

Struensee's father sends the boy off on ship to Greenland hoping that the cold weather will cool him down. During a storm, Struensee is having it off with the skipper's wife for which he is flogged and thrown overboard. Luckily, he is saved by some Moravian brother from the colony in Greenland, and he is returned to Hamburg after staying a while with the brothers. In Hamburg he is apprenticed as a barber, however, he is so unfortunate as to cut off the nose of a councilor because he is distracted by his beautiful wife. He is chased out of the city, after which he travels to

Halle and continues his surgical studies including medicine. He defends his dissertation on good and bad sexually transmitted diseases and is attending the lectures of an exiled Italian professor on Machiavelli, later becoming useful to him in Denmark. Struensee abducts a nun from a nunnery near Halle but is arrested and sentenced to death. He is saved because the prioress of the nunnery has a colonel brother (his name is Teufelvitzi) in a hussar regiment taking Struensee in instead of execution. He is exempted from service by making use of his medical skills; the colonel has contracted a venereal disease, which Struensee cures. He soon becomes city medical officer in Altona, where he cures the wife of an archdeacon of infertility. He “put something in her, so that the following year she gave birth to a healthy boy, the same wife has assured me that it was a pleasure to be a patient in the hands of this doctor”, the narrator ambiguously explains. Struensee not only cures his fellow believers, but he also took loving care of the city’s Jewish women. This was the story of Struensee’s medical education, later the author will publish a paper on his political activities in Denmark.

As can be seen, Struensee’s insatiable sex drive is a recurring theme in the story, constructing a fiction around a core of correct information – a doctor’s career from Halle via Altona to Copenhagen. He has sex with literally every female in the story – even nuns and Jewesses. In this way, his sex drive receives an explanatory weight in relation to his favor and ascension at court in Denmark. By way of sexual services, so to speak, he goes all the way up to the Queen – and his total lack of morals means that he uses his medical expertise to help other lechers getting rid of their venereal diseases, so that they become indebted to him. His political and social cynicism is also a consistent feature of the story, and we learn that his Machiavelli studies have equipped him for the political career that awaits him. Unfortunately, the foreshadowed portrayal of his political life was never published. At least not from the hand of this author.

Brun’s Seven Struensees

Even if the vast majority of Struensee pamphlets pouring out in January to March 1772 were vilifying the fallen Count, Martin Brun discreetly demonstrated that this was not the only possible approach. Actually, he brought to the booming market no less than seven widely differing portrayals of the enigmatic prisoner. Few at the time, however, would know that he was the source of this variety of anonymous Struensee portraits. In 1771, Brun had excelled in role portraits, speaking as Ole the Smith, Jeppe the Watchman, and many more; now, he time and time again picked Struensee as narrator. The field was open: the fallen Count was imprisoned with no access for writers or journalists, so elaborating on his thoughts, feelings and reflections was a free lunch. Many took the occasion, as we saw, to imagine the Monster. Brun also started out in this school, but soon he added considerable variation and

he could not have concocted his bundle of Struensees without considerable talent and insight. We already touched upon how he, in *The Devil's Despair* took Satan himself as a narrator and portrayed Struensee as a devil favored by Satan. He should profit by the success of the plans explained by Satan: "A regent I would tear down from his throne, / His sovereign power was my plan to give / To others whom for me were deeply loved, / They by his fall should see themselves upraised".⁶⁰⁶ Here, Brun adopts the standard view of the theological coup, Struensee as the diabolic antagonist to the divine Juliana and her son.

A quite different version is found already two weeks later, in the *Conversation between the Counts Brandt and Struensee*.⁶⁰⁷ This fictive conversation covers the whole timespan from initial scheming over failed attempts at a coup and to the fall of the two. Brandt initially hesitates to join in, but Struensee convinces him with the promise of half a barrel of gold, and he plans how we will bribe eleven persons to reach his final aim. The motives of the two are no longer diabolic, but rather basically egoistic, even if other motivations are also mentioned, such as popular support outside of court and even improving conditions for the people. The two soon, however, learn about the failure of their plans and conclude: "We were so close before to be a God / Now fortune tells us: you will be a steer" (15). Now they but hope for the King's pardon. A third version moves to the present with both of the two in prison: *A Writing which should be written from the Incarcerated to the Imprisoned. With the Motto: Now all our Joy is over*.⁶⁰⁸ Now, in contradistinction to the *Conversation*, the two of them sorely regret and realize the nefarious character of their actions: their "shameful intercourse with married wives has made us fall from one sin to the next" (5). They were smart guys indeed, in comparison with the cumbersome husbands of their lovers, but now they must admit that an adulterer is no better than an adulteress. Would have been wiser to keep royal persons out of their schemes, they now realize. Here, the two display quite a large measure of self-insight and remorse.

Self-criticism is further radicalized in *Struensee's Petition to the King on Behalf of himself and his fellow Prisoners, about some Solace and Liberation from the well-deserved hard Punishment*.⁶⁰⁹ It takes the shape of a supplication to the King in which Struensee admits that his punishment is both fair and deserved. But what he requests, unlike in the *Conversation*, is not his life. Rather, it appears after a long-

606 [Martin Brun], *Fandens Fortvivelse over sit Riges Forstyrrelse den 17. Januarii*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (28 January 1772), 4.

607 [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem Greverne Brandt og Struensee*, Copenhagen 1772: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (Feb. 14 1772)

608 [Martin Brun], *Et Skrift, som skal være skreven fra den Indsluttede til den Fængslede. Med Devise: Nu er al vor Glæde forbi*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (7 February 1772).

609 [Martin Brun], *Struensees Skrivelse til Kongen paa sine og Medfangnes Vegne, om nogen Lindring og Befrielse fra den velfortiente haarde Straf, samt allerunderdanigst Begiering om jo før jo heller at miste sit Liv. Allerunderdanigst indleveret i Anledning af Geburts-Dagen den 29. Jan. 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (5 February 1772).

winded argument, he begs for a swift execution. In that case he will be gay and accept death with joy. A conclusive poem addresses a reader with like plans: do learn from my example and never reach out for the scepter! A quite different text, not addressing the King but appearing on the occasion of his birthday, 29 January, admits no shame at all of what has happened: *The imprisoned Struensee's Thoughts and Reflections*.⁶¹⁰ Here, Struensee the freethinker does admit that there is a natural God, but does right and wrong exist? A long unspecified quote argues against such an idea claiming that right is nothing but a rhetorical device which criminals employ to embellish their acts.⁶¹¹ Even petty thieves do not speak about stealing but say: let us go out and take back our own goods from the rich! Even the unjust State Council never uses the word injustice about itself. No, in the larger perspective things simply go up and down for everybody, now the King of Denmark prospers while I am on my way downhill, Struensee resigns. Same things will happen even on other planets to which we shall be moved when our time is done. Bottom line here is a sort of stoic fatalism undergirded by futile reincarnation. Blind destiny rules supreme, and it pleased fate to place me close to bliss yet never fully to reach it, Struensee sums up. A conclusive voice finally takes over and harshly judges such a fatalist viewpoint: such will be the thoughts of every freethinker who turns his back on the words of the revealed God!

The outpouring of Struensee-pamphlets in the weeks after the coup was so spectacular as to be taken as the subject of another Brun pamphlet in which Struensee attacks the host of printers and authors involved: *Struensee's Writing to several Writers and Bookprinters who have written and printed about him in these his critical Times*.⁶¹² In the face of all that is now written and published about him, Struensee strikes an ironic pose: so, only now we see the emergence of great minds and wonderful geniuses! But most of them describe the "qualities of a person of whom they have little or no knowledge at all" (3). So, Struensee complains that he is now ascribed sins and crimes which are completely invented. There's nothing skillful in slandering a person and accusing him of made-up crimes. Earlier, he tells the pamphleteers, you wrote under invented names like trees, birds, monkeys, goats, shoe brushes. Now you write weeping or ridiculing about certain persons whose name are explicitly mentioned – e. g., Struensee's own person. Brun here is on the brink of deliberate self-parody or even self-criticism – not only had he, if anyone, excelled in fictive roles and narrators the year before, but he has already, in the few weeks since the coup been the most prolific pamphleteer and not at all spared the market for in-

610 [Martin Brun], *Den fængslede Struenses Tanker og Betænkninger paa den for os glædelige men for ham bedrøvelige Kong Christian den VII vigtigste Geburts-Dag*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.

611 The source of the quote is not indicated; it is a translation from Voltaire's *Le Philosophe Ignorant* of 1766 (see 129 in Voltaire 1784, vol. 32). The fictive Struensee's conclusion that there is no such thing as right or wrong, is not shared by Voltaire's text which claims the opposite.

612 [Martin Brun], *Struensees Skrivelse til en Deel Skribentere og Bogtrykkere, som har skrevet og trykt om ham i disse hans kritiske Tider*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (12 February 1772).

vented Struensees. You just shame me for profit! Struensee critically sums up. But would you really not, he urgently asks the writers, have acted just like me if you were presented with the occasions I had? He had tried to improve his position, even to perfect it, but that is but natural: that is the law of nature which we all obey. In this pamphlet, Struensee appears rather sympathetically, a low-key person with insight in human nature, ambitions, and weaknesses. So much more surprising is the radical shift in tonality in a brief, conclusive appendix where yet another Struensee effectively appears: now he is furious, wicked, and vengeful. Here, he imagines he is back in Cabinet, if only for half a quarter of an hour, a moment he would spend passing a number of judgments. Book-printers having published the most outrageous writings about him should, after interrogation and conviction, lose their lives. Those who have drawn portraits of him, should have their hands cut off. As to those who have written about him in abject ways, he will personally cut off the first three fingers on their right hand. Interestingly, this livid Struensee is angrier with printers than with writers: the former must die while the latter will lose three fingers only. No Press Freedom and no resistance against death penalty remain in this vindictive Struensee version.

It was probably this brutal conclusion that gave Brun the idea to yet a further pamphlet letting a book-printer take the word in an answer to the angry prisoner: *A Couple of Words from a Bookprinter, on the Occasion of Struensee's Three Verdicts*.⁶¹³ This fictive book-printer actually defends Struensee against the revengeful Struensee portrait in the former writing: "A person with a high mind does not care much about what small minds are plotting", he argues. So, Struensee is really high-minded: when he was in power, he did not at all prevent the small writers from writing – he accepted their publications with indifference. And if he escaped from prison, he would not at all pass evil judgments back in Cabinet like the ones described. In these two latter pamphlets, Brun on a meta-level addresses the whole February 1772 situation with the book-market boiling with Struensee booklets, simultaneously staging a conflict between three very different Struensee versions: the cool judge of human nature, the frenzied avenger, and the elevated soul.

This latter, high-minded Struensee receives his most detailed portrait in the amazing *Struensee's Amends to the Citizens of Copenhagen for Crimes Committed against them, with a Petition to them to pray for him with the King for a merciful Punishment*.⁶¹⁴ It addresses the Copenhageners and the King and asks for their understanding of his actions. It opens with almost a small tract of political science analyzing the role and problems of a prime minister with an absolutist king. No task is

613 [Martin Brun], *Et Par Ord fra en Bogtrykker, i Anledning af Struensees 3de Domme*, Copenhagen: L.N Svare; 1772 (after 12 February 1772).

614 [Martin Brun], *Struensees Afbigt til Kiøbenhavns Borgere, for hans begangne Forseelser mod dem, samt Begiering til dem om at bede for ham til Kongen om en naadig Straf*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.

more important nor more difficult than that of a prime minister. He must observe the well of the King, of the realm, of the country – and of himself. He must seek the favor and grace of his King, and he must make himself a “wall for all his ongoing businesses” (4). He needs luck and vigilance. How easy for him to stumble! His honor may easily blind him: Griffenfeldt’s access to the royal Cabinet resulted in nothing but life-long prison. The prime minister is surrounded by King and other ministers, and he must seek knowledge in intelligence and information which may prove incorrect. And he may himself err. He is surrounded by eloquent hypocrites and malicious figures, he is dependent on their advice, and when such advice has bad consequences, he must take the blame. He may be enchanted by his success and will have to face enviers. The more loved he is, the more hated he will be as well. A pretty realistic and cynical description of the role of a prime minister in an absolutist government, almost a small contribution to a sociology or political science of sovereign governance. On such a theoretical background, this Struensee now asks forgiveness from Copenhageners, compassionated, good-hearted, and royalist as they are. He has trespassed against them in his lack of perfect insight, he must admit. Ignorance and self-interest have denied him to act rightfully towards them, but he did intend to make happy the realm, the country, the citizen, and himself. “I have, as far as it was in my hands and power, denied no-one general liberty, on the contrary, I prevented all coercion, as far as possible, and it was my intention and wish that all subjects of the realm could live more freely than they formerly did”. (10) The Danish people never lived “freer or merrier ... In and out of the gates of Copenhagen everybody could walk as he pleased, Day and Night”. Police hours at 10 pm was abolished, which gave liberty to citizens – and more tax revenue to the state from pubs. Sundays were less constrained than earlier, people could go to church as they pleased, and to the opera without sinning. This is why Struensee asks that everybody now judges, after ability and sound reason, whether there could not, among his decisions and initiatives, be “found some good, some useful for the Realm and the country, and some suitable for the Realm and the State and yourself” (14). In that case, let the good and the bad be counted together. Struensee regrets that he did not have the “force and understanding” to keep the level, and that his position made him proud and arrogant. This surprising Struensee portrait is the most sympathetic and insightful of Brun’s many versions of the Cabinet Minister – and it achieves, in the passing, a feat increasingly dangerous – namely to praise a number of the fallen minister’s political initiatives.

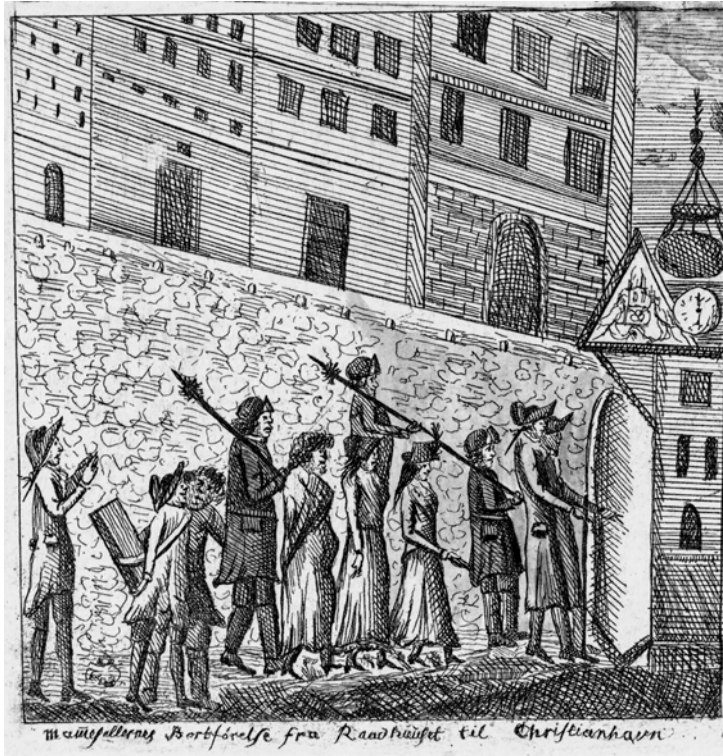


Fig. 45: Brun's elastic imagination is also palpable in his quickly changing judgments of the Great Clean-Up Party. Not only is it less than sympathetic but it also says a lot about the new conditions for Press Freedom after the coup. First, Brun criticized the eruption of ravaging and violence during the night, but only weeks later he seems to have calibrated his viewpoints after popular opinion when he comes close to celebrating not only destructions but also revenge actions against female prostitutes. On this copper, three arrested prostitutes are taken from the Town Hall Prison to the Penitentiary at Christianshavn Square. The three girls are guarded by two police officers and three watchmen to the gate of the wall around the prison. To the right a sketch of the Town Hall to indicate where the procession came from. *The Abduction of the Mademoiselles (Mamesellernes Bortførelse)*, colored copper from 1772, maybe a 1794 copy. © Royal Danish Library.

It is quite an impressive series of Struensees that Brun was able to produce in a matter of a few weeks through January and February. He must have been in a working frenzy when completing this list: Struensee as 1) a tool of the Devil; 2) a selfish conspirator; 3) a shameful prisoner; 4) a stoic fatalist; 5) a judge of human nature; 6) an avenger against printers and writers; 7) a cool political analyst asking for nuanced judgment of his results. It sums up to a fantastic bouquet of variations on a riddle. Apart from the Commission and Struensee's caretaker, Münter, both working in secrecy, nobody had any idea at all of what really went on in the mind of the famous prisoner. There was free rein, and Brun exploited this possibility space better than

anyone. His plastic imagination and his wild fantasy reached a pinnacle in these variations. Simultaneously, he was responding to the demand of a glowing market, and Brun's variety of versions indicates that he knew that Copenhageners were not alike. His different Struensee versions would cater to different consumers on the pamphlet market. This forms a strong indication that even in a public sphere officially consumed by the theological coup interpretation, many different degrees and combinations of antipathy and sympathy with the fallen count remained, in different groups, networks, and social strata in absolutist Denmark.

This economic argument, however, does not cancel the fact that it requires literary talent, knowledge, psychological empathy, and political flair to gestalt so many consistent answers to the large enigma of early 1772. It would prove to be the last great outburst of Brun's baroque talents during Press Freedom, but it also showed that even if Press Freedom was quickly narrowing after the coup, the dominance of monster depictions of Struensee did not rule out, in the early months of the new order, a free and experimental attitude in his description.

As a whole, the pamphlet storm about and against the incarcerated monster Count was sufficiently noisy and spectacular to attract international attention. On 17 March, we find, in the leading francophone journal in the Netherlands *Gazette de Leyde*, the report that there are now "so many anecdotes and details relative to the Revolution of *Copenhagen*, as well as about the projects, the behaviour, and the character of the State Prisoners". Immediately, the *Gazette* cautiously warns that "these stories are so contradictory against each other that it would be to abuse the patience of Readers with good sense to amuse them with such, even for a moment".⁶¹⁵ Among this "swarm of Writings", the *Gazette* particularly emphasizes two: the dialogue between Struensee and Brandt in prison and Adam Struensee's alleged letter to his son (in reality by Brun and Bynch, respectively).⁶¹⁶ They were also among the Danish pamphlets busy being translated into German, Dutch, and other languages for a hungry international market. So, what the *Gazette* called the "hatching of an anthill of Prints" soon spilled over the borders of Denmark-Norway into an emerging international strife over the events in Copenhagen – as is shown in Chapters 12 and 13.

A First Historian of Struensee

Other authors, however, contributed to the assessment of Struensee's political activity and it is even possible to find something as rare as a publication that was not undividedly negative towards Struensee and actually made an effort to present a se-

⁶¹⁵ *Gazette de Leyde*, 17 March 1772.

⁶¹⁶ The pamphlets [Martin Brun], *Samtale imellem Greverne* and [Josias Bynch], *Et mærkværdigt Brev* (14 February and 3 February respectively).

rious analysis of his rule. The 92-page booklet was speed-written during the first six weeks after the coup (and thus seven weeks before the death sentence) by Niels Prah, an editor and associate to Hans Holck and the Address Office, and the title was *Count Johan Friderich Struensee, former Royal Danish Cabinet Minister and maître des requettes, his life story and destiny in last few years in Denmark*.⁶¹⁷ Prah uses the many existing public notices, Cabinet Orders, and legal documents as sources to describe the work of Struensee and aims at deducing some general trends in Struensee's way of thinking. Actually, it is a first attempt to write a historical-political biography with the Struensee reforms as the leitmotif. In several ways it is a Struensee-friendly presentation, in which many of his ideas and deeds are highlighted as beneficial, though often followed by an almost ritualistic rendering of comments on his evil heart, bad behavior, excessive ambition and domineering. Somewhat different from the representation of the father-son-relationship contained in the before-mentioned fictitious letters, Prah underlines how his good upbringing promoted his interest in the sciences, although he, to his father's disappointment, did not have much inclination for religion, a trait that was also observed when he came to court. If he had had a better heart, he would have been the perfect courtier due to his appearances:

He is a robust and able broad-shouldered man, of almost guard height, does not look bad, has a rather long nose, a cheerful face, playful and penetrating eyes, a free gait, does well on horseback. The latitude in his presence, when being around the King and among the court cavaliers, could not have been greater had he been a born nobleman and brought up at court. In short, because of his personality and the qualities of his soul, he could have been a lovable courtier and capable statesman, had his heart been better than one now has the right to conclude it is or has been.

It is a remarkable passage that differs completely from everything else published about Struensee in the months after his fall.⁶¹⁸ According to Prah, there was even some "state good" in Struensee, which is evidenced by all his measures and improvements. No one can deny that. Had he but built it on godliness and religion, Struensee would have been a great minister. "He had sense", Prah states. Just as clearly, he affirms that "the King loved Struensee", otherwise he would never made it so far. And no one doubts that the Queen, too, loved Struensee. According to Prah, Struensee already had a full-blown plan in 1769, which he began to implement on his return from Holstein in 1770. Prah emphasizes the impossibility of de-

617 [Niels Prah], *Greve Johan Friderich Struensee, forrige Kongelige Danske Geheime-Cabinets-Minister og Maitre des Requettes, Hans Levnets-Beskrivelse og Skiebne udi de sidste Aaringer i Danemark, [...] samt en kort Efterretning om hans Fald, Arrest, Forhører og Beskyldninger, som hidindtil ere lagte for Dagen imod ham*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (10 March 1772).

618 Descriptions of Struensee's looks and physiognomy, and thus an explanation to the sexual attraction which dominated the Queen, would become a main ingredient in the fictional representation of Struensee in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Langen 2018, 87–93.

scribing the channels used by Struensee to implement this plan. Whether this is a hint to the love affair with the Queen or a comment on the complicated political game at court is unclear.

Prahl's review of the Struensee reforms begins with the Press Freedom Ordinance of 14 September 1770, quoted in its entirety. Struensee is praised for the introduction of Press Freedom, but its authors are taunted by Prahl for attacking people and various social groups, and the ruthless writers kept publishing as long as people wanted to buy their publications. Then follows pages and pages about court life, all kinds of political initiatives, institutional reorganization and so on. Some Cabinet orders were acclaimed, others, like the ordinance of 13 June 1771 on abolition of sentences for extra-marital sex, made Struensee "hated and in bad repute", and many held the view that raising children outside marriage had now been introduced by law. Prahl subsequently mentions the birth and baptism of Princess Louisa Augusta and states that "it would be a great mistake to omit the birth of this Princess from the life story of Struensee" (71). He needs say no more.

Prahl constantly discusses matters in close connection to legal material sources and several of the key regulations and Cabinet Orders are cited. He mentions how the word "Cabinet Order" appeared more and more frequently, and since they were written in German, everyone could see the spirit of Struensee in them, even "the heart and mind of Struensee against Denmark". But the entanglement of language, reforms, and exercise of power cannot be explained in strict categorization of good and bad. The many changes had been made to cure the diseases that had crept into society. Perhaps, Prahl considers, Struensee, in the capacity of being a physician, was used to act quickly and resorting to "severe measures". At least, that was what he did as "state physician", but this instead amounted to a "state error". Prahl mentions how many people, at the time, ironically referred to "this happy period of physicians in the present century". The booklet ends with a poem revolving around Struensee as a doctor. After a series of medical references, the poem states that "your evil can only be healed/ by the steel cure of the executioner". Solely the cold steel of the axe can serve as remedy. Struensee must die. With its mocking and morbid tone, the poem dramatically differs from the far more balanced presentation and meticulous source-criticism of the previous narrative. As mentioned, Prahl's booklet stands out from the large corpus of Struensee literature because it is written with ambition of making a historical account based on the official sources to the political development during the Struensee rule, rather than the prevailing mix of moral condemnation and fantasies, and, quite importantly, without employing the prevailing theological framework narrative at all.

A Pamphlet Hag and Authors Haggling

Even for the experienced contemporary reader of Press Freedom Writings, it would have been difficult to obtain a comprehensive view of the wide range of Struensee literature and not least to form an opinion about events from reading the complex textual mixture. Reflections on the many publications and their reception are taken up in *A significant Conversation between a Girl and an old Woman, actually undertaken at Amager-Torv, about the latest Times and Writings*.⁶¹⁹ At the main square of Amager-torv, the author listens to a conversation between an old hag with a basket full of pamphlets and penny prints on her arm and a maid with a market bucket in her hand. The old crone tells that Struensee and his friends will be executed within a week. The maid asks in what way they will be executed, and the old woman states – with a face as if she had the sentence in her pocket – that they will be burned, which will happen soon, so that no one will have the opportunity to commit suicide in prison. The girl then asks which writings the old lady has in her basket. Only decent ones, no trash, the old woman assures. “I have *The bold Power of the Royal Dockyard* in my basket. My husband reads it every night when he returns from work”. What she refers to is one of Brun’s pamphlets on the Great Clean-Up.⁶²⁰ Her husband has read it three times and her nine-year-old son prefers it to his catechism. Already, he knows three pages by heart. But the maid does not want that book – the 16-pages pamphlet is referred to as a book.

Then the crone presents the girl with Struensee’s letter to the King which she has just read with her daughter.⁶²¹ They both cried bitterly for two entire hours. Is it really written by Struensee? Yes, the hag assures. See for yourself, it has his name at the bottom. But is he not forbidden to have pen and ink, and is he not chained so that he would have difficulty writing? That is true, but others can write for him and that amounts to the same as if he had written it himself. As is seen, the preferences of the readerships are gender specific. While father and son read action, mother and daughter prefer tear-jerkers.

Don’t you have any nice songs? Indeed, one about Haman, but that is too sad for the maid. But do you have any songs about the demolished houses and those women who were removed from the Misses Offices? No, ugh, the hag does not sell that kind of song. But she does have some prints, i. e. of The Devil and Struensee. Most likely, it is the woodcut entitled *The Power of the Devil in the World* printed by

619 [anonymous], *En betydelig Samtale imellem en Pige og en gammel Kiærling, virkelig holdet paa Amager-Torv, om disse senere Tider og Skrifter og sandfærdig berettet af en Tilhørende*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (24 February 1772).

620 [Martin Brun], *Den brave Holmens Magtes glade Indtog i de smukke Huse paa den merkværdige St. Antonii Dag 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (24 January 1772).

621 [Martin Brun], *Struensees Skrivelse til Kongen paa sine og Medfangnes Vegne [...] Allerunderdanigst indleveret i Anledning af Geburts-Dagen den 29. Jan. 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (5 February 1772).

Svare, depicting a blindfolded Struensee holding the Devil's tail, while two minor auxiliary devils carry the train of Struensee's cloak (see chapter 6). It looks awful, the girl says, but the old woman says that her husband is very enthusiastic about the print and has hung it on the wall. The maid would never put it on the lid of her chest of drawers even if she got it for free. Suddenly, the old hag is knocked over by a passing porter so that the publications are all over the street. She takes to collecting them – and the story ends.

On the one hand, the pamphlet is a condescending representation of the old woman and the maid as cityscape stereotypes, but it is also a testimony of a verbal response – albeit caricatured – to specific written products. The old woman is introduced offering verbal reports on the forthcoming execution of Struensee, a piece of information that could not be obtained from the writings in the basket. In that sense, she represents more than what she sells, she herself contributes to the urban communication flow with rumors adding to the texts in her basket.

The conversation is about publications and their use, just as the materiality of the pamphlets and prints comes to life when they fall out of the basket and spill on the street. Furthermore, it is interesting that the old hag not only appears in the role of saleswoman, but also as an expert reader guiding buyers with reference to her own experiences and not least to her husband's and children's use of the publications. In that sense, the old woman is ascribed a good portion of agency by a narrator who otherwise distances himself – obviously a male narrator – from the seller and the customer. Moreover, different ways of reading are sketched; from the boy learning by heart (like when practicing catechism) and the mother and girl reading to be emotionally touched. Last but not least, this situational representation reflects – albeit again in a caricatured way – mechanisms of contemporary Struensee perceptions and one of the communication situations in which the most burning topics of the time are discussed.

Another reaction to the many publications about the events of 17 January 1772, was communicated as a poem in *Adresseavisen* as early as 11 February (no. 25). The anonymous author – using the tag “E.” – is very critical against the writings and compares the authors to the sailors going berserk, humiliating and abusing women and looting houses during the Great Clean-Up Party. Now the poets have taken over the fury of the sailors. They are hungry and in need of money, and just like the sailors were robbing houses and violating prostitutes, the poets steal topics and abuse the muses. They write about popular joy, about prostitutes, and state prisoners. Village clergymen, parish clerks, and schoolmasters act as virtuous mouthpieces and address with their tasteless glee and bad rhymes the lowest common denominator. Only one of the many publications finds favor in the eyes of the anonymous critic.⁶²² The fact that a poem, only 25 days after the coup, was published sneering at

⁶²² The only text the critic commended was P. F. Suhm's letter to the King (see Chapter 3). See Holm 1885, 50, endnote 1

the poor quality of the many writings, reveals that printers had been extremely busy, and that in this short period a very large number of texts of various kinds was published. The poem by “E.” gave rise to vitriolic strife in the pages of *Adresseavisen* between a handful of anonymous debaters, the poet Johannes Ewald being the only fighting under his own name. He protested against the poem being ascribed to his pen, simultaneously defending the rights of the pamphleteers against “E.”. Soon all of the debaters insinuated that their opponents were really Struensee supporters in disguise. This was now the worst possible accusation. This strife was also addressed by the new, anonymous *Critical Journal on Everything that has been written on the Occasion of 17th January* which was published by book printer Stein as two booklets of 24 and 32 pages respectively, perhaps edited by I. C. Grave (cf. Chapter 14).⁶²³ The first issue was advertised for sale as early as 26 February.

As had become commonplace during the Press Freedom, writers now set out to attack writers. The tone, however, was becoming more poisonous. In this particular case, the abovementioned poet “E.” in *Adresseavisen* was the victim. The *Journal* agreed with “E.” that a large part of the publications was miserably written: “It is deplorable that an army of bad rhymers and bad writers put shame on taste, shame on themselves, become a burden to the common people and a resentment to the right-minded” (3–4). But the journal author is disgusted by the rudeness with which the poet describes the publications and not least how he lumps them all together. The author goes on to scold the poet calling him a malevolent spider who gets aroused by the hum of flies. The reader can be assured that the list presented in the *Journal* will be different. The author reveals that he is a “a hater of all kinds of disorder” and has made an effort of finding a way to categorize the writings and has ended up with a content assessment criterion and a division into three classes. The first contains writings that “reveal some wit or taste”, followed by writings that present no wit, but nevertheless may be of some pleasure to common people and do no harm to morality. The third class consists of writings devoid of any wit and ripe with indecent nonsense.

In the first class, some writings are hailed for being written with a noble heart and powerful minds, while other seems to be less magnanimous. Not surprisingly, well-known clergymen such as Hee, Priebst, Münter, and Schönheyder receive praise for their upright and well-turned sermons of thanksgiving and well-chosen Bible quotes in connection with the fall of Struensee. In the second class, the poem *On the Occasion* is presented as maybe the first publication to hit the streets after the coup, and another one of the earliest publication *Copenhagen Memorandum* is described as written “according to the taste of common people using a cheerful

623 [I. C. Grave], *Critisk Journal over alt hvad der er skrevet i Anledning af den 17de Januarii*. [1–2. Hefte], Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (26 February and 5 June 1772).

melody”.⁶²⁴ Probably, this was not unconditionally positive. Following the mentioning of the writings in the second class, the quality – according to the editor – seems to be declining, and many are characterized by their appeal to the lower classes, e. g., when a pamphlet is said to be “composed by a well-educated sailor” or that a ballad is suitable for being sung then sitting at the spinning wheel or the milk bucket by “female lovers of ballads”. Thus, once more stereotypes are presented regarding sailors as the most socially disadvantaged agents and female commoners’ reading preferences. This is even more explicit when the content of a pamphlet is described as female twaddle.⁶²⁵ Social status, gender, gossip, and rumors play center stage in the assessment of one pamphlet which is described as a fetus of urban rumors written with the purpose of deceiving common people.⁶²⁶

Apparently, the *Journal* did not experience roaring sales, and publication stopped after two issues, and readers were thus deprived of the opportunity of being presented with the writings belonging to the third class, viz. the writings devoid of wit and full of indecent nonsense. It underlines our observation of drastically declining production and sales after the execution of Struensee that the second issue was published in early May (*Adresseavisen*, 5 May 1772) and there was apparently little interest in a third issue any longer. *Fortegnelsen* was not impressed with the competing *Journal* and in a review the criteria that the *Journal* was using in order to distinguish classes of pamphlets were challenged.⁶²⁷ What is meant, for example, by “wit” which is made a characteristic of the writings in the first class? A concluding comment touches upon what *Fortegnelsen* seldom fails to mention, namely that the printers were interested in sales only – and not in publishing texts of quality.

A Successful Scare Campaign

The new regime benefited immensely from the many writings attacking Struensee and paying homage to the royal coup-plotters. Whether priests, poets, or pamphleteers they acted as agents of public history, so to speak, creating and supporting a semi-official version, though with some variations, of the coup focusing on the evil

⁶²⁴ F. U. F. Treu, *I Anledning af Fredagen den 17 Januari 1772, den Freds og Frelsesdag for Tvillingen*, no place of publication, 1772 (20 Jan. 1772); and [anonymous], *Kjøbenhavns Pro Memoria over den meget merkverdige Begivenhed, som skede den 17 Januarii 1772. Sangviis forfattet under den Melodie Det største Glædes Flag*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (21 January 1772).

⁶²⁵ [anonymous], *En betydelig Samtale imellem en Pige og en gammel Kiærling, virkelig holdet paa Amager-Torv, om disse senere Tider og Skrifter og sandfærdig berettet af en Tilhørende*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (24 February 1772).

⁶²⁶ [anonymous], *Den i kort Tid ophøiede men ligesaa hastig nedstødte store Nordiske Tyv eller Struensees rette og sande Caracteer. Forfattet af en Jammerlig Skribent*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (3 February 1772).

⁶²⁷ *Fortegnelsen*, 5 July 1772, no. 196.

scheme of Struensee and his cohort and the divine intervention blocking the carrying out of his plan. They also contributed to a historization of the Struensee regime by creating a discourse on regicide, usurpation, and political monstrosity with numerous historical examples of corresponding wickedness. In this way, the actions of the coup leaders gained popular legitimacy. Since there were no officially approved or conclusive versions of the events coming from political representatives of the new regime – besides the statements presented through the indictment and following death sentence of Brandt and Struensee – the floor was kept open for authors to actively create narratives inspired by historical examples of political monstrosity or based on rumours, and the ensuing moral, political, and religious condemnations of the short Struensee regime.

12 A European Cause Célèbre – the Struensee Affair and its International Reverberations

The Execution of two Counts and the Banishment of a Queen

In 1773, the year after the coup in Copenhagen, an anonymous, German pamphlet appeared, titled *Prophecy on the certain, expected Fulfilment of the old Saying: Tandem bona caussa triumphat*, that is, a good cause will eventually triumph.⁶²⁸ It looked back on the chain of Struensee events, musing on the international fame of the affair: “The event happening last year in Copenhagen is so well-known that I find it of no use to repeat it here. For newspaper-writers, it was a matter with which they filled their empty pages all through a half-year. Through them, it has been heard in all of Europe, and through strangers, even black diplomats, it has also not been concealed from other continents” (11–12). It was a world event as much as such a thing was possible in the emerging international public sphere of the eighteenth century, and the anonymous author, F. W. J. Freiherr von Krohne, even toys with the idea that in a remote future, one Danish king Frederik or Christian no. 50 will have goose pimples when he reads about it, and he will be unable to erase the event from history-books, even if he spends millions trying. Here, Krohne implicitly refers to the machinations of the Danish court to contain the spread of non-standard versions of what had happened, both by putting pressure on international media and seizing stocks of foreign pamphlets for destruction. What were those spectacular events, how did news and pamphlets about them spread through the international public sphere, and what did the new Danish government do in order to control information?

On 20 January, a few days after the coup events, an Inquisition Commission was appointed to prosecute the two imprisoned counts, Brandt and Struensee, and their circle of swiftly incarcerated followers. As members of the commission were appointed Luxdorph and one of the coup leaders Ove Guldberg, as well as the new lord mayor of Copenhagen G. A. Braem, author and deputy in the German Chancellery A. G. Carstens, law professor Peder Kofod Ancher, judge, baron Jens Krag-Juel-Vind, Supreme Court prosecutor E. E. Schmidt, archivist and judge F. C. Sevel, as well as attorney general Henrik Stampe. It was a selection of elite officials with judicial expertise, loyal to the coup group, with the significant political addition of one of the central coup-plotters, the theologian and court official Ove Guldberg. A smaller squad of three – colonel Köller and Guldberg of the coup group, along with his friend, Suhm the historian – was appointed to investigate the papers confiscated

628 [Freiherr J. W. F. von Krohne], *Weissagung von der gewiß zu erwartenden Erfüllung des alten Sprichworts: Tandem bona caussa triumphat*, [Eventually, a good cause will win], no place or printer, 1773.

from the belongings of the two Counts and collected from various royal castles. Another nine-man commission took care of investigating and interrogating the Queen, and finally, a larger commission of no less than 35 members was appointed, on 14 March, to decide upon the destiny of the royal marriage, with a considerable overlap with the nine-persons commission mentioned. Guldberg was the only person to become member of all four commissions, signaling his increasing political power behind the scenes in the new situation. The commissions knew they were expected to act quickly, and there was hardly much doubt among their elite members about the issue of guilt; the paramount decision to be made was the final destinies of the two main prisoners. The purpose of the Brandt-Struensee commission was, briefly stated, “before the beginning of inquisition to scrutinize their papers and letters, for therefrom to learn what paragraphs you properly have to seek enlightened, then to pursue investigation, and then to judge how the guilty should be judged and punished according to law”.⁶²⁹ Guilt was a premise, not a conclusion.

From 21 January to 19 February, the commission pertaining to the two main culprits and their associates convened every day except Sundays, continuing with less frequency until 13 June. A total of 47 meetings included a month of interrogation of Struensee and Brandt beginning 25 February. On the second day of inquiry, Struensee confessed his relationship with the Queen, although he partly transferred to Caroline Matilda the responsibility for the development of their relationship. He was cooperative and, at the request of the Commission, drafted a statement of defence in which he explained and justified his actions – more on this document below. The proceedings were not public, but Struensee’s defence was soon disseminated in German publications without specified place of printing.⁶³⁰ His main message was that he had, in all respects, carried out the King’s wishes as he interpreted them and that he had done nothing without the King’s consent. On the other hand, he took full responsibility for what happened, and at no point in his defence did he mention that the King was erratic and unwilling or unable to fulfil his duties as king. He described, in turn, this issue in a separately written letter in French, in preparation for the future medical treatment of the King, a document picked up by Hereditary Prince

629 “forinden Inquisitionen begynder, haver at igiennemsee deres [d. v. s. de arresterede Personers] Papiirer og Brevskaber, for deraf at erfare, hvad for Artikler I egentlig haver at søge oplyst, og derefter med Undersøgningen at fortfare, samt at paakiende, hvorledes de Skyldige effter Loven bør ansees og straffes.”, Hansen 1927–41, vol. I, XI.

630 E. g. [J. Fr. Struensee, F. Wivet, etc.] *Schriften, die in Sachen des ehemaligen Grafen Johann Friedrich Struensee, bey der königl. Inquisitions-Commission zu Copenhagen wider und für ihn übergeben sind; mit der von ihm eigenhändig entworfenen Apologie und dem über ihn gefällten Urtheile*, (no place of printing), 1772; [J. Fr. Struensee, E. Brandt] *Des ehemaligen Grafens Johann Friederich Struensee Vertheidigung an die Königliche Commiſion gerichtet und von ihm selbst entworfen. Nebst einem Schreiben des ehemaligen Grafen Brandt an gedachte Commiſion. Aus dem Dänischen übersetzt, 1772 and Brandts Proceß als eine Fortsetzung der Schriften, die in Sachen des ehemal. Grafen Joh. Fr. Struensee wider und für ihn übergeben sind*, no place or printer, 1773.

Frederik and filed among his private papers.⁶³¹ Ultimo March, the end of main investigations was approaching, and the King – that is, the new State Council, reconstructed in February – ordered a verdict to be reached, stressing that no possibility of appeal should be considered. On 23 March, public prosecutor Frederik W. Wivet was appointed prosecutor in the case, while the lawyers Peter Uldall and Oluf Bang were named defenders of Struensee and Brandt, respectively. Verdicts were reached on 25 April, executions completed on 28 April, and not much later, the sentence texts were published on 8 May in both Danish, German, and French versions.⁶³² Only then, the arguments of the main commission were accessible to the public.

The sentences were cruel: both Counts were convicted under the 1683 Danish Law of King Christian V in which lese-majesty, article 6-4-1, was the most serious crime of all. Struensee was found guilty on no less than nine points, the decisive ones being his relation to the Queen (which was mentioned, however, only euphemistically), his assumption of power to sign Cabinet Orders on the King's behalf, and his alleged isolation of the King from other contacts. Brandt was sentenced for having bitten the King's finger during a scuffle, and for supporting and concealing Struensee's political actions. Both were also convicted for extracting funds from the King's treasury through fraud, an accusation which was hardly true. The verdicts were handed over to the King for approval, which meant that he, as supreme judge of the realm, could pardon or mitigate the punishment. Some of the commissioners expected some form of royal pardon or reduction of sentence. Rumor had it that the King was ready for a reduction of sentences but was stifled by unnamed coup-plotters. The King confirmed the verdict on 27 April.⁶³³

Executions were completed at great speed. On the morning of 28 April, more than half of the population of Copenhagen gathered around a wooden scaffold

631 Lassen, 1891, 219–303; an English translation of the document with comments: Schioldann 2013.

632 The Inquisition Commission (Guldberg, Luxdorph, etc.), *Dom, afsagt af den anordnede Inquisitions-Commission paa Christiansborg Slot, den 25. Aprilis 1772 over Johan Friderich Struensee. Med den paafulgte Kongelige Approbation af 27. Aprilis 1772*, Copenhagen: F. C. Godiche, 1772 (8 May 1772); The Inquisition Commission (Guldberg, Luxdorph, etc.), *Dom, afsagt af den anordnede Inquisitions-Commission paa Christiansborg Slot, den 25. Aprilis 1772 over Enevold Brandt. Med den paafulgte Kongelige Approbation af 27. Aprilis 1772*, Copenhagen: F. C. Godiche, 1772 (8 May 1772); The Inquisition Commission (Guldberg, Luxdorph, etc.), *Sentence prononcée, par la Commission d'Enquête autorisée à cette effet et tenue au Château de Christiansbourg le 25 d'avril 1772, contre Jean Frideric Struensée et approuvée par Le Roi le 27. du mois susdit. Traduite sur l'original*, Copenhagen: Peter Steinmann, 1772 (8 May 1772); The Inquisition Commission (Guldberg, Luxdorph, etc.), *Sentence prononcée, par la Commission d'Enquête autorisée à cette effet et tenue au Château de Christiansbourg le 25 d'avril 1772, contre Enevold Brandt, avec l'approbation Du Roi donnée le 27 Avril 1772*, Copenhagen: Peter Steinmann, 1772 (8 May 1772); The Inquisition Commission (Guldberg, Luxdorph, etc.), *Urtheile der Königlichen Inquisitions-Commission über die Grafen, Struensee und Brandt, mit der darauf erfolgten Königlichen Approbation. Aus dem Dänischen übersetzt*. Copenhagen A. F. Stein, 1772 (8 May 1772).

633 The verdicts: Hansen 1927–1941, vol. I, 212–236; Langen 2018, 62–67.

erected at Øster Fælled – the Eastern Commons – to the north of the city to watch the punishment ceremony, guarded by six chains of soldiers. After being ritually questioned by each their priest, Brandt and Struensee were beheaded, in that order. Each execution followed the same pattern. First, the coat of arms of each was publicly broken asunder as a sign that they lost their noble dignity before they died, then the right hand was cut off with an axe, finally the head, which was lifted up by the hair and displayed to the crowd by the henchman. After that, the body was quartered, roped down from the scaffold and loaded onto a wagon to be driven off.

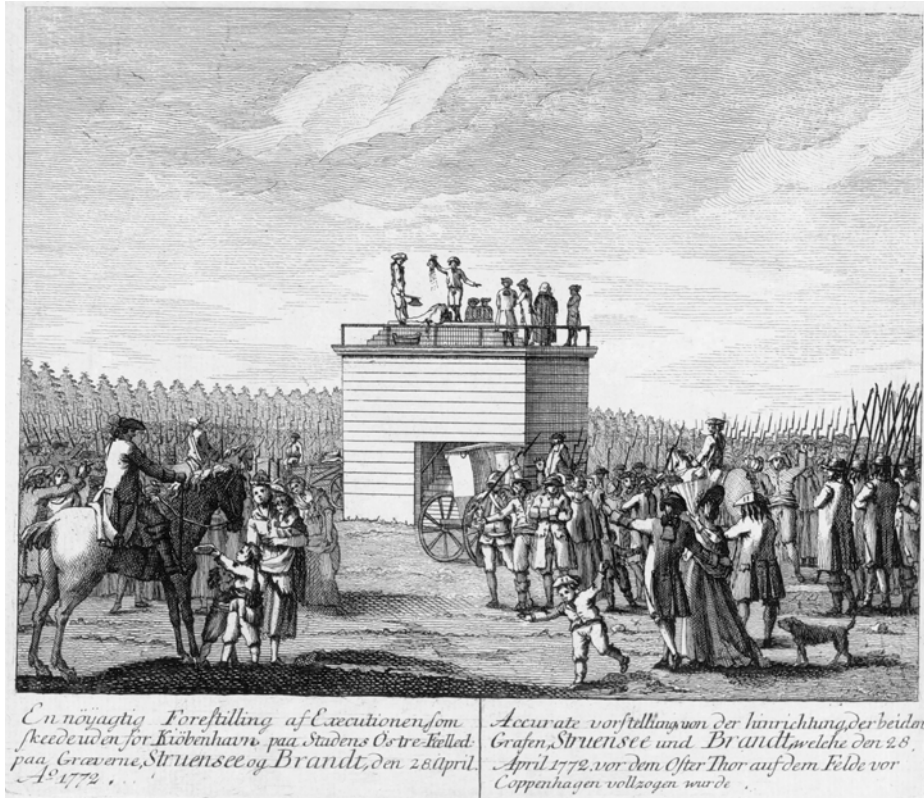


Fig. 46: The classic, detailed representation of the execution of the two fallen Counts on 28 April 1772. More than half of the population of Copenhagen had taken the trip out to Øster Fælled, and the depiction also gives a view into the Copenhagen lower class with the family begging at the lower left. *A precise Representation of the Execution (En nøjagtig Forestilling af Executionen, som skeede uden for Kiöbenhavn paa Stadens Östre-Fælled paa Græverne, Struensee og Brandt, den 28. April. A:o 1772)*, copper, Copenhagen 1772. © Royal Danish Library.



Fig. 47: The first line of the caption on this popular and explicit broadsheet bluntly points to the bloody and horrifying realities of the executions: "O, what a miserable sight of carcasses and bodies". In the woodcut, the quartered body parts of Brandt and Struensee are being roped down from the scaffold to a carriage to be taken away for display. *Depiction of the Execution of the Twain Counts Struensee and Brandt, 28 April 1772 (Afbildning paa Henrettelsen af de Tvende Grever Struensee og Brandt, d. 28 Apr. 1772)*, colored woodcut, Copenhagen 1772. © Royal Danish Library.

Struensee waited in the coach below with his priest Münter during the dismemberment of Brandt. Münter had arranged for the carriage to be turned so that Struensee could not see what was going on up on the scaffold, but he was, no doubt, able to

hear Brandt screaming and the noise of the spectators. Reportedly, it took three ax blows to finally sever Struensee's head from his body. Later rumors had it that the henchman also cut off Struensee's penis, showing it to the crowd as a sign that his adultery with the Queen had now reached a definitive end, but that is an anecdote without evidence. The corpses were transported to Vester Fælled – the Western Commons – to the southwest of the city where they were put on public display on wheels and stakes close to the main entrance road to the city.⁶³⁴ A young Norwegian, Valentin Knudsen, witnessed the executions and described them in a letter to his sister in Tønsberg. He concluded his letter with the words: "What their crimes really have been, I do not know, for the truth has been kept a secret, which is reasonable, and city gossip I do not believe, therefore I cannot give you any reliable intelligence".⁶³⁵

The Queen's destiny proved more difficult for the new Danish government to negotiate because of the delicate fact that she was English. Indeed, one of the reasons for the court to pick the young Caroline Matilda as new Danish Queen in the first place, six years earlier, had been political rapprochement between England and Denmark-Norway. Now, all of a sudden, this connection was a liability. The case against Caroline Matilda went ahead during March. After persistently denying any love affair with Struensee, she finally gave in to pressure – and not least to the commission's manipulative claim that her denial would harm Struensee, who had admitted the relationship. A commissioner suggested that Struensee could face a very harsh punishment for perjury if she continued to refuse. A string of witnesses also confirmed the Queen's infidelity. She confessed on 9 March. The King, accompanied by the Hereditary Prince, had Caroline Matilda's confession conveyed when commissioners returned from Kronborg after one of the interrogations. The King's bed of marriage had been defiled, and the 35-man commission decided divorce was the next step. On 6 April, Christian divorced Caroline Matilda.

Through its Copenhagen envoy, R. M. Keith, England had reacted aggressively against the unconditional incarceration of an English Princess, and already late January, George III had ordered the Royal Navy to prepare for a rescue action.⁶³⁶ Through the following months, Keith struggled to prevent divorce by the threat of war, but he was long denied access to the Danish court, to foreign minister von Osten, as well as to the imprisoned Queen – on the Danish pretext that the whole thing was a family issue and negotiations should take place directly between the two cousin sovereigns involved. That, of course, was a strategy of the Danes to keep Keith at arm's length and prevent him from functioning as a communication link between the King and the isolated Queen, and at the same time, it allowed for the

634 The execution: Bech 1989, 374–382; Bregnsbo 2007, 168–169; Langen 2008, 389–390.

635 Ludvig Daae 1887, 798–800.

636 For the complicated Danish-British negotiations through the spring of 1772, see Tillyard 2006, Chapter 5.

Danes to push through divorce against British pressure. The relation between the two courts grew cooler during March and April, and a British naval expedition force was under preparation in Plymouth and Portsmouth. The next explosive issue after the early April divorce was: what should now happen to the Queen? English war threats still loomed on the horizon. The original plan by the coup-makers had been banishment for life to the town of Aalborg in the North of Jutland, and a miniature court was under preparation at the local castle of Aalborghus there, but in mid-April, as the transferral of Caroline Matilda to Aalborg was imminent, the English King through Keith put his foot down and refused to comply. Only hours before the British naval expedition force was set to leave the ports in southern England for Copenhagen, Keith was able to negotiate a solution: she would be extradited instead to the castle of Celle, a town in British-governed Hanover in Northwestern Germany, little more than 100 km from the southern borders of the Danish realm, while preserving her title as a Queen. Probably, the Danish government was relieved to see her out of the country. In late May, she was picked up in Elsinore by three English naval ships and sailed away in early June – to live in isolation but for three years until she died from scarlet fever in 1775, aged 23. She had to leave both of her infant kids behind in Denmark, the toddler Crown Prince Frederik and the fruit of her affair with Struensee, tiny Louise Augusta, not yet one year of age. Simultaneously with her departure, the last of the imprisoned Struensee loyalists arrested in January were freed, some of them sent to remote parts of the realm. The only one receiving a serious sentence was the officer S. O. Falkenskiold, close to Struensee through the last year of his reign, who was banished for life to the small Norwegian fortress islet of Munkholm next to Trondhjem. In one of the many ironies of Press Freedom, Falkenskiold shared his stay at Munkholm with the furious theologian pamphleteer Christian Thura who got permission to preach for the other prisoners there. So, we may imagine the educated Struensee loyalist forced to abide with Thura's Old Lutheran ramblings as a sort of extra punishment.



Map. 7: Copenhagen Environments. Relevant locations in the immediate surroundings of Copenhagen, e. g. castles, mansions, and scaffolds. The map also includes locations at the Citadel and in the Christianshavn neighborhood. Information is presented on Hersleb's map of 1770. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

A Cause Célèbre

International attention had been fueled already by the spectacular coup events of January, and the dramatic details of the developing Struensee affair not only stamped themselves deeply into Danish collective memory, but also caused immediate curiosity and uproar among European publics. Papers and journals, particularly in North Germany and the international publication hub of Holland, continuously reported thoroughly on the dramatic events in Copenhagen in German and French through the spring of 1772. The public concern of the English press was granted by the acute involvement of a young English Princess in a starring role. Also, the press in America took notice. What was by many perceived as a bloody, cruel, and old-fashioned if not obsolete punishment rite in April only added to the burgeoning international engrossment with current political metamorphoses in Copenhagen.⁶³⁷

Luxdorph took care to collect the ongoing issues of the *Hamburgischer Correspondent*, one of the most important newspapers in Europe, covering the Struensee affair in great detail through the spring of 1772.⁶³⁸ Publishing the news stream from Copenhagen as a frontpage serial written by a local correspondent, the *Correspondent* granted that the Struensee affair and the change of power in Denmark-Norway gained a widespread audience in German-reading lands.⁶³⁹ The coverage was well-informed and went into great detail, following e.g. the interrogations not only of Brandt and Struensee but also of the list of other imprisoned suspects and charting Struensee's struggle to become a Christian through his education by visits of the German priest Dr. Münter in his prison cell. Already in the *Correspondent* issue of 2 May, the double execution was described in great detail in an extra insert section of the paper, only four days after it had taken place outside of Copenhagen. This was professional journalism. Other German newspapers followed suit, such as the competing *Hamburgische Neue Zeitung*, the *Mannheimer Zeitung*, the *Gazette de Berlin* or the *Gazette de Cologne*. From Holland, important international publications like the *Gazette de Leyde*, *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, and *Gazette d'Utrecht* related the Danish

637 The international press coverage of the Struensee affair would merit a whole independent research project. Here, we shall focus upon the ensuing pamphlet wars.

638 Luxdorph vol. 3.1.40–48, published in Hamburg. The full name of the paper was *Staats-und Gelehrte Zeitung des Hamburgischen unpartheyischen Correspondenten*. Founded in the 1720s, it was Hamburg's oldest newspaper and was, during long periods, the most influential and widely read newspaper in Europe. As indicated by its title, it boasted a network of its own foreign correspondents. Luxdorph's Collection has ten issues from February through May 1772, all of them with detailed frontpage reports from Copenhagen, 12 February, 28 February, 3 April, 15 April, 18 April, 22 April, 25 April, 29 April, 1 May, 2 May 1772, the latter adding an extra insert section to the report of the main section.

639 We do not know the identity of the Hamburg paper's agile Copenhagen correspondent, but the early and detailed information about the progress of pastor Münter's conversion of Struensee in his cell (alleged to having taken place mid-March and reported in Hamburg by 3 April) indicates it would have been an author from the German circles of Copenhagen, very close to Münter.

events to French-reading audiences, supplemented by Dutch-language media like the *Leydse Courant*. In the Spanish Netherlands, also catering to the large French market, international journals like the *Journal Encyclopédique*, the *Journal Politique* and the *Annales Beligiques* spread the news; in Spain itself, the *Mercurio Historico y Politico*; in Sweden, *Stockholms Post-Tidningar*.⁶⁴⁰ So, continental European public was informed with considerable speed and a quite comprehensive coverage in both of the two international languages of the continent, German and French. Local press further disseminated information from such sources.

In England, many papers and magazines were active: *London Magazine*, *London Chronicle*, *Oxford Magazine*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Town and Country Magazine* and many others; in Scotland, the *Edinburgh Amusement* followed events in a long series of articles, while the *Hibernian Magazine* informed the Ireland public; in the British colony in North America, details about the Struensee case were reported by papers like *Pennsylvania Gazette*, *Virginia Gazette*, and *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*. Given the fact that papers of the period are often handed down but fragmentarily, the extant coverage is impressive. Most if not all main European news outlets and magazines would have carried detailed Copenhagen and Struensee news during the spring of 1772, peaking around the verdicts and executions in late April. Oftentimes, Hamburg is quoted as a source, and it seems like international editors were sure to skim the pages of the *Correspondent* in order to keep track of Danish events.

The English press was particularly intense in its coverage of what was quickly perceived as the unjust persecution of the country's own, innocent Princess. The English court attempted to contain information by barring the public communication outlet of *London Gazette* from reporting on the case but proved unable to stop the London press which was often able to report Danish news even before standard official channels when the King's regular courier from Copenhagen clocked in at court. Communications between London and Copenhagen took around ten days, and there was a race to be first with new information.

The anonymous "Junius" in the *Gentleman's Magazine* even made a strong principled case that the Hanoverian court in London was no private family, and that the public interest of state should grant the press the license to relate even the most minute details of the evolving crisis. Simultaneously, Caroline Matilda's isolation in Kronborg – where she was not allowed to communicate freely with her brother in London, nor to see the English envoy R. M. Keith until the middle of April when the divorce was settled – made space for free invention in the somber descriptions of her incarceration there. Similarly, London press rumors had it that the execution of the Queen had been prevented, by a hair's breadth and in the very last moment, by a

640 The first five volumes of the *Journal Encyclopédique* of Bouillon contained detailed information from Copenhagen, stemming, among other sources, from Hamburg.

brave intervention by Mr. Keith.⁶⁴¹ The Queen's official innocence, however, was quickly doubted in the London Press – already on 11 February, the *London Magazine* reported that “the Queen's fidelity to the King's bed was long ago suspected”.⁶⁴² And after Struensee's and the Queen's confessions in late February and early March – be they voluntary, duped, forced, or even extorted by torture, as suspected by some – were proudly announced by the new Danish government, the London press gave up defense of her innocence and freely speculated upon the possibilities of divorce, exile, English-Danish conflict or even war, all while the courts of both countries strove to keep details of the intense negotiations secret, and the British navy was preparing for action in the Baltic Sea.

As an example of the level of information quickly spreading in the international press can be mentioned the report of the *Gazette de Leyde* of 4 February, little more than two weeks after the coup in Copenhagen. It was one of the leading francophone journals of the international public sphere, with an estimated 4,200 subscribers plus possibly another couple of thousands in pirate reprint.⁶⁴³ In four packed pages, a surprising amount of detail and analyses is presented, much of which was not at all public knowledge in Copenhagen at the time. Thus, the recent Fermentation period is presented with its “seditious posters and satires against persons in high places which were spread with a mission, announcing, about two months ago, the most violent crisis and had prepared the spirits for large events”. As to the coup preparation, the report relates the existence of two opposed political parties, one led by Struensee, the other by Juliana Maria; as to the coup itself the report emphasizes the uninitiated King's shock when woken by the coup-plotters; Guldberg's central role in preparing the documents ready for the King to sign; the names of all the coup-plotters, including Beringskiold, and all the honors and titles awarded to each of them after the coup; the curious double role of Rantzau as central coup-plotter and simultaneously Struensee's old Altona friend and benefactor; the names of all the arrested of 17 January; the names of the members of the Commission of Inquiry. To top it, the portrait of Struensee in the *Gazette de Leyde* is not at all derogatory. He is “a Lord, to tell the truth, of a hardly illustrious birth, having earlier practiced medicine in Altona, but with superior talents, selfless, full of beneficial plans for the Monarchy, & averse in his service to his Master.” The *Gazette* would continue to report, in great detail, on events in Copenhagen through spring, oftentimes on the front page. There was hardly an issue of the *Gazette* in 1772 without news from Denmark, sometimes with several different reports from sources in Hamburg and Copenhagen, and

⁶⁴¹ *London Chronicle*, 4 February 1772.

⁶⁴² Quoted from Tillyard 2006 233. The details of the long and complicated Danish-English conflict around Matilda's destiny in the spring of 1772 are covered by Tillyard 2006, Chapters 5–6.

⁶⁴³ Burrows 2002, 26; the numbers refer to the years around 1776. Burrows judges the total circulation of the international gazettes to have been 10 to 15,000 outside of France and a similar number inside. Many of the gazettes supported enlightenment positions in various grades, e. g. representative bodies, materialism, enlightened absolutism reforms.

its international readers would be considerably more well-informed about details of Danish events than readers of the *Adresseavisen* or *Berlingske Tidende* in Copenhagen.⁶⁴⁴

An anonymous Copenhagener, however, would not leave the 4 February claims of the *Gazette* uncommented, so in the *Gazette de Cologne*'s 10 March edition, a protest against the Dutch journal's 4 February account of things saw print, reprinted in Danish in the Copenhagen *Berlingske Tidende* on 30 March. The Copenhagener immediately starts with rectifying the *Gazette de Leyde*'s positive perception of Struensee:

Nobody should be ignorant that he, as against articles 7 and 26 of the Constitution of the Danish Realm, let himself have an authority which no subject can neither wish for nor exert without being guilty in lese-majesty, his previously established position had already subverted the old constitution of the country, but the immense power which he had now acquired for himself became so violent and so arbitrary that one believed to be suddenly taken from Copenhagen to Constantinople.

The Danish writer is knowledgeable about the Montesquieuan distinction between European monarchy and Asian despotism, accusing Struensee's government of the latter – while already assuming that lese-majesty is the relevant crime and, implicitly, execution the relevant punishment. Struensee robbed the royal treasury, the Copenhagener continues, he and his ilk encouraged to general debauchery and the corruption of morality, they ridiculed religion and did not observe the slightest degree of outward decency. “I, who am somewhat infidel, was finally forced to believe more than I had intended”, the author piously concludes his alternative portrayal of Struensee. He then continues to give what he claims to be the true version of events in the city. In this version, the King is in control and appears as the person leading and ordering the coup. Juliana Maria has no intention at all of taking part in governing, and it was not even necessary for Juliana Maria and her son to form any party, for trustworthy subjects offered their arms and their lives to save the Kingdom. After prudent caution, the two royals selected among the willing the coalition of Rantzau, Eickstedt, and Köller who stand out, in this account, as the core active group. Guldberg and Beringskiold, the planner and the now outcast initiator of the group, are not mentioned at all. So, a suitably cleansed chain of events is presented as the correct version of the contested morning of 17 January, minimizing the roles of Guldberg, Juliana Maria, and her son, while magnifying that of the King. It seems likely that the “Copenhagener” was a concoction of the new government, whose version of events he largely follows.

It is significant that his correction did not appear in the *Gazette de Leyde* on which we know the new Danish government tried to put pressure by more indirect

644 For instance, the entirety of the Struensee and Brandt sentences appeared as a feuilleton in the May-June issues of the *Gazette de Leyde*.

means. Probably, it was the Danish pressure on the paper which gave rise to the following vague correction in the *Gazette de Leyde* in its March 3 edition: “In order to observe an exact impartiality, we readily inform the Public that we have been informed that the recent News from Copenhagen show, more and more, that the first things we published in some of our letters, have been dictated by a partisan spirit and contain a number of falsehoods”. No particular information, however, is corrected. This seems to be as long as the *Gazette de Leyde* was willing to bow to Copenhagen pressure, and the detailed rectifications of the Copenhagener had to appear in a competing Francophone journal.⁶⁴⁵ The Copenhagen correction was disseminated elsewhere, appearing in both Danish and German versions.⁶⁴⁶ In any case, this small press skirmish in Leiden anticipated the much more detailed clashes to follow on the international pamphlet scene.

Intense international press reportage during events, however, was only the beginning. The amount of Danish Press Freedom Writings in the collections of leading international libraries testifies to the swift spread also of original pamphlets from Copenhagen.⁶⁴⁷ Suhm’s brief January letter *To the King* (see Chapter 3) coming hard on the heels of the coup was quickly reprinted in Norway, the Duchies, and translated into German, French and other languages, with its blunt and direct advice of the King, if not admonishing and alleging his partial guilt of events, and its discussion of the nature of the political obligations of an absolutist king.⁶⁴⁸ Even if Suhm’s pamphlet did not provide much detail about coup events, it unmistakably signaled that a decisive government change had happened, as well as announcing a critical discussion on the international scene of the responsibilities to his people of an absolutist king in Denmark and, by implication, elsewhere. Thus, a crucial aspect of the burgeoning public interest in the Danish events was the character and detail of absolutist rule. Some of the German-language pamphlets being published in Copenhagen would be immediately reprinted in German states, and soon, selections from the vast surge of Danish-language Press Freedom pamphlets on the Struensee affair of

645 Later, however, the *Gazette* was willing to forward the warning of the Danish government against the *Zuverlässige Nachricht* pamphlet’s French version, the *Détail Circonstancié* (in its 19 June issue), while the reason for the warning is now modified to refer to the fact that the pamphlet contains terrible rumors about Struensee’s bloody plans which have now been rejected by his sentence.

646 Such as in the *Altona Reichs-Postreuter*, 6 April 1772, thus published in the Danish realm.

647 To take but one example, the University Library of Bologna holds more than 50 Press Freedom Writings, pamphlets and woodcuts, in Danish originals.

648 E. g. *An den König von dem Herrn Conferenzrath Suhm*, Flensburg: Serringhausen 1772; *Seltenes Denkmahl patriotischer Freymüthigkeit, und grossmüthiger Königlicher Wahrheitsliebe; Aufgestellt vom Herrn Conferenzrath, Peter Friederich Suhm. Nebst der Ode an den Herrn Conferenzrath, Peter Friederich Suhm. Eine Gegenschrift. Beydes aus dem Dänischen übersetzt. Das beständige Wohl Dännmarks, auf Veranlassung des 17ten Januars 1772*, no place or printer, 1772 (12 February 1772); *Lettre au Roi, par Pierre Frederic Suhm, Conseiller de Conférence: Traduite du Danois, & revue par l’Auteur*, no place or printer, [1772].

the early spring of 1772 began to reappear in international versions, particularly in Germany. Several handfuls of Danish Press Freedom Writings were translated into Dutch through 1772 (see below). Versions of Danish pamphlets could be found also in Swedish, English, and French. In particular, the conversion reports of the two counts published in Copenhagen through the summer of 1772 went on to become international bestsellers in many languages and print runs for years to come.

Soon, after the first waves of newspaper reports and Danish originals in translation, international publishers began adding their own original pamphlets and writings by local authors and pundits adding further details, analyses, comments, evaluations, criticism, particularly in German, but also in Dutch, English, French, Swedish, etc. Translations of source documents from the Copenhagen trials such as Wivet's prosecution, Struensee's defense, and the two sentence documents of Brandt and Struensee appeared in different combinations in international pamphlets, which made it possible for international readers to make their own judgments of the increasingly famous or infamous court case. This second wave of international, critical digestion of the events continued unabashed from the summer of 1772 into 1773 and 1774 where the immediate news information of the spring months of 1772 was further elaborated, commented, and analyzed. Now, completely parallel counter-interpretations of the events would appear, as against the official Danish theological interpretation of the coup, on a range from serious, critical journalism over sentimental reporting to fake news, even fabricated disinformation.

Although little read on the continent, the English press also continued covering events thoroughly, offering counter-interpretations to the Danish theological miracle version, here again with a particular emphasis on the English Princess forced to vacate the Danish throne. The aim of Krohne's pamphlet cited above was to prophesy the return of Caroline Matilda from her Celle exile to the Danish court, if not throne, and her destiny would continue to ferment international curiosity through a number of years even after her death in 1775, particularly in England where the occupation with the sad destiny of the King's sister would result in many reports, ranging from political to emotional.⁶⁴⁹ Even for decades to come, summaries and analyses of the events of 1772 continued to appear in main European languages; in a certain sense the stream of publication may have dwindled but never definitely stopped, and interpretations of many different kinds have continued to appear until this day.⁶⁵⁰

In the Danish public, as we saw, a particular theological interpretation of coup events had been successfully established immediately after the coup. First, by the priestly spin campaign with thanksgiving sermons in late January and early February, then by the ensuing pamphlet publication by leading clergy through February

649 See Merethe Roos 2015.

650 This includes memories, academic investigations, novels, popular writings, etc., but also versions in other media such as operas, theater plays, feature films, comics, etc. See Schlösser 1931; Langen 2018b.

and March, and finally with the majority of busy pamphleteers adopting the claim that the coup was, in fact, a miraculous action by God Himself, directing the actions of the Queen Dowager and her son as his sacred representatives (see Chapter 10). If this campaign proved exemplarily successful in the Danish-Norwegian public, there was little guarantee that the new Danish government would be able to extend its spiritual air supremacy abroad where immense interest in Danish developments was boiling, both for sensationalist, sentimental, and political reasons.

A Non-Theological Coup Interpretation – the “Comprehensive Intelligence” Spreads in Europe

How did the international public react to the Danish events in more depth after the strong initial press coverage paralleling the events through the spring of 1772? And how did the new Danish government react? Already in Denmark itself, spring publications showed small cracks in the uniform support to the theological coup interpretation. We heard about Prahl’s *Description of the Life and Fate of Struensee* from March, the first Danish piece of writing attempting to give a source-based, descriptive account of events (see Chapter 11), rather than placing the main emphasis on God’s alleged miracle.

On 1 June, the *Adresseavisen* published a note that the newspaper had received a “most supreme order” to warn their readers that a certain pamphlet, *Comprehensive Intelligence*, from Thiele’s printshop, it was claimed, consisted but of “a mixture of fabrications and of impermissible untruths”.⁶⁵¹ As we heard, the pamphlet professed to provide a detailed account of the “secret conspiracy which was happily revealed in Copenhagen during the night between January 16 and 17.” A few days later, a further public note in *Adresseavisen* urged that the warning already given was universal and “pertained, in general, to all those small pamphlets which have been, without authorization published during these times about what happened January 17 [...] as there are, in all these writings, many partly incorrect and unreliable circumstances”.⁶⁵² Almost hesitantly, the coup government began intervening in the surge of spring 1772 pamphlets, not yet by censorship but by public warnings only. What was it in the *Comprehensive Intelligence* account of the coup which so worried the coup-plotters?

⁶⁵¹ *Adresseavisen* 1 June, no. 89. The full title of the anonymous pamphlet was [anonymous], *Udførlig Efterretning om den hemmelige Sammenrottelse, som lykkelig blev aabenbaret i Kiøbenhavn Natten imellem den 16 og 17 Jan. 1772. da ved Guds Bistand formedelst de Sammensvornes Fængselse, en betydeligmUlykke blev afvendt [...]. Tillige en kort Berætning om E. Brandt og J.F. Struensees ynkværdige dog salige Ende og sidste ustandene Dødsstraf*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (8 May 1772).

⁶⁵² *Adresseavisen*, 5 June 1772, no. 92.

The 32-page leaflet began with a description of the young Struensee's rebellion against his father of which we already heard (Chapter 11), but quickly leads into his ascension to the Danish court. There, he was ennobled through "the intercession of a certain high person", that is, the Queen who is often mentioned but never named in the booklet which portrays her as the main instigator behind Struensee's career as well as behind a plan to kill most of the royal family and make Struensee reign over Denmark-Norway under a new title of "Protector". For this purpose, the Queen and Struensee armed the castle, isolated and drugged the King, convincing him that all of it was for his protection. Struensee ordered general Eickstedt to support him, but instead he spilled the beans to Rantzau, and the two of them organized the coup group by addressing the Queen Dowager and her son, colonel Köller and count von Osten. This group, led by Rantzau, managed to get in contact with the King, making him sign the relevant documents. There follows a pretty detailed description of the arrests of Struensee and his followers – in both the cases of Struensee and the Queen, they only yielded when presented with drawn rapiers, it is claimed. Struensee's behavior during and after the arrest is depicted almost mockingly: faced with the plain conditions of a prison cell, the count tries to kill himself by smashing his own head into the wall. The pamphlet tracks the whole process with court case, conversion, and execution, portraying Struensee in no sympathetic terms, much like the mainstream of anti-Struensee literature of the spring.

The very coup process up to and including the morning of 17 January, however, is painted in some detail in the pamphlet. Some high-ranking people had been initiated into the plan for Struensee's takeover, and one officer had reported that it happened "in the presence of a high person"; once again, Caroline Matilda is indirectly exposed as main responsible for the whole Struensee scandal. The future coup-plotters hear of the Queen's plan and seek out The Queen Dowager and the Hereditary Prince to inform them about the pending catastrophe. As they hear about the planned betrayal, they cannot hold back the tears. The plotters – all mentioned by name, many of them correctly – continue to make preparations, and on the night of 17 January they go to the King, who is frightened by the unannounced visit. In a weeping voice The Queen Dowager says to him: "Your Majesty, my son, fear not, we come not as enemies, but as friends, with the purpose of rescuing us and the whole nation and with God's help to avert the danger that threatens us". Juliana Maria, however, is overwhelmed by grief and is too choked with tears to continue, which is why the Hereditary Prince and Rantzau have to take over. The King is afraid that the coup will lead to bloodshed but signs the orders he is brought after Rantzau has given assurance that he will take all probable dangers on his shoulders. Struensee and his accomplices are arrested, and the author continues describing the arrest of Caroline Matilda, who opposes and threatens Rantzau while swearing. She jumps out of bed and walks angrily back and forth across the floor. The narrator emphasizes that Rantzau virtuously keeps his hat in front of his eyes, so as not to see Caroline Matilda in nightwear. Eventually, Rantzau has to lead Caroline Matilda by the

hand and, with his rapier in the other, force her out into a waiting coach, which is why she curses him again. “I love God and am faithful to my King! adieu Madame”, is Rantzau’s final response to her attack.

This central part of the text, then, is a quite profane representation of concrete, real actions and actors, in no way a hymn to divine intervention. What shocked authorities in this description would not have been the loyalty of the author who is clearly on the side of the coup-plotters against evil conspirators; it was rather the detailed description of well-known persons in the Copenhagen elite involved in specific actions during the coup. Here, the Queen Dowager and her son are described as ordinary, emotional persons of flesh and blood, rather than as angelic tools of God, and the diffuse generality of the theological coup interpretation, rarely mentioning actual persons or actions, are replaced by actual agency of real people acting and reacting with weeping, fear, and shock. God is not absent but relegated to a background premise in this interpretation of the coup which appears as the deed of particular individuals, most of them household names in Denmark-Norway. Not only did this description go against the established theological interpretation, it also ousted a number of the coup-plotters to the new and unpredictable Danish public.

On top of this came that the pamphlet makes of Queen Matilda a sort of eminence grise behind the whole Struensee conspiracy. This all but deferential portrayal of Caroline Matilda’s share in events is made into a key point in the narrative. Here, too, the story differs from the many writings that either pass over Caroline Matilda in silence, mourn her fate, or see her as a victim of Struensee. In this pamphlet she is not only a conscious agent but represents a kind of puppet master behind Struensee. At the time of the arrest, she is remorseful, and she articulates her emotions by swearing – just like Struensee, which emphasizes the resemblance between them and their anything but pious relationship. In addition, the profane portrayal of a raging Queen in her nightwear constitutes a powerful contrast to the occasional poems’ praise to the elevated Queen in the period before her arrest, as well as to the emotionally tense farewells at her departure from Denmark shortly after. In addition to the unwelcome revelations of responsibilities of many of the persons of the coup group, the very dark picture painted of Caroline Matilda probably added to the government’s ill feeling about this pamphlet. Not because they did not agree in its verdict of the Queen, but because of England. A shaky agreement had been reached, after long tensions, with the English government in April, and a portrayal of the Queen soon to be exiled as the prime mover and real organizer behind Struensee’s alleged plans would be liable to endanger the new government’s fragile relation to her brother the King of England.

Comprehensive Intelligence concludes by resuming the conversion to Christianity of the two arrested counts by their pastoral caretakers in prison. Those conversion stories would later rise to prominence through detailed versions narrated by those two priests themselves. The pamphlet surge of spring 1772 had overwhelmingly supported the viewpoints of the new government with their vicious attacks on the two

counts and their general support to the theological interpretation of the coup. Even if by no means friendly to Struensee nor the Queen, the *Comprehensive Intelligence* broke with this tacit public agreement about the coup's character.

The new government tried to counteract such non-theological coup interpretations through the mentioned warnings in the press coming out exactly when British men-of-war at Elsinore were about to escort the Queen out of the realm; prohibitions and censorship, however, were soon to follow (see Chapter 14).

The *Comprehensive Intelligence* could not be so stopped, however, particularly not abroad. It proved the source of some of the most widespread accounts of the coup in German. Thiele already published a German version in Copenhagen, titled *Ausführliche Nachricht von der geheimen Verschwörung welche in Kopenhagen in der Nacht von 16ten auf den 17ten Januar*, which was quickly reprinted in Trondhjem in Norway and in Haderslev in the Duchies.⁶⁵³ Soon after, it was spreading in differing versions in Germany, oftentimes bound with Suhm's letter to the King (see Chapter 4) or other relevant documents.⁶⁵⁴ Through the spread of this pamphlet in many versions in German lands, a more secular and in a certain sense realist description of the coup events was disseminating internationally. Far from all details of these pamphlets were precise or even correct – cf. for instance the inclusion of von Osten among the coup-plotters and the exclusion of Guldberg who surprisingly often went under the radar in early accounts of the coup. The pamphlet's detailed, personal alternative to the more vague and general description widespread, e. g., in the priests' thanksgiving pamphlets, probably served, in itself, to grant this pamphlet credibility abroad where the assumption that God took special care to protect the Danish-Norwegian royal house would hardly seem a matter of course. And even if not at all friendly toward Queen Matilda, the pamphlet spread an image of her as intelligent, cunning, and powerful, an image which might serve to inspire ideas to restore her in her position in Copenhagen. Already in June, the pamphlet appeared in Prussia under the title of *Zuverlässige Nachricht*, a widely extended and pretty different 106-page version with the addition, among other things, of a short presentation of the legal initiatives during the Struensee period and a 50-page alphabetized list of detailed biographies of both central and more peripheral actors during the spring events.⁶⁵⁵ Here, the scheming role of the Queen is absent, more details about the coup night are correct, and Struensee's crimes are related through Münster's thanks-

653 [anonymous], *Ausführliche Nachricht von der geheimen Verschwörung welche in Kopenhagen in der Nacht von 16ten auf den 17ten Januar dieses 1772sten Jahres glücklich entdeckt, [...] nach dem Dänischen Original*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772.

654 They appeared under titles such as [anonymous], *Ausführlicher Bericht von der den 17ten Jenner 1772 in Copennagen vorgegangenen Staatsveränderung*, which was sold out quickly and came in "a new and improved version". Other titles could be [anonymous], *Zuverlässige Nachricht von der zu Copennagen am 17. Jan. 1772 geschehenen groszen Staatsveränderung*.

655 [anonymous], *Zuverlässige Nachricht von der in Dännemak den 17ten Jenner 1772 vorgefallenen grossen Staatsveränderung, den Lebensumständen der merkwürdigsten Personen des königlichen*

giving sermon. Different versions of the pamphlet proliferated through German-speaking lands in 1772 to 1773.⁶⁵⁶

Such publications seem to have been inaugurating an international pamphlet war through 1772 to 1773. No less than two volumes of the Luxdorph collection (Series 2, vols. 19–20) exclusively contain alternative, German-language versions of the coup, writings most of which were probably accessible in Copenhagen. Other, related writings in English, particularly concerning Queen Matilda's destiny, were collected by Luxdorph in a special volume outside of his main Press Freedom collection, probably indicating that these versions were not so accessible in Denmark-Norway – but indicating at the same time Luxdorph's insatiable interest in collecting evidence of the growing international strife over the Danish events.⁶⁵⁷ The Royal Library also holds a volume with no less than 15 Dutch translations from 1772 of Danish Press Freedom Writings primarily pertaining to the coup events; it is not known who collected them, but Luxdorph would be a fair bet.⁶⁵⁸

Danish Court Case Minutes as International Bestsellers

Among the earliest international publications on the Struensee affair coming on the heels of the extensive press coverage seem to have been translations of central court documents, such as Wivet's prosecution speech against Struensee, Struensee's own defense paper, and the verdicts of Struensee and Brandt.⁶⁵⁹ It would have been such

dänischen Hofes wie auch der Staatsgefangenen nebst den Umständen ihrer Gefangennehmung [...] in einem Schreiben eines Reisenden zu C. an seinen Freund in H., 22 June 1772, Halle: J. G. Trampe.

656 On the diffusion of the German version, see Keitsch 2000, 100–112, and Schlösser 1931, 14. See also Harald Ilsøe 1992, 240–241 and Hille 1909, 135–136.

657 One criterion for inclusion of publications in Luxdorph's Collection of Press Freedom Writings seems to have been availability in Copenhagen, or, more broadly, in Denmark-Norway and the duchies. This does not necessarily mean that all those publications would have been openly for sale at the main bookstores and venues in Copenhagen, however. Many of those writings were persecuted by the government and would not have been for public sale (see below), instead they would have been available as special offers under the table for a selected audience.

658 The Dutch pamphlets include Hee's conversion report on Brandt; the *Comprehensive Intelligence*; concocted fake news pamphlets like the conversation between Brandt and Struensee in prison, Struensee's testament, and letters between Struensee and his parents; Münter's thanksgiving sermon; Bynch's criticism of Suhm's letter to the King; alternative international versions of events, the C. A. Rothes pamphlet and the alleged letter of complaint from the imprisoned Queen Matilda, all of the aforementioned published by F. J. Ebert in Rotterdam. An original Dutch contribution is a brief life of Struensee as an alleged disciple of la Mettrie, published by C. Philips in Amsterdam.

659 Such as J. Fr. Struensee etc., *Schriften, die in Sachen des ehemaligen Grafen Johann Friedrich Struensee, bey der königl. Inquisitions-Commission zu Copenhagen wider und für ihn übergeben sind; mit der von ihm eigenhändig entworfenen Apologie und dem über ihn gefällten Urtheile* and J. Fr. Struensee, E. Brandt, *Des ehemaligen Grafens Johann Friederich Struensee Vertheidigung an die*

publications that made it possible for the above-mentioned Krohne to publish his scathing criticism of the court case and for others to ridicule the Danish proceedings as a mock trial. The corresponding Brandt documents were briefer and less principally interesting, if not for the extremely harsh verdict for accidentally biting the King's finger in a brawl which the King had himself provoked, but they too enjoyed publication interest in Germany and Holland.⁶⁶⁰

Wivet's prosecution speech is a strange piece seen through the legal lenses of our time, but judging after comments by the defence, already at the time it appeared as rather peculiar after the judicial standards of the 1700s. Wivet took Struensee's guilt to be so evident and well-established that he resorted to mocking and ridiculing the accused rather than proving guilt. Based on a sketch of his life, intended as a sort of judgment of character, he sought to convince the commission that Struensee was simply, by his very existence, an evil person which, for that reason, ought to be subjected to derision and punishment. Wivet would say, for instance: "Who was this murder angel? It was Johann Friederich Struensee, the most reckless person imaginable and who in that case merits the name of more than *vir unius seculi*, earlier a doctor, yet a count but (as I hope), before I let him go, will have nothing left but shock, sentence and punishment".⁶⁶¹ When Wivet relates how Struensee became city doctor in Altona, at 21 years of age, he claims that from this fact it may be inferred that already then, "the cure was worse than the disease, and you must conclude that he was as good a doctor in the city as in the state, and hence the number of dead of Altona must have exceeded that of the newborn, if the number of those latter have not been multiplied by himself by other means" (137). Wivet's ridicule of Struensee's assumedly non-existing medical capacities leads him to insinuate not only the young Struensee's killing of sick Altonians, but also his reputation as a hound dog, implicitly referring to his relation to the Queen which is otherwise discreetly indicated only. Wivet's character assassination paints a picture of Struensee as an atheist freethinker mocking religion, assuming his political position out of mere lust for

*Königliche Commiſſion gerichtet und von ihm ſelbſt entworfen. Nebſt einem Schreiben des ehemaligen Grafen Brandt an gedachte Commiſſion. Aus dem Dänischen überſetzt, both from 1772, no printshop or publication city indicated. The interest in England was ſufficient long-lived to grant an English 1775 version, *The trial of Count Struensee, late Prime Miniſter to the King of Denmark, before the Royal Commiſſion of Inquiſition, at Copenhagen. Translated from the Daniſh and German originals*, (London: printed for the translator; ſold by T. Waters, South-Audley-Street, Groſvenor-Square; T. Axtell, under the Royal-Exchange; and J. Whitaker, in Mitre-Court, Fleet-Street), containing Wivet's and Uldall's ſpeeches, Struensee's apology, and his ſentence. The English version was reviewed, e. g. in *London Magazine* vol. 44, 1775, 687–689 with long quotes, particularly regarding Struensee's affair with the queen.*

660 Brandt was faced with basically two charges: the finger bite which was interpreted as an assassination attempt on the life of the King, and complicity in Struensee's crimes which he had failed to counteract or reveal to outsiders.

661 Hansen 1927–1941, vol. I, 137.

power and hedonism without possessing the least knowledge about matters of state. Wivet even himself takes to defend his own mocking tone:

You must not attack me for, on some occasion or another, to have ridiculed him in actions which demand the highest degree of seriousness, for there is a difference between a minister committing one fault, and a loudmouthed liar who aims to become a minister and thereby an enemy of the land and who ought, for that reason, to be met with scorn just like he has himself met others. (149)

Wivet's long, contemptuous portrayal of Struensee's life and character serves as the main premise to nine more formal charges, each of them punishable for lese-majesty: 1) the relationship to the Queen (circumspectly described as "his company with this highest lady and her confidentiality with him"); 2) complicitness in Brandt's crime, biting the King; 3) his rough treatment of the young Crown Prince; 4) his seizure of royal authority; 5) using that authority without the King's knowledge; 6) to have committed fraud and added a figure zero to a document in order to multiply a sum paid to himself; 7) selling a piece of the Queen's jewelry too cheaply; 8) to have all the King's letters sent to the Cabinet in order to isolate the King; 9) to have ordered the Copenhagen commandant to keep canons ready. Wivet argued that as each of these crimes called for the most severe punishment, it was necessary to prove one of them only for, as he says, "The Count has but one head".

Uldall's defense remarks upon the strange, derisive character of the prosecution, arguing that Struensee had no reason to expect the "scorn and ridicule which Mr. Public Prosecutor seeks to throw upon his actions".⁶⁶² When Wivet's speech appeared in German, some reviews immediately noted the same thing. When Wivet writes – so a review in the *Auserlesene Bibliothek* – that Struensee's "efforts are regarded as dead flies on the bottom of a pharmacy flask", the reviewer judges this in the following way: "Such quotes, and even more peculiar, far more curious quotes, to use a word less than fitting, appear multiple times in this writing".⁶⁶³ The review complains that the public defender objects to such claims by the prosecutor only in a weak and general way and goes on to characterize Struensee's own defense reprinted in the same volume as the prosecution and the verdict: "Count Struensee's own answer is modestly, yet still frankly written, and contains unmistakably a praiseworthy candidness". The reviewer strongly recommends it for reading, judging that it contains much to throw light, for an impartial and freethinking public, upon the peculiar revolution which ended with his tragedy. The reviewer finishes with encouraging his reader to check out also Münter's conversion tale and the *Journal Encyclopédique* to get a better position to judge correctly both Struensee's char-

⁶⁶² Hansen 1927, 176.

⁶⁶³ [anonymous], an untitled review addressing the above-mentioned "Schriften die in Sachen des ehemaligen Grafen Johann Friedrich Struensee ...", in *Auserlesene Bibliothek der neuesten deutschen Litteratur*, vol. 3, Lemgo, 1772, 439–440.

acter and the bloody “Hof-Cabale”, the court conspiracy, in Copenhagen. Such a review testifies to a German interest in gathering and comparing the different extant sources to the events in Copenhagen.

Struensee’s defense does indeed launch a completely different tone than that of the prosecutor. It is cool, passionless, argument-based, and takes the structure of listing a series of general principles after which he claims his government to have worked – all of it in mutual understanding with the King. Struensee’s main, implicit argument is thus that his assumption of power lay safely within the confines of the Danish royal constitution of the 1665 *Lex Regia*, because everything was done with the King’s approval if not active participation, and that he has himself not striven for personal gain of wealth nor honor but for the implementation of a number of beneficial principles of governance: “The desire to be useful and to accomplish actions which would have a wider influence to the advantage of the society in which I lived, was my sole endeavor”.⁶⁶⁴ He relates how he, as a doctor, attempted to cure the King, reconcile him with the Queen, and make him more interested in matters of state. The calling of Brandt and Rantzau to court is portrayed as a double means to please the King and counterbalance the influence of the old ministers. Struensee’s arguments against the previous government are meticulously listed: it had removed the King from government matters, he had no real influence in the Council which ruled over him, even in his private life. Favoritism and intrigues mixed into everything, and offices were given to court persons without relevant capacities. Government was anarchical because all officials constantly transgressed the limits of their own positions and competences. State finances were broken, and the influence of foreign courts was suppressive. So, such were the problems Struensee claimed to attempt to cure – a virtual summary of the Saint-Germain–Gähler–Rantzau group’s grudges against the old State Council rule during the 1760s (see Chapters 2 and 3).

His majesty’s main principle of political procedure, as against the earlier government, was that he would insist on his royal prerogative to all final decisions. All proposals should be presented to him in writing, rather than orally, they should be brief, clear and, if possible, with a menu of different decision options. Everything should go through ministries which should be reformed to treat cases after standard principles of procedure. Decisions should be general, details be left to ministries, and further details to their subordinates. Everything should follow rules admitting no exceptions, and one department should not influence another.

As to political subject matters, the King wanted the reduction of influence of foreign emissaries – particularly the Russians. All financial state institutions should be merged into one, and all royal income collected in one treasury, state expenditure should be reduced, all taxes paid in cash, not in *naturalia*, the state should stop supporting industries, it should make budgets for annual expenses and reduce state pensions. All in all, an economic and financial rationalization program. As to justice,

664 Hansen 1927–1941, vol. I, 8.

the King would no longer make decisions against standard procedure, the number of law courts should be reduced, judges should not receive extra payments or bribes. As to the royal court, all superfluous activity should cease, and entertainments should be after the taste of King and Queen. Fewer soldiers of fortune should be admitted to court, noblemen should stay at their manors rather than at court, offices should be given after objective recommendations from the ministries rather than after petitions and intercessions, no titles and distinctions be given without merit. No charity should be given to poor individuals petitioning – rather, poorhouses should be better financed and improved. Morality should no longer be governed by legislation but left to the upbringing and education of children and instruction of grownups by the clergy.

All these ideas of the King should be taken into consideration when judging whether it has been useful or harmful that the King gave me his confidence to pursue them, Struensee claims. No doubt such ideas had been harbored by Struensee; more doubtful it seems how many of them had really been shared by the sick King, one might add. All of this resulted in many Cabinet Orders, Struensee adds, because of the constant stream of cases emerging from the ministries, but it was his aim to reduce their number. He had to concentrate much on this activity which was why people thought he was a recluse and did not accept advice from others. He hoped his actions would be judged after conviction only, not after his person – this is the reason why he accepted the appointment as Cabinet Minister, Struensee claims: Cabinet Orders should not result from various people approaching his majesty with different pleas, but from consistent Cabinet reflections only. And he himself strove to rule without reference to personal intentions or partisanship. Cabinet Orders should always go to chiefs of ministries and departments, and they, in turn, were instructed to object if such orders went against existing resolutions.

The fact that not all Cabinet Orders had the King's signature, Struensee explains with a rather weak reference to Cabinet Secretary Schumacher "who knew what the King intended" and so was able to author the relevant orders without going back to the King to sign. If any individuals were harmed by new legislation, so Struensee claims, it was his intention to compensate them or offer them new employment. The many public threats against himself he had faced with indifference, and he could never imagine that anyone would, in seriousness, attack him for not supporting the King or even for plotting against him. Particularly because Struensee himself owed his position and security to the King, such a thing would seem to him absurd. Finally, he finishes his defense as follows: "If you finally judge carefully all what I have here honestly and truthfully said about my activity, you will, in my behavior, find political error and moral offense rather than crimes calling for punishment, if you except that one thing to which I have not referred here" (32). The latter was Struensee's only, indirect reference to his relation to the Queen which thus hovered over the whole court case without much explicit discussion, even mentioning. Finally, he flatly rejects any accusation of despotism: "Despotism consists, on my account, in

the case where the king makes decisions about the rights, liberties, fortunes, and lives of his subjects in an arbitrary manner, without investigations and without following established form” (34). So, enlightened absolutism with rule of law is not the same thing as despotism.

The very genre of the text, of course, is an apology, and Struensee obviously downplays issues like his tensions with some of the old ministers, e. g., Bernstorff, just like he certainly exaggerates the King’s active participation in Struensee’s political enterprise and his deliberate embrace of the long list of principles presented. For all we know, the King’s mental state deteriorated rapidly through 1771, and though active participation on the part of the King seems probable in the first half of Struensee’s reign, it does not really seem so for the latter half, after the summer of 1771. But there is no doubt that the principled parts of Struensee’s apology are honest in the sense that they reflect principles which he had actually striven to pursue. Struensee’s apology is the only document in which he himself goes into some detail regarding his dramatic 16 months of Cabinet rule, and it gives a pretty detailed picture of the version of enlightened absolutism which he tried to implement – in a sense the final fruit of the political program which the Saint-Germain–Gähler–Rantzau faction had been pursuing ever since the early 1760s. It is not strange that many international readers showed a demand for translations of this document to get a first-hand impression of the more detailed character of the radical political experiment in Denmark-Norway.

Enlightened absolutism à la Struensee entails full sovereignty of the ruler’s cabinet, marginalization of noble influence on government, a professionalization of administration, clarity of rules and compartmentalization of decisions, enlightened rule in the sense that relevant experts of the respective departments should prepare decisions unhindered by other departments. Arbitrary aspects of sovereignty, such as the king’s power to accede to individual pleas and supplications or to introduce exceptions from law and procedure, should be contained or even abolished. A gradient of specificity should oblige higher levels of government to state general rules and prevent them from rule of detail, which should be left to ministries and local authorities in a sort of subsidiarity principle. The abandonment of government legal interference in morality issues would grant a new sphere of private liberty. A striking omission from this program inspired by radical enlightenment ideas laid out in Struensee’s apology is Press Freedom itself, Struensee’s first accomplishment which is not even mentioned – apart, implicitly, from his claimed indifference as to pamphlets attacking himself, a claim which is hardly credible given his restriction of Press Freedom in October 1771. Correspondingly, if the principles of Struensee’s apology do indeed form a strong version of enlightened absolutism, they admit but few traces of opinion-guided absolutism – which had been so central to his own original arguments behind Press Freedom. It may be for tactical reasons that the influence of public opinions on politics is omitted from his apology, Struensee realizing the low regard for Press Freedom in the new regime about to pass verdict on

him, – or it may be because of the tough lesson learnt by the aggressive pamphlets against himself in the late summer of 1771. In any case, this omission of the creation of a public sphere and its role in politics takes this final expression of Struenseenian absolutism far in the direction of administrative civil service rule if not outright expert rule.

It must be said that Wivet's prosecution compares badly to the subdued, principled, argued style of the apology. Struensee wrote it knowing he would receive a death sentence. That can be seen from his one, fleeting reference to the Queen, the relation to whom he had confessed, voluntarily or after pressure. As also implied by Wivet, this was sufficient for a *lèse-majesté* sentence, so not even Struensee himself would have had reasons to doubt the outcome of his case. Uldall's defense of Struensee also gave up defending this offense. All he had left to hope for would be the King's mercy, which the coup-makers would be sure to prevent – and, if given, would actually go against the strict, anti-arbitrary principles of Struensee's own apology. It is an interesting fact that when the Danish government strove, in late 1772, to prevent international dissemination of alternative versions of what had happened during spring, Struensee's apology was on the list. Information about the details of the court case was now to be cleansed away from the international public, and the new Danish government tried to prevent the spread of this treatise of enlightened absolutism without any traces of Struensee the bloody insurrectionist.

Even the two official sentences of Brandt and Struensee appeared on the list of texts the government tried to make disappear from the international public. Their international circulation was neither strange nor unexpected, however, as they had been published with official permission to the Godiche printshop in Danish, German, as well as French versions in Copenhagen in May 1772, briefly after the executions. So, it seems like the government later regretted its permission to foreign-language versions. As to Struensee's verdict in particular, even a recent defense for the sentence like Stig Iuul's 1974 article admits the poor quality of the text.⁶⁶⁵ Iuul argues that given the legislative basis in the *Lex Regia*, the Danish 1683 Codex and the judicial standards of the time, the commission could not have reached any other decision. Particularly, he points to the fact that two central judicial principles of our day were not observed at the time: the rule about the free evaluation of evidence and the rule that *nulla poene sine lege* – no punishment without law. At the time, witness claims without counterclaims would simply count as truths, and nobody thought laws were or could be exhaustive so that courts were free to arbitrarily punish what they found were actions detrimental to state and society. Still, Iuul's characterization of the verdict text is harsh: "The way in which the verdict is formally composed is very much open to criticism. It is impossible to find any proper system, the presentation of case and argumentation are intertwined, and its means of expression is

665 Iuul 1974.

more impassioned and one-sided than what you normally find in rulings”.⁶⁶⁶ The verdict does not at all refer to the claims made by Uldall’s nor Struensee’s own defense. It does not even go through every single of the nine charges of the prosecutor, rather grouping them loosely together and omitting some. The most severe charge, the relation to the Queen, is mentioned in the very first sentence of the verdict, so to speak beginning with the conclusion. But again, reference to the constituent element of that offence is mentioned implicitly only: “Struensee has earlier recognized and has himself confessed to have committed a severe crime, which involves an attack on the highness of the king or *Crimen laesae Majestatis* to a high degree and, according to the law and its 6th Book, 4th Chapter, 1st Article in particular, deserves a severe death penalty”.⁶⁶⁷ So, the very first sentence of the verdict already contains its conclusion. Article 6-4-1 of the Danish 1683 Codex refers to actions which “laster kongen til beskæmmelse”, that is, offend the king to shamefulness. A long discussion among Danish historians and law scholars has later problematized the application of this paragraph to the infidelity charge but, as Iuul argues, nobody in the period would doubt that being made a cuckold before the eyes of an international public would surely count as a case of shamefulness for a king. The verdict concludes:

As it is thus clear that Struensee, in more than one way and in more than one respect has committed *Crimen laesae Majestatis*, to a supreme degree, and participated in the same committed by others, the whole of his administration has been a chain of violence, self-interest, which he has striven to fulfill, even in a shameful and punishable way, not in word and deed only, but also through the public initiatives he has sought to demonstrate.⁶⁶⁸

From a present observer’s point of view, however, the strangest feature of the court documents of the Struensee case is not their impassioned and unsystematic character – but rather the very low degree to which they refer to each other. Neither the prosecution nor the verdict takes care to reject Struensee’s apology (which had been submitted before both), nor does the verdict attempt to refute the claims of Uldall’s defense against the prosecutor. They appear as almost completely independent documents. Objections are disregarded rather than refuted.

These were the documents now spreading in shifting combinations across Europe in German and French versions, a few years later in English translations. Now being able to judge central court documents with their own eyes, some international readers drew the conclusion that the Inquisition Commission case in Copenhagen had been but a mere show trial.

Court documents, however, were not the only Danish writings having a second career as international pamphlets. Quite a few of the many Press Freedom Writings on Brandt and Struensee appearing in Copenhagen during their incarceration made

⁶⁶⁶ Iuul 1974, 163–164.

⁶⁶⁷ Hansen 1927–1941, vol. I, 212.

⁶⁶⁸ Hansen 1927–1941, vol. I, 232.

their way to the international sphere. Some of them had already seen German versions in Copenhagen or the Duchies, others were translated in German lands. Also, Dutch, English, Swedish, and French versions appeared. The international market for information about the events in Copenhagen in 1772 seemed insatiable. Particularly, pamphlets like Martin Brun's fictive conversation between Brandt and Struensee in prison, the fictive testament of Struensee, the more and less fictive correspondence between Struensee and his parents authored by Bynch and others, saw international translations. Their dissemination, however, was more than matched by the two clerical accounts of the two main celebrity culprits.

The Conversion of a Courtier – Dean Hee's Tale of Count Brandt

After the Danish pamphlet surge of ill-informed – or imaginative, if you prefer – writings about Struensee and Brandt during the early spring of 1772, a considerable hunger remained in the Danish public for more well-founded information about the two enigmatic characters dominating headlines. Thus, the conversion histories published by the two priests who had been ordained to serve as their pastoral caretakes in prison were eagerly awaited. Finally, first-hand information by reliable sources would be available. Those conversion accounts not only sold as hot cakes in Copenhagen during the summer of 1772, but they would continue to enjoy immense international interest with many translations in successive print runs.

None other than Suhm had insisted, in the Inquisition Commission meeting of 28 February, upon sending capable clergy to take care of the spiritual needs of the two state prisoners. Guldberg literally found they could go to Hell, but the outcome was that Dean Jørgen Hee of the naval Holmens Church was sent to Brandt, just like the popular pastor Balthasar Münter of the German St. Petri Church was assigned to Struensee.⁶⁶⁹

The first of the two top clergy to publish was Hee. Already three weeks after the executions, his account was on sale from 17 May: *Credible Notification on the executed Enewold Brandt's Conditions and Frame of Mind in his Prison, until his Death on the Scaffold April 28 1772*.⁶⁷⁰ Hee must have walked directly home from the execution events to his writing desk. He wasted no time, maybe also because he wrote his conversion account from memory.

669 In his "Secret Observations", Suhm wrote: "I said to Guldberg that you ought to send priests to them, but he said that might be later, but I said: 'That will delay execution after the verdict' – 'If they will not convert', was his answer, 'then they can go to Hell.'" Suhm 1918, 74.

670 Jørgen Hee, *Paalidelig Underretning om den henrettede Enewold Brandts Forhold og Tænke-maade i hans Fængsel, indtil hans Død paa Echafautet den 28 April 1772*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (17 May 1772). For some reason, the conversion stories are not found in Luxdorph's Collection.



Fig. 48: Enevold Brandt was called to support Struensee, his old Altona friend, when he assumed power in Denmark during 1770. Besides his position of *maître de plaisir* – chief of entertainments – at court, Brandt got the still more demanding task of taking care of the King’s person. *Enevold Brandt*, miniature by Andreas Thornborg, n. d. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Kit Weiss.

Hee’s presentation indirectly comments upon the claims made by the many small pamphlets appearing on Brandt and he strives to refute all rumors circulating about him. Even after execution, hearsay had it that Brandt’s penitence had been but simulated; even in his last hour, his “frankness displayed is suspected and taken to be cheek”. But now, Hee will no longer keep silent, with the Lord as his witness he claims that Brandt’s very being, “in all senses ungodly”, had actually been fully turned to obedience towards the call of the gospel. The “terrible crime” he had committed had been turned by means of a thorough transformation of mind. Hee finds that most of what circulated about Brandt was but a creation of a miserable zeal to honor infidelity, which the rumor-mongers felt should enjoy protection. It was but an attempt to spread doubt about the victory of religion and the effects of revelation on a straying heart. It proved too hard to such voices to watch Brandt leave the company of the ungodly before he left this world, so that they had to express their regret over the revealed powerlessness of freethinking when “faced with approaching death”. To Hee, circulating gossip about Brandt’s simulation was but part of a concealed campaign by Copenhagen freethinkers.

Hee admits to having had second thoughts about his task, particularly because he knew well beforehand that Brandt had lived a voluptuous life, he was of a cheeky and untamed nature, he mocked the truths of religion and would prove a hard nut to crack. But already by his first meeting with the prisoner, Hee discovered that Brandt

marshaled no sophistic objections. As soon as he, faced with reason and scripture, was presented with an explanation, he accepted. Brandt was susceptible: as soon as he was reminded of his family, particularly his mother, he resorted to impetuous crying, a feature Hee seems to have known how to exploit. As Hee leaves the fortress of the Citadel after the first conversation, he is happy that his fear of finding an impudent and unbending mind had proved unfounded. But victory was not yet certain (20). Hee learns from the officer on guard that Brandt had been very quiet after his first visit and wept for hours on end during the night. But this, in turn, had given the musical Count such a peace of mind that he had afterwards burst out into singing an aria.

The day after, Hee explains that the effort must come from Brandt himself, but that he, as a priest and fellow human being nurturing a deep love for Brandt, would do everything to support him. Again, tears come to his eyes, as they did at every conversation they had, so Hee. The amount of tears seem proportional to Hee's success and Brandt's submission. At some point in the process, rumors appear that Brandt should indulge in reckless conversations with one of the guarding officers during Hee's absence. Hee confronts Brandt who admits he may have made such a comment but takes it to show his lightness of heart. As he has nothing else to do, it is too easy for him to fall back into established patterns of thought. This makes Hee procure edifying literature to the cell, for instance a volume of Edmund Gibson's *Pastoral Letters* translated into Danish by Hee's son, which he judges to be a tool apt to convince a former freethinker. A Bible and more books follow.

Rumors about Brandt's recklessness continue, but Hee now only finds proof of the opposite. The fortress commandant confirms that Brandt now spends all his time reading the Bible and instructive books when not called to interrogation by the Commission. Hee is further convinced after hearing a false rumor involving himself: he should have, so the rumor, have hidden himself outside of the door after leaving only to hear unspecified "reckless activity" from the cell. That had never taken place, and Hee categorized it as yet another evil attack on Brandt's honesty as a convert in order to seduce other blind people from following his example. Brandt even claims the story had been concocted by a specific person whose name Hee, however, refuses to reveal.

Hee's account does not always eschew the banal, as when he relates that Brandt had earlier thought himself to be free but remained a prisoner of his own desires, while now he is a prisoner, but grace and truth have set him free (38). Also, enlightenment ideas are ritually counterargued. Brandt had read "the despicable works of Voltaire", and even paid the philosopher a four-day visit in Ferney, an initiative he now sorely regrets. As to Struensee, Brandt relates that he had never had any feeling for religion, not even as a child, while Brandt had himself preserved some of his childhood faith. Hee had, in the beginning of his book, mentioned the good and Christian education Brandt had received, and Brandt himself had related how moved he had been at his confirmation in Copenhagen's St. Petri Church. Brandt

had often discussed religion with Struensee and even encouraged him to come to the faith. Hee first thought this was a claim Brandt made just to appear pious, but after Hee himself had the occasion to meet Struensee he was convinced Brandt spoke the truth. Struensee even asked Hee to take the message to Brandt about Struensee’s own conversion.

No deeper psychological insight is apparent from Hee’s booklet, and his treatment of Brandt’s emotions is but superficial. The promise of the title that the reader will learn about Brandt’s way of thinking is not really kept. Emotions in Brandt traced by Hee are elementary, e. g., his continuing hope to keep his life (51). Hee claimed that this hope stemmed from urban hearsay, which somebody must have passed on to him in the cell. Four weeks earlier, Brandt had even had a bout of recklessness where he demanded the Commission to release him from his chains in the cell. This was an idea which sprung “from the root of self-interest”, but Hee led him back on the right track: the all-important thing was to die blessed (54).

Die he should. It was Hee who brought to Brandt the news of his conviction and the date of execution (65). The day before, Hee arrives 10 am and prepares the convict. They have a devotional together and sing a couple of psalms. Then Hee proposes that Brandt should, in the presence of reliable witnesses, confess his heart, the purpose being to refute “the evil rumors about his condition in prison”. Brandt agrees and confirms, in the presence of a handful of officers, that he has, without any trace of hypocrisy, sought the grace of God. Simultaneously, he forgives those who had accused him of hypocrisy. Then, on his knees weeping, he receives the Eucharist. The day after, Hee arrives already 6 am, and the last hours are passed with prayers and edifying conversations. Brandt thanks Hee who adds, in a note, that modesty prohibits him from citing the expressions Brandt used. Brandt is now released from his iron chain, dresses, and walks around for the first time in weeks. He has a coffee and a pastry, and an officer arrives and announces departure. Brandt and Hee embrace each other, and in each their carriage they are brought to the execution scaffold in Øster Fælled. From other sources we know that Brandt brought some coins as a tip to the henchman in case he should receive a last-minute pardon from the King. On the scaffold, Hee prays for the sinner, while Brandt prepares for death. Brandt cites the Creed and willingly answers Hee’s ritual questions about remorse and confession for the crimes he has committed. “YES”, Brandt shouts out loud and prays to God, King, and everyone for pardon. “The blood of Jesus cries out for my soul!” he exclaims, head on the block. Then it is over.

Hee’s booklet differs in almost all respects from Balthasar Münter’s learned, comprehensive and well-composed book about Struensee’s parallel conversion which appeared a couple of months later. Hee explicitly mentions that he did not take any notes or the like to keep impressions from the meetings with Brandt; he had not originally considered to publish about the conversion. Still, the new government had reasons to be very satisfied with the pamphlet which supplemented the theological coup interpretation by granting the redemption of the executed.



Forrige

Kongelige Danske Conferents-Raad og *Maitre des Spectacles*

Greve Enwold Brandt,

i hans Fald og Arrest i Citadellen i Friderichshavn,

hvor han blev indbragt den 17 Januarii 1772.

Vaa god Opdragelse og verdslig Wiisdom lære
 Den gode Greve Brandt fandt Vej for sig til Ere.
 Men see, naar Mangelen af Herrens sande Frygt
 En grundede hans Trin; saa stod han ikke trygt.
 Hvad Nøytet har udspreedt, hans Fald vil nu bestyrke,
 Alt han en agted værdt, Gud Skaber en at dyrke,
 Men tidt har drevet Spot i Ord og Gierninger
 Med Verdens Frelsermand, og en Gudsnaagter er.

▼ Nu maa han dog tilfids, om Følelse han haver,
 ▼ Indsee, han har misbrugt de ham forleente Gaver,
 ▼ Og lære Daarerne, hvis Tal er alt for stort,
 ▼ At saadan Binding blir ved saadant Levnet giort.
 ▼ O lader Eder dog, enhver som dette læser,
 ▼ Ydmyge for vor Gud, at verdslig Bid opløser,
 ▼ Naar Christi sande Troe i Hjertet ikke boer;
 ▼ Thi Gud bevarer selv enhver, som paa ham troer.

Kiøbenhavn 1772, trykt og fundet til Kjøbs hos Morten Hallager, boende i store Gieslstræde i No. 196.

Fig. 49: In this simple woodcut, the imprisoned Brandt must place his foot on the table so that the chain will not prevent him from playing his beloved flute. This does not hinder him, however, from using a mirror so that he can enjoy his own performance. He has no humility and is a denier of god, the accompanying text concludes. *Former Danish Conference Councilor and Maître des Spectacles Count Enwold Brandt (Forrige Kongelige Danske Conferents=Raad og Maitre des Spectacles Greve Enwold Brandt)*, woodcut, Copenhagen 1772: Hallager. © Royal Danish Library.

As is evident, the recurring rumors about what happened in the cell – Brandt’s behaviors and the character of the conversations – played center stage in Hee’s presentation. It belonged to the genre to build a monument over the conversion of the criminal, showing how the freethinker eventually resigned and accepted faith, so that the falsity of freethinking and truth of religion became clear for all to see. But refutation of skeptical rumors circulating actually appears as the central *raison d’être* of Hee’s booklet – a theme completely absent from Münter’s book, even if he was no less obsessed with the freethinkers of Copenhagen. Those rumors constituted an undermining of Hee’s conversion efforts, and he seemed to have been bent on demonstrating to the new in power, to the bishop, and to the public that he did actually manage to fulfill his assignment as Brandt’s spiritual caretaker. The pamphlet does not add much to Hee’s honor in its presumptuous obsession with his own reputation.

Hee’s conversion leaflet got a lukewarm reception in *Fortegnelsen*. Hee’s oral lectures to Brandt are assumed to have been clearer and more convincing than the published piece, “as he holds greater gifts for speaking than for writing”. Rhetorically, the conversion piece is comparable to Hee’s thanksgiving sermon *Disturbance of the Disturbers* (see Chapter 10): Hee’s conversion report is stylistically not unlike a sermon. Apart from the discussion of rumors and the observation of Brandt’s reactions, the skeleton is that of a sermon. This did not prevent the conversion story, just like Hee’s *Disturbance* speech, from achieving considerable international interest. It soon appeared in versions in German, English, French, and Dutch for the hungry European market. The headless counts were quickly becoming international celebrities, and with them, their spiritual caretakers also rose to European fame.

An Evil Man, by all Means Pushed into Heaven – Dr. Münter’s Conversion Report on Struensee

Even more than Hee’s report on Brandt, Münter’s on Struensee proved to be among the most widespread Danish publications to shape international perception of the events in Copenhagen. So, what were the structure and content of this important book? Münter had no less than 38 sessions with Struensee in the citadel of Kastellet over eight weeks, from March 1 to the execution on 28 April, and thus visited him in his cell more than every second afternoon. There was an enormous curiosity to hear what went on there, and after Hee had quickly published his conversion story in May, the public now awaited Münter’s book. Interest was evident already from a false German pamphlet which appeared on 20 March, pretending to give news on Münter’s first visit with Struensee.⁶⁷¹ That forced Münter to publicly refute it in a let-

671 [anonymous], *Der erste Besuch des geistlichen Docter M** bey den als Staats-Verbrecher inhaftierten Gr***, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (20 March 1772).

ter to the editor in *Adresseavisen*: “When the pamphlet published from printer Thiele titled “The clerical Doctor M’s First Visit with the Co arrested as a State Criminal” is assumed to contain some of my conversations with count Struensee, I hereby testify that there is not a single true word in it”.⁶⁷² Münter realized the potentials in a book publication, and already May 6, a week after executions, he announced subscription for both German and Danish versions in *Adresseavisen*. It was probably clear already then that this was big game. These were two men of higher intellectual capacities than Hee and Brandt. It was a battle of giants: now, the public should watch the Christian hero defeat the Freethinker. The result was a book of more than 300 pages, appearing in German on 28 July: *History of the Conversion of the former Count and Royal Danish Secret Cabinet Minister Johann Friederich Struensee, with his own Report of how he has come to change his Positions on Religion*.⁶⁷³ It was the book event of the summer, and it triggered a publicist race over the Danish version that Münter was busy producing. Already between August 7 to 28, the industrious Niels Prah, in his periodical *Kiøbenhavns Allehaande*, consecrated seven whole issues to paraphrasing Münter’s German book in Danish. Münter’s own translation, by his house teacher J. A. Wolf, came out on 7 September, and only a week later, on 15 September, a collection of excerpts from the conversion reports of both counts was published by Thiele as a sort of easy-read version.⁶⁷⁴ In six weeks, no less than four competing versions of Münter’s conversion story had come out; nobody seemed to ask about copyright.

Münter construed his book chronologically, conversation for conversation, and it seems as if he was able to use his written notes for the day, with Struensee’s reactions added afterwards. This implies that over long periods, the reader mainly hears the sermonizing voice of Münter, interrupted now and then by a comment to the reader (now, I had taken Struensee to that point, and from there I continued with this question ...), or a Struensee reaction. Generally, Münter’s strategy is to convince the freethinker with reason – by presenting proofs of Christianity. It is basically motivated in Münter’s own theological rationalism taking faith and reason to be allies; but at the same time tactically apt for convincing the assumedly reason-idolizing freethinker.

⁶⁷² *Adresseavisen*, 23 March 1772.

⁶⁷³ Balthasar Münter: *Bekehrungsgeschichte des vormaligen Grafen und Königlichen Dänischen Geheimen Cabinetsministers Johann Friederich Struensee, nebst desselben eigenhändiger Nachricht von der Art, wie er zur Aenderung seiner Gesinnungen über die Religion gekommen ist*, Rothen, Erben und Prost, 18 July 1772.

⁶⁷⁴ *Kiøbenhavns Allehaande*, Nos. 22–28, Aug. 1772; Balthasar Münter, *Forrige Greve og Kongelig Danske Geheime Cabinetsminister Johann Friderich Struensees Omvendelses-Historie, tilligemed hans egenhændige Efterretning om Maaden, hvorledes han er kommen til Forandring i sin Tænkemaade, i Hensigt til Religionen*, Copenhagen: Nikolaus Møller, 1772 (7 September 1772); Balthasar Münter and Jørgen Hee: *Et kort men fuldstændigt Udtog af de henrettede Grevers sidste Omvendelses-Historie. Forfattet og beskrevet over Johan Friderich Struensee af Hr. Dr. Münther, og over Enewold Brandt af Hr. Provst Hee*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (15 September 1772).

It has a spectacular result. Already after 10 meetings, Münter declares Struensee a convert. What would the remaining 28 sessions be for? They pass by extending the prisoner’s knowledge about the theoretical “secrecies” of Christianity on the one hand and ransacking Struensee’s soul on the other. He may be intellectually convinced about Christian doctrine all right, but has he really managed to transform his soul, has he become sufficiently humble and righteous to satisfy the very purpose of it all: to grant him redemption after that death sentence which seems more probable with each passing day?

Münter clearly develops a tactic of pincer movement, particularly through most of the first ten long conversations – after conversion, their average size shrinks to about half. His two main roads of attack are theory and remorse. At the first meeting, Münter must give up his initial theoretical thrust when he voices the claim that Struensee must already have sensed immortality and feared about it. No reaction. Then he asks him to present his own “System of Religion” so that they can compare the two. This gives rise to a page of presentation of the basics of Struensee’s general world view, actually the first time since the Altona days we have such a sketch – even if in Münter’s indirect summary. “He was probably far from being a Christian, yet he recognized the existence of a Supreme Being and thought that the world and the human race had their origin in God” (10). It is deism or religion of nature, standard with many enlighteners in seventeenth-eighteenth centuries. He continues: “That man should consist of two substances, he had never been able to convince himself to believe. He took himself and all human beings to be but machines. He did not take his hypothesis from la Mettrie whom he had never read but had formed it himself after his own reflection. It was God who pushed the human machine and gave it movement but when it stopped, that is, in death, there would be nothing more to hope nor to fear” (10). Struensee celebrates an elementary anti-dualism and claims the existence of but one world, a monism – in his variant, a sort of mechanical materialism.

Yet, it is no simple determinist variant of materialism: “Freedom he would not deny for man, yet his free actions are determined by sensations” (10). Matter, in certain configurations, is able to feel or have sensations. Struensee also later insists on current medical terminology like “sensibility”, “irritability” etc., developed by the Swiss doctor and natural philosopher Albrecht von Haller who had been lively debated in medicine since the 1750s. Irritability was an unconscious ability of movement in living tissue, while sensibility gave rise to conscious sensations, and the latter, so Struensee, provide the conditions for freedom. This is a variant of vitalist materialism developed in French enlightenment circles, among others Diderot and Buffon. This, in turn, forms the basis of a utilitarian societal ethic in Struensee: “So, there was morality in actions, but only in so far as they had effects for society. In itself, all what human beings might do was indifferent; God did not care about our business, and if human beings had power over their actions and were able to prevent them from being harmful for society, no-one could blame them” (10). In a certain

sense an early version of Mill's famous harm principle. This basic ethics doctrine of Struensee lies behind his more personal confession: "He added that he must confess that he was very uneasy with some of his deeds, more precisely because he had drawn others down with him into misfortune" (10). Finally, he rejects Christianity with the argument that if it would really have been a divine revelation from an omnipotent god, then all human beings would have known it.

Apart from giving a brief outline of Struenseenian metaphysics before conversion, his account also establishes the second attack road for Münter: Struensee's shame over having brought others in misfortune. This gives Münter the idea to end the session by a piece of breaking news: Bernstorff's death. Münter turns towards the reader: "I presume my readers knows how much he had to reproach himself for his relation to Count Bernstorff. I told him, then, about his death as I left" (11). Struensee had been censored by Bernstorff in Altona and had sacked him from the State Council in September 1770. Münter twists the knife: "Generally, Mr. Count, it is believed that the grief he suffered in his last years caused his death" (11). Struensee blushes, and Münter glimpses that he hit the spot.

The first road was theory, and this is pursued at full power during the second conversation. Münter is now prepared to attack Struensee's machine. It is a mere hypothesis, Münter claims, and it must be measured on two Leibniz-Wolffian main principles: the principle of contradiction (a proposition must not be self-contradictory or go against an already established truth) and the principle of sufficient ground (in an explanation of anything, you should state the grounds for it to exist rather than not). The machine hypothesis fails on both counts. It conflicts with what is known about the soul, and it is no sufficient explanation because it is in need of additional auxiliary hypotheses. Münter succeeds in convincing Struensee about the principle of contradiction to the degree that he, time and time again, makes him admit the truth of some theological proposition merely on the ground that it does not seem to entail any contradiction. Struensee attempts to defend his machine doctrine with reference to von Haller's *Physiologie* and its ideas of organic movement, but we are not told the details of his argument. Münter rejects it out of hand as an incomplete induction and adds: a machine works in motion only, but human beings may work without movement, e. g., in thinking. Machines function by necessity, while man is free. Münter thus reinvigorates dualism, asking Struensee how his machine would account for the existence of abstract concepts. They come from pictures, which, in turn, come from sensibility, Struensee answers in the vein of empiricism. But as Struensee would not reject freedom, he gave in, Münter says. Struensee admits that reproaches of conscience have no mechanical explanation. In Münter's account, not much seems necessary to convince Struensee.

Faced with two competing hypotheses, that one must be chosen, so Münster, which is “the most advantageous to God’s honor”. But a machine-creating God would be a mere master of marionets – there is more honor in creating “reasonable, free creatures”. It is in this second conversation that tectonic plates really seem to move: “I could feel that the Count was now very embarrassed with his machine” (19–20). Struensee’s only, meek defense goes: human beings are fallible, and Münster’s new hypothesis might also be wrong. Now, Münster abruptly shifts to his other attack road: how much have you hurt your parents? Struensee claims his father has been very tough against him, and suddenly you feel transported to the psychologist’s couch. This calls forth the first tear – among many – in Struensee’s eyes, and Münster leaves the cell satisfied. Finally, he hands the prisoner a book, the rationalist theologian F. W. J. Jerusalem’s recent *Betrachtungen*, the first of a series of contemporary “neologist” theology treatises he gives the isolated prisoner, probably hungry for access to reading material.

Already now, Münster is convinced about “the victory of truth over him” (24). In the third meeting, Münster persuades Struensee that it was only as a legitimation for lust and voluptuousness that he had developed the machine theory in the first place. So, now he must admit the existence of an immortal soul. And he should hasten in order to save that soul. This dispute quickly ends with Struensee exclaiming “O, I now hope and wish for immortality” (29) – of which he had just been instructed by Jerusalem’s book. Münster, to the reader: now that he has accepted immortality, I can skip the planned lecture about the nature of the soul. Münster then goes on to break down his “false calmness” by making immortality dependent upon remorse over sins committed – the second attack road again. Struensee admits to feeling bad, not over having offended God, but for having brought his friends into trouble. Again, he weeps, but puts faith in the hope that his ongoing “philosophical atonement” may save him. Münster retorts, brusquely: only Christian atonement exists. There is no philosophical atonement. “O, I have so many doubts”, Struensee complains – to which Münster answers that when you learn more about Christianity you are in no need of complicated investigation of doubts: many good Christians die with doubts. Now, Münster finishes the third meeting by handing him Samuel Reimarus’ book on natural religion. Struensee must have frowned. This was one of the official publications of the famous Hamburg theologian – while Struensee, from his Altona youth, knew about Reimarus’ secret, private writings, later to become famous in the hands of Lessing, with their rejection of resurrection.



Fig. 50: A couple of broadsheets depicted Struensee's conversion by pastor Münter. Here a version showing the supernatural forces involved. "Save your soul but hurry up!" the angel admonishes, leading Struensee towards the gate of grace. Struensee obeys and utters a small prayer: "God! give me strength! then I follow", while the tiny, stinking devil on his shoulder also wishes to join. "The Lord lifts the chains of sin when a sinner reconsiders", the general lesson of the broadsheet concludes on the lower left. Even a sinner of the caliber of a Struensee can be saved if he converts. *Representation of Count Struensee's Conversion and his expected State of Grace (Forestillingen af Grev Struenses Omvendelse og forventede Naade-Tilstand)*, woodcut, Copenhagen 1772: L. N. Svare. © Royal Danish Library.

The fourth session addresses Struensee's last theoretical stronghold, his ethical utilitarianism that morality is all about societal utility. For how could that be measured? The effects of any action continue in all directions and may never be exhausted. Effects can never be summed up. So, there must be something in actions *themselves*

which makes them good or evil. This is decided by God’s will, which is accessible to humans through conscience. So, Münster reads from the German poet Gellert’s *Moralische Vorlesungen* to convince Struensee that even he is in the possession of a conscience. Struensee, skeptically: But is morality not just an effect of upbringing? Münster retorts that Greenlanders and Hottentots have more morality than do the English and the French. Surprisingly, it is the rationalist cleric who plays out the noble-savage argument. Struensee again yields, morality must be innate, given by God – and Münster concludes: any action against moral feeling is evil. Tears are shed. Again, the theoretical push is followed by an emotional one. Struensee must admit his deviations, Münster now must make the wound deeper, so that Struensee is forced to seek consolation, he remarks with a side-glance to the reader. The plan forward is now Jesu moral teachings as the bridge leading to the “Secrecies”, that is, the theoretical dogma of Christianity, beginning with Atonement, from there further on to the double nature of Christ, then the Trinity, to finish with the Last Judgment and Eternity. But before this theoretical journey requiring revelation, the soul must be prepared.

So, conversations five and six deviate from the double pincer movement used until now. It proves the most psychotherapeutic phase, in which Münster pulls Struensee through a tough interrogation about sins committed. Names are never mentioned, nor is the most serious sin – the relationship with the Queen – but Münster inquisitively asks: How much time has been wasted on lust? How much good has been neglected? Why have you excited your fantasy with unclean pictures? Why have you depraved yourself to the level of animals? Münster continues into very concrete questions: How many have you made unhappy? How many young women? (Here, Struensee admits: “I have been a dangerous seducer”, 54) How many fatherless children? How many marriages destroyed? How many fathers caring for children of strangers? Struensee answers only briefly, apart from mentioning one particular child of two years, whom he asks Münster to take care of (58). After this torrent of questions, Struensee finally admits to having been driven by lust – and feels suitably ashamed. With this successful therapy session, Münster hands him a book on Jesu moral teachings.

The sixth conversation, however, proves less satisfactory to Münster. Now, he passes to the second big source of sin, according to him: vanity. Now Münster’s questions seem endless, Struensee’s answers brief or non-existent. He does admit to having mocked religion, but to friends primarily, not in order to win supporters. Münster claims that Struensee, intending to get power, luxury, and high standing, has committed slander, ascription of evil intentions, derision etc. and thereby brought the state into danger. Here, however, he fails to convince Struensee that his political activity sprung from ambition. Münster even admits to the reader: “To correct his political insights I had neither calling nor convenience” (72). Münster does not repeat the bloody rumors about Struensee’s political plans from the priest campaign – maybe he was informed by the ongoing work in the Commission that it had been unable to

prove the existence of such plans. And even if Struensee finally yields and admits that he did actually pursue politics out of selfishness and sin, he never gives in on the point that his political activities were well-intentioned as such and that time only will decide their results. Having just read about Jesus, though, Struensee embraces his ethics, aided or pushed by Münter's tricky invention of playing out Voltaire and Rousseau against him: both of the two also embrace Jesu ideas of morality.

In the seventh, eighth and ninth conversations, Münter goes back to theory and takes the decisive step from reason to revelation. Until now, all has been explainable by reason, but atonement and the divinity of Jesus are in need of revelation. His argument, however, is very indirect: reason would claim that in order to atone for sins committed, you should feel remorse, offer compensations, promise future improvements, maybe sacrifices. But none of these have any effect at all: none of them can really erase the debt of guilt. So, only the belief in Jesus may atone sins. So, revelation is implied by demonstrating the powerlessness of reason. Struensee writhes and tries to counterargue, it seems he has counted on a Christianity of some Socinian version, without the divinity of Jesus. But presented with references to a number of writers of Antiquity mentioning the existence of Jesus, he gives in, again surprisingly quickly. And now there's no way back. The trap closes. Once you have admitted the divine character of Jesus, you must believe all that he says. Only now, Münter hands Struensee the New Testament and goes on to argue: if something does not contradict God and is not a product of reason – then it must be revealed. This almost purely logical definition of revelation, without recourse to inner, personal experience, seems to satisfy Struensee.

The tenth conversation goes to show that atonement is not only beyond reason, but that it is also consistent with God's love. The question is simple: is atonement against the Love of God, or does it support it? This alternative makes Struensee weep with joy, and Münter declares: "I now see nothing more which could prevent you from becoming a Christian" (111). Even Münter himself is touched: "Now, a scenery developed which was unspeakably moving to me. I have never felt such a joy, never have I, with such a certainty and so tender an elevation of my heart, been conscious of that happiness it is to have brought back a sinner from the fallacies of his ways" (112). Münter embraces Struensee, encourages him to thank God, "and we prayed with each other."

After this pinnacle moment, conversations become significantly shorter. Münter takes to developing a long series of further truths of faith and challenges Struensee to further refine his soul so that he may be urged to perform good deeds. He does not find many occasions in his cell, though, but does utter some pious words to his guards. Struensee even tries his hand on some theological improvisations, while Münter makes sure to demolish Struensee's Enlightenment hero Helvétius who is but "the largest idiot and charlatan as well" (128). Münter has not read him by himself but he knows about him from sure sources. As finally the death sentence is an-

nounced on 25 April in the presence of Münter, Struensee calmly reads how his “right hand is cut off, then the head; the body is quartered and put on a wheel, but the head and hand are mounted on a stake” and stoically concludes that judges could not resolve otherwise (246). This coolness seems to provoke Münter who now, for once, boils over about the one crime which is “not only offense to the King but also to the whole nation, and should be so in every country” (247). It harmed Münter, however, to have to say such unpleasant things to Struensee, he admits to the reader.

Did Münter’s constant talk about Struensee’s soul and mindset cover the fact that he kept on fearing, until the last moment, that Struensee would make a free-thinker happening out of his short stay on the public scene of the scaffold? When you read Münter’s meticulous instructions to Struensee on the morning of execution, then “no pride, no self-delusion” is Münter’s principle: “You must do nothing in order to provoke, in the audience, a favorable judgment of your firmness and boldness” (267). Do not keep back your tears, he continues, God loves sincerity. “You would commit a sin, and scandalize sensible Christians, if you would die with a boldness which is showed by him alone who suffers for truth and virtue. With visible signs of remorse and sadness but also of that peace of mind, which comes from the confidence with which God has forgiven your sins, that is how I wish to see you on the scaffold. Yes, I would even rather not see you denying the natural fear of death” (267).

It is a director who gives his actor the last instructions before he enters the stage. Münter does not even refrain from reawakening, for effect, that fear of death which the whole therapy run had aimed at containing. Was Münter afraid that he had made Struensee so sure and calm in his newfound faith that he would appear proud and bold – and that the audience might misinterpret this as the gesture of a free-thinker? Or did he have an even worse nightmare: that Struensee had but mimicked him for two months and exploited him to get company and reading in his isolation? Even during the very last seconds when Münter and Struensee sit in the carriage under the scaffold, while Brandt is being quartered, Münter continues: “I finally admonished him to stay with his aim and not, in the final moments, to feign a steadfastness he did not possess. Such a pretense necessarily would deeply displease God, and if he had still time to worry about the judgment of humans, then I could tell him that only a few, not very farsighted people would regard forced boldness to be truth” (272). It is probably those dangerous deists again, those that Münter had preached against in January, that he now imagine cheering in the crowd over seeing a firm, unbroken freethinker facing death.

Struensee made no scene on the scaffold, but he did not weep either, and his answers to the ritual questions Münter had to pose him, were strangely ambiguous: “Do you repent of all of your heart for all of that by which you have offended God and humans?” It would be easy to say “Yes”, such as Brandt had yelled to the same question from Hee some minutes earlier. But Struensee answered: “You know my

feelings in that regard, and I assure you they remain in this moment the same” (273). Those in the crowd who could hear the answer through the noise would have no idea of what Struensee had earlier told Münter. To them, that might as well be freethinker ideas. As Struensee’s right hand was cut off, Münter began shouting: “Keep in memory Jesus Christ, the Crucified, who is dead, but is also resurrected!”, as if to ensure that the freethinker did not return in the last moments of pain, but before Münter completed his advice, as he says, the head lay by his feet, severed from the body (274).



Fig. 51: Struensee donated to pastor Münter a later famous tobacco tin as a memory token of their conversations in jail. Münter’s daughter, the later author Frederikke Brun, recalls this utensil in her childhood memories: “Struensee and my father had become intimately connected and Struensee had promised his friend that if it proved possible for souls to pass through the confines of the sense world, he should show himself to him within the first quarter of a year after death. This was a source of unspeakable fear for my mother who, in those three months, lay sleepless besides my sweetly slumbering father, fearing the ghost that never came. In that period, one particular object of her panic was that tobacco box of tin which Struensee had used in jail and which my father had now always with him – all of the time, she feared to catch the glimpse of his cut-off hand besides it.” (Brun 1824, 28–29) Tobacco tin with Struensee’s portrait in miniature, by Cornelius Høyer, 1770. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Kit Weiss.

After 38 conversations, the book concludes with Struensee's own meticulous report about his conversion which virtuously repeats Münter's teachings. It was written on Münter's encouragement in the cell – and subsequently proofread by the priest. A strange fact, though, that Münter did not pull out his red pen when he read the very last, conclusive section of those 30 pages. Here, Struensee summarizes his original motivations for *not* to believe, and finishes with this conclusion:

In the application of Christianity, it has been particularly offensive to me when I found that in many, their mindset and actions did not cohere with the vivacity of their faith and their feelings for the truths. I discovered the effects of imagination and of self-deception: they were satisfied with themselves, they had kept away from sensual dissipations and, in their place, in the pretense of zeal, given themselves to a spirit of pride, jealousy, hatred, and persecution. This abuse showed, to my eyes, religion as a blinding, which holds, to all times, more harmful effects for human society than the chaotic enjoyment of sensual pleasure. To make an industrious use of the truths on oneself, to emphasize righteousness and the action of duty after the situation in which you find yourself, that is to me what is most necessary in being a true Christian. (303–304)

Period. An extremely diminutive Christianity is what remains. Devotion to duty and righteousness. Cicero could have said that. No more mention of revelation, faith, sin, remorse, atonement, redemption, immortality. Was that a way for Struensee to signal his real position that he chose to place his old arguments against religion as his final public utterance?

An International Bestseller

Münter had hoped that the sale of his book would cover expenses. That was a modest thought. Reverdil estimates that the many print runs sold in more than 20,000 copies.⁶⁷⁵ So, book sales were as busy in the parsonage on the corner of St. Pederstræde where Münter himself did the selling. But Copenhagen success would pale as compared to the conversion book's international fate. Already on 17 July, Münter repeated his warning against false versions of his story in a letter to the editor of the *Gazette de Leyde*, and he took the occasion to announce the upcoming German, Danish, French, and Dutch versions of his book. The German original from Copenhagen was reprinted in Leipzig already the same year, and 1773 a new version with comments appeared in Hamburg. The success continued into 1773 and the mid-1770s with five French versions, three English versions, one Swedish, and, much later, an American (1853) and a Lebanese (1882) version. A contemporaneous estimate judged that the book's total European circulation might surpass 500,000.⁶⁷⁶ The conversion story had appeal, both to curious readers, to skeptics, to believers, to priests. Most

⁶⁷⁵ Reverdil 1858, 428.

⁶⁷⁶ International versions, see Roos 2013, 29; international circulation, Tillyard 2006, 270.

contemporary reviews celebrated the book, while an enlightenment philosopher like Lessing was a skeptic already during the court case and wrote, in a letter, that Struensee would probably not be beheaded but if it should so happen, he would not lose much because he already behaved, “particularly faced with the hypocritical, miserable Münter, as a man without a head”.⁶⁷⁷ Lessing obviously would have been informed by the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* whose April 3 front page had a very detailed report on the conversion. None less than Goethe complained, in a review in the *Frankfurter Anzeigen*, that Struensee was no more of a philosopher than Münter who, by portraying his crimes in a very emotional way, forced Struensee to seek consolation. To him, the book only served to prove that too strict religious moralism had frightened Struensee away from all religion and that Pascal had caused more harm than Voltaire, Hume, la Mettrie, Helvétius, Rousseau, and all of their school – a claim which would, in turn, bring the *Anzeigen* into press freedom problems.⁶⁷⁸

The authenticity of Struensee’s conversion is, of course, contested. Almost all that is related through the book took place between two persons behind closed doors and only one survived to report about it. There is little doubt that the volume contains many authentic bits of conversation between the two men, but the three main possibilities of doubt remain (and they are not even mutually exclusive): 1) Struensee was a person in a terrible situation, isolated in a cell, abandoned by everybody, waiting for a death sentence. Was he still sane? Can one seriously believe a speed conversion of a man in a situation that extreme? A more serious possibility is: 2) Is it conceivable that Struensee was able to mimic Münter’s discourse to such a perfection that he fooled him to believe in his conversion? The many “conversations” which, over long stretches, consist mostly of Münter lecturing, only briefly interrupted by Struensee’s accept, might point in such a direction. The amounts of tears, painstakingly recorded by Münter, would serve to immunize against such an interpretation, but his meticulous instruction of Struensee in the hours before decapitation gives the impression that Münter himself feared this possibility. Even worse, of course, is: 3) That Münter falsified what happened, either by directly forging Struensee’s conversion or by sharpening it and, for the sake of effect, making it more clear and more definitive than it really was. An intermediate is also possible: Struensee was shaken and went further in the direction of bowing to Münter than he would normally allow himself, and Münter, in turn, overinterpreted his statements to something clearer and more coherent than what really took place. But the genre itself demanded full and clear conversion.⁶⁷⁹ The book could not have been published if Struensee had stopped halfway after conversation six and had accepted the

⁶⁷⁷ Quoted from Glebe-Møller 2007, 105.

⁶⁷⁸ Goethe (no year) 36: 53–56.

⁶⁷⁹ Glebe-Møller (2007, 106) refers to the genre example of *Sandheds Kraft til at overvinde Den Atheistiske og Naturalistiske Vantro* (“The Force of Truth to Conquer Atheist and Naturalist Disbelief”, Erik Pontoppidan, 1758, 1768) presenting a collection of historical examples of mockers of religion who were eventually converted.

ethics doctrine of Jesus but rejected atonement – or if all had ended as an intelligent conversation between two disagreeing scholars. In that case, Münter would have failed to meet his divine obligation.

At the time, most of the Danish reviews were enthusiastic and saw no reason to doubt.⁶⁸⁰ In the international sphere, more scepticism prevailed. In the Hague, the *Bibliothèque de science et beaux-arts*, already in its issue of July to September 1772, published extracts of Münter's German book translated into French, accompanied by a lengthy commentary sowing doubts about the authenticity of the story – which prompted Münter to an aggressive reply insisting on his truthfulness.⁶⁸¹ In Denmark, also the playwright Charlotte Dorothea Biehl proved more skeptical. She considered “the mercy of God from another viewpoint than most, and has but little faith in a forced conversion, as what would constitute true and real remorse, following Scripture, would be the improvement of living and refraining from evil. A human being abandoned and shunned by everybody, for whom the world has nothing left but bitterness and bile, is so to speak forced to grasp for religion as the only thing which may give him consolation and solace and milden the fear of his soul”. She would argue that faith is true only if you are free and possess the means to transgress its commandments but struggle to avoid doing so.⁶⁸² Caroline Matilda was, of course, skeptical, now without any voice in the Danish public: “She smiled at it and did not believe in it, or at least, in the seriousness of the transformation of his thoughts”, as her defense lawyer Peter Uldall later wrote.⁶⁸³ Present scholars like Jens Glebe-Møller and Asser Amdisen voice even more skepticism at the authenticity.⁶⁸⁴

The problem is aggravated by the fact that the publication was not only a two-man affair between a sinner and his confessor. It was a political book. Münter had been a main character in the sermon campaign of the new government in February, he was part of the new political inner circle, he was covering the most important prisoner, and his book was also a way to neutralize Struensee and an attempt to round off and conclude the theological coup interpretation. The book served to wind up the official interpretation of all that had happened in the strange half-year since 17 January. The government painfully realized that many observers saw public execution with torture as a barbaric and almost medieval punishment ritual, and by making a pious Christian out of Struensee, you could take some of the force out of

680 See *Lærde Efterretninger* 44.2 (29 October 1772): 713–724; *Kritisk Journal* 41–42 (1772): 321–328; 329–336; *Fortegnelsen* 4.2: 419, 445–447.

681 *Bibliothèque de science et beaux-arts*, XXXVIII (July–Sept. 1772): 38–62; Münter's reply, XXXIX (April–June 1773): 439–434. Later, the *Bibliothèque* added further extracts when the whole of the book came out in a French version.

682 Biehl 1865–1866, 436–437 (written in 1784).

683 Quoted from Glebe-Møller 2007, 106; see Uldall 1914, 24.

684 See Glebe-Møller 2007, 54; Amdisen 2002, 205.

that critique.⁶⁸⁵ He had not only been punished by law, but his redemption was being conscientiously cared for. God had supervised the whole process. First, he had made Juliana Maria, her son and the others intervene, and now He, tough but loving, had concluded the process with punishment and redemption in one and the same movement.

With the conversion book, one could also attempt to accommodate the shift in public atmosphere which seems to have begun in May, in the hangover after the executions, when the sentence texts were published and everybody could see that no evidence had been found for the murderous sedition plans which had so fueled the “Fermentation” imagination during winter.⁶⁸⁶ The conversion story, simultaneously, functioned by displacing focus from politics to religion in the Struensee case: the bankruptcy of freethinking, of atheism, materialism, and deism, now appeared as the core of the case, while fundamental political disagreements about the nature of absolutist monarchical government in theory and practice would mercifully vanish in the haze. In that way, Struensee’s rise and fall became a narrative about the defeat of disbelief, his fall and execution became a righteous punishment, even crowned by a final ticket to paradise, rather than a story about a principled disagreement over the more or less enlightened ways of absolutism – the original motivation of the Saint-Germain–Gähler–Rantzau group behind Struensee still so obvious in his apology text.⁶⁸⁷ Now, the case could be closed with a picture of an infidel Struensee no longer a devil. His sins had now been contained in a suitable cleansing ritual.

Everything had ended well, no reason to talk about that anymore. That was expressed in the government action initiated through the fall of 1772 when Count Schmettau the younger – son of the infamous deist – serving as Danish emissary in Dresden, was sent to the book city of Leipzig to seize offensive international pamphlets there. Already during spring, the Danish government had intervened against international journals, attempting to change or even stop their coverage of the story. We know the Danish government put pressure on publications like the *Gazette de Leyde* to influence on their reporting on events, and we have no reason to assume such action did not also extend to a number of other international media hubs.⁶⁸⁸

685 Bynch, for instance, wrote in his polemic against Suhm’s *To the King*, that all those who speculated about torture for Struensee, “forgot that we lived in the eighteenth century” [“glemte at vi levede i det 18de Sekulo”], [J. L. Bynch], *De Retsindiges Kritik over Hr. Conferentsraad Peter Friderich Suhms Moraler til Kongen. Opsat, efter manges Begiering af en Veldømmende*, Copenhagen: J. R. Tiele, 1772 (21 February 1772).

686 Reverdil 1916, 274.

687 Horstbøll 2005, 399, Langen 2018, 65.

688 The Danish government unsuccessfully attempted to intervene against the coverage of events in the influential *Gazette de Leyde* published by Etienne and his son Jean Luzac (cf. Koopmans 2005, 231), March 1772, Luzac answered the Danish court that he would never go against truth, neither from animosity nor to please the great (van Vliet 2001, 30). As it would be meaningless to attempt to stop the spread of uncontrolled information by appealing to one particular journal only, it seems a qualified guess that such attempts by the Danish government extended also to other international

Now, Schmettau intervened, up to the large annual Leipzig book fair of January, in order to confiscate German writings with interpretations of the Struensee case deviating from the Danish theological coup interpretation. This was also motivated by demands sent from the English government to foreign minister von Osten, complaining about certain German writings, and during the winter of 1772 to 1773, a number of confiscations were completed (see below).⁶⁸⁹

In the Danish Press Freedom context, Münter's book versions came out half a year later than the cusp of Struensee writings appearing during the spring of 1772; in a certain sense, they concluded that wave. Its enormous success demonstrated a long-held desire in the Danish public – and not much later in the European public – for finally to get thorough information about this strange man which had dominated Danish politics in sixteen dramatic months, changing the face of Danish absolutism, and who was now busy becoming a household name in Europe. Indirectly, it was also the government's final analysis of him: a sinner now forgiven. An evil man, by all means pushed into Heaven. The book marked a provisional end to the Struensee period, but it also appeared at a time when Press Freedom itself was slowly vanishing. Bie and Bynch were incarcerated, Brun struggled to reinvent himself as a Christian, the court case against Thura followed in September, and the amount of Press Freedom Writings was strongly shrinking. The Danish government must have thought: case closed.

media hubs. Such pressure on the liberty of the international French presses outside of France forming the backbone of Enlightened European public in mid-eighteenth century, moreover, was no rare event. Rather, it was standard diplomatic procedure of the time in many Ancien Regime royal courts, spearheaded, of course, by the French absolutist government; see Burrows 2002. Even if often effective in single cases, such pressure did not have lasting effects in terms of substantially forcing the Francophone gazettes to be more cautious as a major selling-point was exactly their fearless attitude, and oftentimes, they changed publication place, name, etc. to escape state pressures. Several states, France, Prussia, Poland, are known to have used the alternative of bribes instead of pressure to make gazettes better represent their viewpoints, or to hand-feed selected information to local gazette correspondents; we do not know to what extent Denmark-Norway may have pursued such strategies with international papers.

689 Holm 1890–1912, vol. V, 78. In a certain sense, there was something strange here. Some of the pamphlets were German-language products from Copenhagen printshops, but most were not – how would the English foreign service be able to claim any Danish responsibility for their publication? This arouses suspicion that the English inquiry might have been involved in a cover-up, to hide the fact that some of the writings (e. g., “Rothes” and the letter from Caroline Matilda) may have had English origins; see below.

13 An International Pamphlet War

The Queen Dowager as an Evil Mastermind

Two full volumes in Luxdorph's Collection consists of illegal writings in German, which deviate radically from the theological coup interpretation of the government.⁶⁹⁰ The majority of them was hardly printed in Copenhagen, but would probably, to some extent, have circulated there. Not only did they not subscribe to God as the main responsible, but they also construed human responsibilities behind the coup differently. Several observers saw Queen Dowager Juliana Maria as the central, evil-spirited puppet master behind a year-long intrigue against Queen Caroline Matilda and later against Struensee, motivated in her desire to see her son, Hereditary Prince Frederik, on the throne instead of any progeny of the King. Another, assumedly English pamphlet was probably authored by the Danish government in order to contain such rumors. Others analyzed Queen Matilda's legal status, attacked the legitimacy of the court cases and even prophesied her return to the throne. Against such anti-Danish pamphlets, the international success of the conversion tales and some of the thanksgiving sermons would weigh in the opposite scale of balance, defending the official Danish theological interpretation. An international war of pamphlets, in short, developed through 1772 to 1773 around the interpretation of what in the world had happened in Denmark, personally, legally, politically. The international translations of court documents, conversion stories and many other Danish pamphlets fed into this propaganda clash in the European public.

Seen from a Danish-Norwegian point of view, it had been a recurrent problem for absolutist governance of the public sphere that while it had proven possible to enforce restrictive policies for Danish-Norwegian publications, it was considerably more difficult to control the import of international writings, particularly from neighboring German lands. Christian IV had, in 1596, introduced a total ban on import of non-censored books, and local clergy and town councils were supposed to monitor that the ban was not broken. The newly formed "Church Inspection College" had, in 1740, introduced an important relaxation so that books of deviant content, particularly from abroad, could be sold to the privileged minority of learned and nobles – a step in the direction of a moderate, "two-tier" Press Freedom. The royal motivation behind this step had been to allow for pietist writings which might otherwise be prohibited in the orthodox-Lutheran leaning Academic Council and its book censorship. That decree made possible, in effect, that also other potentially problematic prints might seep in to get access to a narrow elite readership in the realm. With Press Freedom, by contrast, the door was slammed wide open which can be seen also from the relatively large fraction of German-language Press Freedom Writings in Luxdorph's

690 Vols. 19–20 of the Second Series.

collection (more than 10 percent). Only far into 1773, the government intervened judicially against such import (see Chapter 14). But already in 1772, the government was actively fighting against such writings by other means.

The most radical piece of this kind, also spreading in international translations, claimed to be authored by a certain “C. A. Rothes” presented as a royal advisor and Cabinet secretary for Christian VII and a high judge at the supreme court of Altona. No such person existed. It had the title of *The Real Views and Political System of the Regency of Denmark Fully Explained, Tracing the true Causes of late Revolution at Copenhagen*.⁶⁹¹ The title page claims the original was in French, published in Hamburg, but no such version is known, and it seems more probable that the English version was the original, while Hamburg close to Denmark is mentioned to give it greater authority and put it at a distance from British (or French) interests. Reverdil, the Swiss republican turned Danish court official had, after his demise from the court after the 1772 coup, read the publication in England and saw it as a reaction against the efforts of Danish and English courts attempt to silence matters. Their discretion, according to Reverdil, gave rise to many rumors and other “licentious results of English liberty”. He found there was not a single true word in it. Reverdil rightly noted that the alleged “Rothes” character was but a fabrication and that there had never been a Cabinet Secretary in Denmark of that name.⁶⁹²

Under a Vergil quote widespread at the time, “Quis talia fando Temperet a lacrymis” – who can abstain from tears faced with such things? – the fictive “Rothes” tackles the case head-on, outlining a detailed, wicked conspiracy theory with Juliana Maria as the spider in the center. Already by the death of her husband Frederick V in 1766, she had formed a plan of “snatching the scepter from the feeble hands of Christian VII, whose youth and timidity forwarded the evil designs of this artful step-mother”.⁶⁹³ Queen Dowager Juliana Maria goes under the name of Juliana

691 Luxdorph collected both a German version in his Press Freedom collection and a French/English double version in his English volume which points to the fact that it would have been the German version that could be found in Copenhagen: C. A. Rothes [pseudonym], *Entdeckung der wahren Absichten des Staatssystems der Dänischen Regierung enthaltend die wahren Ursachen der letztern Revolution zu Copenhagen. Auf glaubwürdige Schriften gegründet von Christian Adolph Rothes [...] ursprünglich französisch zu Hamburg herausgegeben*, Hamburg [?], no printer, 1772. As we do not know the origin of the text, we also do not know which of the three versions might be the original. A subtitle claims the French version as original and Hamburg as its place of publication, but as the author of the title page is a fiction this information is probably fictitious as well.

692 Reverdil 1858, 389 on.

693 Quotes in this section from the bilingual version, *Les vues réelles et le système politique de la régence de Danemarck développés. Deduisant les Causes de la dernière Révolution A Copenhague ... Publié originairement en François à Hambourg et supprimé immédiatement par l'Autorité de la Reine Douairere./ The Real Views and Political System of the Regency of Denmark Fully Explained, Tracing the true Causes of late Revolution at Copenhagen ... Published originally in French at Hamburg, and immediately suppressed through the Interest of the Queen Dowager. With an Appendix by the English Editor*, London: S. Bladon, Paternoster-row, 1772. The quote is from 3–5.

or even “Juliana the Machiavelist” through the booklet (25). Ever since her spouse King Frederik was alive, she had hated his first son Crown Prince Christian who blocked the way for her own son with him, Hereditary Prince Frederik. Out of fear or prudence, young Christian had showed her respect; only in his choice of Queen Matilda, he had ventured to go against her, “Rothes” claims.



Fig. 52: The second Queen of Frederik V, now Queen Dowager Juliana Maria, became a central political actor in and through the coup of 17 January 1772. She had long since sought a way to bring her son, Hereditary Prince Frederik, closer to the throne and supported, maybe for that reason, the coup that ended with placing him at the head of the reorganized State Council in February 1772. The more precise sharing of power between mother, son, and their Cabinet Secretary Guldberg is hard to judge, but the circulating international rumours of Juliana Maria as the single top central figure of the group were exaggerated. *Queen Dowager Juliana Maria with a Portrait of Hereditary Prince Frederik*, painting by J. G. Ziesenis, 1766, © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Kit Weiss.

Juliana feared to lose her power over the King and could not hide her ill will against young Matilda whose beauty ravished the people. This is why she concocted a “dangerous cabal” (11) against King, Queen and state by sending the King abroad on his foreign tour of 1768. During this long separation of the royal spouses, she did everything to sour the relationship between them. She told Matilda in detail about the King’s assumed love affairs in London and Paris, while all that the lonesome Matilda did for entertainment, riding, hunting and so on, Juliana portrayed to the court as destructive to her reputation. Conversely, she informed the King in England that Matilda was unfaithful with new, invited favorites to her court so that, by the King’s return, the two spouses were estranged. Simultaneously, Juliana saw to the banishment of a long series of courtiers and ministers, including the important Russian emissary Filosofov, while she turned foreign policies towards France instead. Fictive letter quotes from top officials like Bernstorff and Bülow are used to substantiate such accusations, and the 17 January revolution now has but confirmed their worst fears, according to “Roths”.

Only Struensee had Juliana been unable to remove, because he was loved by King and Queen alike. Unfortunately, Matilda picked bad people as her favorites, and this paved the way for her fall. “The Great” of the realm were jealous of Struensee and gave Juliana the idea that he wished to exterminate nobility and that the rise of Struensee was possible only because of a “scandalous predilection of the Queen, who in her heart detested the Danes, dishonored, by her licentious conduct, the state and the King, and seemed determine to govern without controul with her unworthy favorites” (33–35).

Struensee was accused by Juliana of terrible crimes, such as poisoning the young King and weakening his mind. On top of that came the debauchery of the King which made him indifferent to the Queen’s missteps. Shrewdly fabricated rumors in the capital made the expected impression on officers and commoners. The Queen Dowager pulled Thott, Osten, and Köller to her party, yet not the proud Rantzau who wished to give back freedom to citizens and restricting sovereign powers in order to reinstate “good old laws”. It is interesting to note how “Roths” goes a long way to exempt Rantzau from participating in the Cabal, to the extreme of changing his viewpoints to the almost opposite. All of this, “Roths” continues, is motivated in Juliana’s desire to see her son on the throne, including abusing Matilda’s innocent confidence in Struensee to throw her into misery. Struensee’s policies were painted in the blackest of colors, even if he did good things such as the relaxation of police control and morality legislations, “Roths” claims. So, the coup was no immediate whim but had been thoroughly planned by Juliana through years. The King was forced to sign the arrest orders under threat of forcing him off the throne and, after the coup, supporters were bribed to celebrate and articulate attacks for infidelity and crimes against state and King. Even the Queen would have been executed on fabricated evidence, had not the English envoy Mr. Keith intervened and threatened with bombing Copenhagen.

Juliana now was in power, her son became chief of the State Council, and the King's orders must be countersigned by the Council. All contact between King and Queen was prevented. Struensee and Brandt were forced by torture to confess crimes they had never committed. Forged letters documented an illicit relation between Struensee and Matilda. Also, the sermon campaign is described in some detail by "Rothes", claiming Juliana as main responsible for the initiative: "As she had the clergy at her devotion, she commanded those who were the most celebrated for their eloquence in the pulpit to fulminate against the licentiousness and debauchery of Queen Matilda's court, treating as impious blasphemers the disgraced ministers, at the same time returning thanks to the Almighty for having delivered them, under the happy auspices of Queen Juliana, from the oppression of these enemies to religion and the state" (65). Other clerics were ordered to preach incessantly to Matilda, urging her to spend the rest of her days regretting her crimes and misdemeanors. But all accusations against her remain unfounded, no proof of her infidelity exists, and yet she should be executed and her children declared to be bastards. Only England forced Juliana to change the Queen's life sentence to lifelong banishment to the ice-covered deserts of Jutland.

Interestingly, "Rothes" points to the important efforts of the international press in this regard: "Since the sensible part of the nation have discovered her sinister views, and her criminal projects, she has affected great moderation and indifference to obtain the government of affairs. The discovery has prevented her attempting to shorten the days of the royal family, and the foreign Gazettes, which accused her of this design, have effectually prevented her carrying it into execution, by pointing out her evil intentions" (67). International reports about Danish events are assumed to have assisted the official English pressure, during the spring of 1772, not only forcing Juliana to behave, on the outside, in a more moderate way, but also preventing her from shortening "the days of the royal family", that is, from her assumed plan of simply killing off the Queen and her two royal kids. "Rothes" finishes by expressing the hope that England will force Juliana to regret her crimes which pushed Matilda, yet not 21 years of age, into a dungeon. But she is innocent. "Rothes" hopes that his writing will spread across remote nations and make Juliana's name hated even in the most remote of afterworlds.

The alleged English publisher adds an appendix about what has happened since "Rothes" assumedly wrote his piece in mid-spring of 1772: the verdicts, the executions, the fact that Matilda, thanks to Keith, the English envoy, is now permitted a walk outside of Kronborg, finally implying that her two kids left behind will now most probably be strangled.⁶⁹⁴ Such were the foreboding last words of this direct

694 "As to the young prince and princess it is not improbable, that they may die of a disorder similar to that which carried off Peter the third of Russia" (92). Rumor had it that he had been strangled, as a bit more directly expressed by the German version of "Rothes", that they might "vom St. – sterben können" (56).

pamphlet attack on the new Danish government. The writing of the “Rothés” appendix is portrayed to have taken place between the executions of Brandt and Struensee late April and Matilda’s departure from Denmark early June. We have no sources to the actual publication date of the resulting booklet, but sometimes during early summer of 1772 seems most probable.

“Rothés” would have appeared as a bombshell in the Danish public – or in the narrow parts of it having access to the booklet. As we saw, the government tried to bolster its theological coup interpretation with policies against even loyal pamphlets offering personal details about coup events, like the *Comprehensive Intelligence*. “Rothés” ingeniously sought to gain credibility by mixing truths, which had been weeded out or marginalized in the official Danish interpretation, with a grandiose, fabricated conspiracy theory. It was true that Juliana heeded ambitions on behalf of her son, that Struensee’s bloody plans were rumors only, that Struensee was loved by King and Queen alike, that even his good initiatives were swiftly being dismantled, that the King was forced to sign arrest orders, that the new government launched a twisted coup version through a sermon campaign, that court language had been German long before Struensee, and much more. On his basis of such ill-heard truths, “Rothés” constructs a deep state conspiracy with Juliana as a cunning mastermind, sacking all ministers during the whole of Christian’s reign, orchestrating rumors to demolish the royal family and pushing both of the Queen’s kids out of the succession, if not out of this life. Reverdil, however, was not right that “there is not a single true word in it”. The crafty trick of the pamphlet was that it garnished its large propaganda construction of a long-winded “Cabal” with a host of ill-heard truths circulating only underground in Copenhagen, giving it credibility.

We have no idea who gave birth to “C. A. Rothés” and his writing, but it is a clever and informed construction, probably with government background. A possible responsible could be the French or Swedish court which would have an interest in deepening the conflict between Denmark and England, maybe also between Denmark and Russia which was now again, after the coup, in a position to hope for a close ally in Copenhagen. Another possible source could be the English court or parts thereof, in a reaction against its loss in the fight against the royal divorce and the perceived humiliation of the King’s sister on the international scene.⁶⁹⁵

It is an interesting fact that interpretation of the situation along the lines of “Rothés” could also be found in Copenhagen, even if not publicly expressed. The playwright Charlotte Dorothea Biehl’s *Historical Letters* similarly set Queen Dowager Juliana Maria in the role of central villain, responsible not only for the vandalism of the Great Clean-Up Party but also for the conspiracy of exploiting Struensee and us-

⁶⁹⁵ The general stance of the booklet might also point in the direction of surviving Struensee loyalists in exile such as those who assembled in Hamburg during the following years, plotting against the new Danish Guldberg government; see below. We have no information, however, that such groups were already organizing in the summer of 1772.

ing him to dismantle the State Council, only to ditch him afterwards by arousing a mob against him when he had done what she wished.⁶⁹⁶ It is apparent from the same source that Biehl was close to the English envoy M. Keith during 1771 to 1772 and enjoyed many intimate conversations with him.⁶⁹⁷ Might she have been the source, via Keith as an intermediary, to the bleak picture of Juliana Maria painted in the “Rothés” pamphlet – which would then be a fabrication by English government circles? “Rothés” kept being taken seriously as a source in England long after, e. g., in Keith’s *Memoirs and Correspondances* that came out in 1849. That Keith himself did in fact ascribe to Juliana an evil role is apparent from a letter written from Celle where he paid a visit to exiled Caroline Matilda in November 1772.⁶⁹⁸

In any case, the ingenious construction of Rothés’ counter-narrative, by playing on the fairytale stereotype of the wicked stepmother going to extremes to defend her own progeny, made a strong case to delegitimize the new fragile government under stabilization in Copenhagen in 1772. Its German and French/English versions were soon supplied with a Dutch translation the same year, indicating that it enjoyed a wide circulation in Europe, causing bad publicity for the new Danish government claimed to be in the claws of the evil stepmother.

Guldberg Strikes Back

Not much later in 1772, another English-language pamphlet appeared, directly aimed against the “Rothés” pamphlet. It was called *Letters from an English Gentleman, on His Travels Through Denmark, to His Friend in London, Concerning the Late Transactions in Copenhagen, serving as a Confutation to the many False Accounts published in The English News-Papers: but more Particularly in the pamphlet called The political system of the regency of Denmark Fully Explained*, signed Copenhagen, June 17 by “Th – M –”.⁶⁹⁹ Much seems to indicate that the pamphlet is authored on an initiative of the Danish government, maybe written by the central coup-plotter Guldberg himself, and then translated by the Danish envoy Baron von Diede in Lon-

696 Cf. Biehl 1865–1866, 443 on. Biehl’s letters are authored in retrospect in 1784 and only published in 1865 to 1866. Obviously, it is a possibility that Biehl’s tough judgment of Juliana was developed later than the Press Freedom period; the fact that it comes to expression in 1784 in letters to her close friend Johan Bülow is probably motivated by the fact that he was centrally connected to the coup, by the now 16-year old Crown Prince Frederick, in April of the same year, against Juliana, her son, and Guldberg. On Biehl’s history writings, see Olden-Jørgensen 2018.

697 Biehl 1865–1866, 423 on.

698 Smyth 1849, 303.

699 London 1772, printer not indicated. The initials may refer to Thomas More, well-known in England for his opposition to the despotism of Henry VIII, thus casting Struensee as the Danish parallel to the infamous English tyrant.

don, as a move to contain the damaging effects of the “Rothés” publication.⁷⁰⁰ It is fake news versus fake news.

The piece contains three parts, appearing as three successive letters written by a traveling Englishman in Copenhagen, mailed back to England at three dates in the late spring of 1772 (16 May, 28 May, and 19 June, respectively), the very same period in which the “Rothés” pamphlet claims to have been written. The first letter describes conditions in Denmark in 1771, before the January coup, the second covers post-coup events, and only the third letter launches the attack against “Rothés” – maybe in order to build up the authenticity of a person who was active and informed already before the “Rothés” booklet appeared between the latter two dates.

The first letter addresses a certain “Dear Sir” in London and directly presents the aim of correcting the fallacious rumors circulating about Denmark in the English public: “In order to obtain as true and satisfactory light into this affair as possible, I left England; for I could not bear to read the contradictions published in our newspapers, or to hear the false reasonings about the matter among the ministerial emissaries in our coffee-houses, and among the credulous news-mongers in all companies” (1). The writer claims to have been in Copenhagen already the year before, during the summer of 1771, from 20 May to 24 August. The Queen, Struensee, and all their “partisans, were not indiscriminately destroyed”, he says, for already the year before, the mob was desperate, the considerate middle class spoke about the “despotic usages, joined with an unrestrained perpetration of vice” at court (2), and the nobility was suppressed and pushed into a condition of the utmost fear. But the presence of patriotism and the will to freedom already then predicted the great change to come, everybody looked to the court of Juliana Maria and her son at Fredensborg who, as yet, kept themselves back. First, King and country should be saved, and then injustices should be repaired, and public credibility reinstated.

Late July 1771, the English writer had visited one of the most learned Danes at his country estate and conversed with him in French. Why, the Englishman had asked, are the Danes so annoyed with the Queen and her favorite? The answer of the learned Dane is in three parts: 1) “We have given ourselves as hereditary subjects to the issue of Frederick III and to his offspring only” (4), and we would rather die than be ruled by “spurious progeny”. If it is really Guldberg speaking here, he exploits, against his own knowledge, rumors that even the Crown Prince should be Struensee’s child.⁷⁰¹ The learned Dane continued: 2) Matilda and Struensee have dismantled the State Council. We were, that is true, dissatisfied with most of its members, but without a council, despotism reigns. Orders are now emerging directly from the Cabinet. The departments have degenerated into mere secretariats. Struensee knows

700 Ehrencron-Müller, III, 306–307 provides various sources for the Guldberg hypothesis. Other sources mention the top Danish official Andreas Holt as a possible author; see Syskind 1972, 16.

701 There is a strange tension between the implication that the Crown Prince is Struensee’s child, and the claim that he attempts to kill him. Both could hardly be credible at the same time.

nothing about Danish conditions and does nothing but carousing from morning until night, and he is “the Q–n’s *constant* and *sole* companion during the time of her lying-in” (6, italics in the text). 3) Now, just a few days ago, Struensee has become partner of government, as against our laws, and he has been appointed count. You have seen yourself, at Hirskholm, how this guy and the Queen humiliate the King and threaten the Crown Prince by hunger and cold, the Dane had said. The spelling error of “Hirskholm” instead of “Hirschholm” is probably a deliberate trick to disculpate the Danish court from a suspicion of authorship: the court would surely know the correct spelling. The Dane had continued: remember what your countrymen did in 1688 – comparing the approaching coup with the Glorious Revolution. We will not rely upon alien powers but persuade Juliana and her son to do the work. No matter where I came, the Englishman concludes about his 1771 experiences, I heard the same thing: the storm was brewing.

As the fictive Englishman returned to England, letters from Denmark kept informing him during winter about the increasingly shocking behavior of Matilda and Struensee, how the anger of the people grew and made all patriots tremble. The rumor spread that the Queen would dethrone the King, declare herself a regent and appoint Struensee “protector” of the realm. The Englishman is evidently knowledgeable as to the “Fermentation” rumors of late 1771. Finally, Juliana and Frederik were called to lead the group saving King and land, and in January, the Englishman received notice on the coup. The Englishman celebrates this liberation of “a noble and oppressed people” and remarks upon the coup’s notable success. All had been completed so masterfully that not a drop of blood had been spilled nor any disorder erupted, apart from the understandable lust for revenge of the joyous mob against “an enormous and unrestrained debauchery so dishonorable to the nation” (13), destroying all houses with a bad reputation. The Great Clean-Up Party appears to the Englishman to be a legitimate act of returning to normal: it is wrong to call what happened a revolution.

In his second letter, the fictive English gentleman is writing from Denmark in late May and has striven to collect information about what happened since 17 January, both from Danish informants and local Englishmen. He has investigated even the feelings of the underclass and the provinces. There had been such a rage among commoners, sailors, and soldiers that Juliane and Frederik were simply forced to act – within one week, anarchy and sedition might otherwise have destroyed the state. The strategy from the sermon campaign is repeated: the reference to terrible but unspecified action plans on the part of Struensee and Matilda. A friend has shown the Englishman one of the recent English papers, raging against Juliana and sending threats of war against Denmark. Are you not ashamed of these lies? he writes to his friend. Should we let Denmark be subverted and the royal house degenerated because of an English princess forgetting what a virtuous King her brother is and who “gave herself up to libidinous embraces”? (17) How could a country – Eng-

land – actively support despotism, infamy, and depraved destruction of religion and customs, despicable Cabinet Orders?

The Englishman adds that the verdicts of Struensee and Matilda were unanimous – it was impossible for two persons to have opposite opinions on this. Also, the people were convinced about the righteousness of the verdicts. The executions, however, are never mentioned in these letters, even if they were completed a few weeks before the alleged letter dates of May-June 1772. It seems as if the Danish government propaganda was less than proud of mentioning this event on the international stage.

In the third and last letter, now in June, the traveling Englishman explicitly thanks for the “Rothes” pamphlet which he has now received by mail from home – and again, he attacks such abuse, by bookdealers and scribblers, of the curiosity of their nation. They go further, however, than even the most superstitious man, even here in the middle of enlightened times, in a very learned nation. The wicked pamphlet of Rothes even claims to be “founded on authentic papers”, on evidential sources. But C. A. Rothes does not exist at all, the Englishman makes clear, it must be an envoy from the French court who has, in London, produced this “foul abortion” in order to ridicule the English, to incite to war between old allies, to give the intriguing French court the pleasure of seeing English trade going down, to see debts growing and war spreading all over Europe, to the advantage of France. The “Rothes” pamphlet is portrayed as an ignition designed to blow up the whole of the continent. That Juliana should have sided with France and Prussia, like Rothes claims, is mere rubbish – it was Struensee who destroyed Danish alliances and its relation to Russia. Everything Rothes claims about Juliana, then, is wrong. All of Europe knows that it was Struensee who sacked all the important ministers and courtiers out of fear that they would reveal his “criminal love” to the Queen and pave his own road to the Cabinet (33). We must prevent the spread of such lies among our countrymen, the Englishman stipulates.

Particularly important for the pamphlet, it seems, is trying to repair the Danish relation to Russia, which makes it even more probable that the traveling Englishman is, in fact, a concoction of the Danish government. Its version of 1771 to 1772 events stands in almost detailed one to one correspondence to the standard narration of the new government, with two characteristic omissions. The executions are not mentioned and the theory about the miraculous intervention of God in the coup is reduced to the weaker claim that Juliana and Frederik were “called”. The coup motor here is rather the fermenting anger in all social groups from mob over middle classes to nobility: it was a revolt of a noble and suppressed people. Again, a construction is made to conceal the concrete action of the non-royal members of the coup group. If God was not responsible, then the people. Probably, the Danish government realized that international, political readers would be less tempted to assume a special, divine protection of the Danish royal house, and the Great Clean-Up Party here comes in handy as an indication of the coup having its real base in a growing popular re-

volt. In a countermovement against the diabolization of Juliana in “Rothes”, Struensee is made responsible for every single dismissal of important persons from court since the ascension of Christian VII, long before he came to court.

We do not know how the new government may have learned about the “Rothes” pamphlet, probably from its London envoy or from Luxdorph in the Danish Chancellery, but the two opposed pamphlets taken together form the pinnacle of an international pamphlet war over the summer of 1772. We have no exact dating of the two pamphlets, but the most probable period seems to be briefly after their fictive dates of May to June 1772. Juliana Maria and Struensee, in the two opposed pamphlets, are construed as mastermind villains of almost transcendent powers. International political misinformation is no news and has been around long before the Trojan horse but again, the new Danish government displayed an acute awareness that the new public sphere demanded a swift presence on the booming pamphlet market under the armlength of anonymity.⁷⁰² The counter-pamphlet was not the only governmental action taken against “Rothes”. “Rothes” was among the pamphlets captured for destruction in Leipzig, just like it was a central part of the pretext for a large fine to the Copenhagen book importer Proft in 1773 (see Chapter 14).

Exploiting Caroline Matilda’s Viewpoint

A character of the drama who was suitable for international propaganda was Queen Matilda. Out of considerations to England, the new regime could not handle her case as brutally as against the two Counts, and she had enjoyed a popularity during her six years in Copenhagen that had not completely disappeared. The new government had, as mentioned, imagined banishing her to Aalborg for life, but that was prevented by English intervention. Juliana attempted to stick to the Aalborg plan as against England but was trumped by the new prime minister Schack-Rathlou, and the difficult English-Danish diplomatic compromise with the small town of Celle in English-governed Hanover was reached by mid-April.⁷⁰³ By Caroline Matilda’s departure from Kronborg around 1 June 1772, the young Queen was forced to leave behind her infant daughter Louise Augusta, and a small Danish literature emerged mourning her exit. “Your departure must bend the heart even of the wild”, one early pamphlet claimed,⁷⁰⁴ and it was cause for regret that this withdrawal took place during a

702 As such, the “Letters” was an updated version of the tactics followed almost a century earlier when the Danish envoy in London Mogens Skeel worked against the inimical claims about Danish absolutism presented by Robert Molesworth’s “An Account of Denmark” (1693). Skeel failed to have Molesworth’s book prohibited in England but succeeded in feeding content into the appearance of a counter-book, William King’s *Animadversions*, eight months later. (Olden-Jørgensen 2008, 71 on). Debate speed had accelerated considerably in 1722 by comparison.

703 See Koch 1892–1894, 56.

704 [anonymous], *Kiøbenhavn til Cronborg*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (24 February 1772).

strange silence: “Do you, Matilda! Leave? O! could one but speak about your leaving? Should it be left in hibernation?”⁷⁰⁵ The alleged reasons for her departure could – in contrast to the many Struensee pamphlets – often be left in discretion: “Intervening causes have denied both you and us that happiness, and we must prepare ourselves for a farewell!”⁷⁰⁶ There was a Teflon-like quality to the way in which the harsh accusations against Struensee did not target Caroline Matilda in public, even if she judicially shared his guilt in infidelity against the King. Even a eulogy to Juliana and the King had to admit, regarding Caroline Matilda, that “those who received you with delight/ Should also sound a farewell”. And even a pamphlet which begins by speaking about those terrible domains “where virtue had to yield to vice” and continues by theologically celebrating that the criminals “were yet cast down from top of power” by the Almighty, concludes in a mild and generous wish that “she may happily / settle in those regions / where pleasures she will have / and everlasting joy embrace”.⁷⁰⁷ Even a fictive letter of farewell from Juliana lets the Queen Dowager be consumed by tender feelings with little probable correlate in the real world: “My heart now swims in tears disguised. / You darken the sun of joy. Your loss My heart does wound”. The small Crown Prince joins in, agreeing: “I lay in secret calms by your sweet breasts / There I fulfilled a small set of desires / Now stunned I miss the good I just / embraced in you in an innocent kiss”. Yea, yet not one year of age, the tiny Crown Princess eloquently contributes to goodbye, predicting that when once she achieves intelligence, “Then I shall fiery watch, in sweet appreciation / my tender *Mother* who’s worth my love”.⁷⁰⁸ Around the Queen’s departure, in short, a small, sentimental Matilda literature appeared in Copenhagen, which tenderly praised the departing Queen’s good character, expressed compassion in her fate and wished her well in exile.⁷⁰⁹ The new government did not intervene against these pamphlets even if they celebrated a banished character now *persona non grata* in the realm. In the November decision, the year after, however, the pretext for the final smothering of Press Freedom would prove to be critical coppers continuing to celebrate the exiled Queen.

In the meantime, the Queen’s dramatic destiny had been subject to repeated international attempts to put her to political use. The second of the two 1772 pamphlets taken as a pretext to punish the bookdealer Proft the year after was exactly a large,

705 [anonymous], *Tanker ved Dronning Caroline Matildas Bortreyse fra Dannemark til Zelle i det Hannoverske*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (1 June 1772).

706 [anonymous], *Afskeeds-Tale til Dronningen. ifra det Danske Publico*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (5 June 1772).

707 [anonymous], *Adspredte Tanker samlede ved Søe-Kanten af Cronborg Fæstning og opskrevne ved Dronning Caroline Matildas Bortreyse*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (5 June 1772).

708 [anonymous], *Kongens- Dronning Juliane Maries, Kronprindsens og Prindsessens ømme Fornemmelser ved Dronning Caroline Matildas Bortreise. Og Dronning Caroline Matildas Svar til Høistsamme*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772.

709 On the occasional poems in honor of Caroline Matilda, see Bregnsbo 2007, 55.

fictive letter from the incarcerated Queen in a completely different tone, claiming to give a detailed account of recent events in Denmark.⁷¹⁰ It also appeared, in addition to the English original, in French and alternative German versions: yet another international publishing success attacking the Danish government and its versions of events.⁷¹¹ The fictive letter from the imprisoned Queen is addressed to an English count *** who has demonstrated loyalty to the Queen's family – the English royal house – which has encouraged her, from her Kronborg captivity, to submit her story to his judgment. She hopes that he will be able to convince their countrymen about her innocence. This is why she will here vindicate herself against accusations

that I have been guilty of plotting against the King, my husband, in order to dispossess him of his crown: that in concert with the counts Struensee, Brandt, and others, I had actually drawn up an act of renunciation, which it was my intention to oblige his majesty to sign by force, whenever we, the conspirators, should have secured his person, which design (it is pretended) we were on the point of putting into execution, at the very time we were arrested by the King's order. And lastly, that I have been guilty of infidelity to the King, my husband's bed, with the aforesaid count Struensee. (7)

In contrast to the sentimental farewell pamphlets to the Queen, Matilda here stands forth as a sharp and well-argued legal subject dedicated to rejecting accusations and defending her honor.

Caroline Matilda knows well how difficult it is to defend herself against such accusations, but she hopes to be able to prove that the whole of the case is unjust, accusations are improbable and proofs insufficient. Nobody had been questioned at the time of her arrest, and she was, on the whole, treated unfairly. Arrest orders had been violently extorted from the King by Juliana and her son and faced with the threat that they would forge his signature, he yielded. A mere shadow of royal dignity was left when he, hands shaking and heart stressed, signed the order delivering me to my enemies, Matilda claims. He hesitated to sign, even after they had ensured him that the conspirators were about to force him to vacate the throne – which proves that he did not at all judge Matilda to be capable of such a complot. Matilda continues narrating how Rantzau, by her arrest, did not permit her to speak to the King. It was obvious that decisions had been made before the King's order, and that Rantzau acted on Juliana and Frederik's orders only. The order was displayed only

710 [anonymous], *Zuverlässige Nachricht von der letzter Staatsveränderung in Dänemark von Ihrer Majestät der Königin Caroline Matilda während Ihrer Gefangenschaft auf dem Schlosse zu Kroonenburg eigenhändig entworfen und ohnlängst dem Grafen von *** zur Prüfung zugesandt. Nach dem Original abcopiert und aus dem Englischen übersetzt*, Rotterdam: J. F. Ebert, 1772, who also published a briefer French version. In 1773, a longer version came out with London on the title page.

711 While it seems to have been the German version that circulated in Copenhagen, we shall here refer to the English original: [anonymous], *The Queen of Denmark's Account of the late Revolution in Denmark; written while Her Majesty was a Prisoner in the Castle of Cronenburgh; and Now First Published from the Original Manuscript, Sent to a Noble Earl*, London: J. Wheble, No. 24, Pater-noster Row, 1772.

after the arrest had been completed. Köller admitted, during the arrest of Struensee, that he did not have the order present but acted under threat of he himself losing his head.⁷¹² Most of the other persons arrested had to be released later as none of the accusations against them would stand at a criminal court, and some of them even received a pension. We remark in the passing that this is one of several occasions where the Queen, supposedly still incarcerated at Kronborg while writing, displays knowledge about later events. The author of the letter is considerably well-oriented about events on the coup night as well as later in spring.

The Queen also comments upon the behavior of members of the Inquisition Committee. My enemies, she says, claim that the judges proved the accusations against me, but even they themselves were not convinced. Their only proof was the confessions of her so-called accomplices, but they had been extorted by means of torture. We may add here that it is still a matter of discussion whether Struensee may have been subjected to torture. The Queen continues on unsuitability: members of the commission were appointed by the very same persons participating in the extortion of the King's signature on the night of the coup – which must refer to count Schack-Rathlou, the newly-appointed central figure in the recently appointed State Council. The work of the commission was conducted clandestinely, she says, even if the simplest of subjects have the right to a public interrogation and the whole of the Danish nation took a deep interest in proceedings. But there was no public access until after commission decisions, and colonel Keith – the English envoy to Denmark – was denied right to be present at interrogations. All that was due to the enmity which commission members had against her person, she says.

On top of such offenses against her, it was improbable, in the first place, that she should have acted as claimed, she continues. To remove the King would have been extremely unfavorable to her, for she could not become regent of Denmark, and then the throne would pass to Hereditary Prince Frederick, Juliana's son. And even if she could have taken over the throne, how could she grant to stay there? Juliana would, aided by foreign powers like France, have pushed her away and reinstated the King, and England would be in no position to defend a usurper. She would be overthrown. She would not expect any support from the army, and the nobility supported the Queen Dowager. The people were against her because of evil and wicked rumors planted by her enemies. Her sole protector was the King, and it must be plain to everybody that she had never striven to assume power, to have advantages, to organize a party, even when she sensed a strong party gathering against her.

712 Page 12. In the English version, Köller appears under the name of "Roller".



Fig. 53: In England, the public was preoccupied with the strange destiny which the country's young Princess and sister of the King was suffering as Queen of Denmark. In the description of her imprisonment at Kronborg in Elsinore in *The Christian's Magazine* 1772, the Queen withers in a dark, barred dungeon surrounded by halberd-armed guards and sobbing, handwringing ladies-in-waiting. Resigned, she leans on the Bible while her daughter Louise Augusta, but nine months of age, seems matured before time and stares disillusioned into the distance. *The Queen of D-n-k, in Prison in the Castle at Kronenburgh*, illustration to article in *The Christian's Magazine* 1772. © Royal Danish Library.

This was why her enemies had to try to hit her by other means: the criminal and prohibited relation to Struensee. They spread the rumor that the facial features of her kid were those of Struensee. They claim Struensee confessed the relation, but she does not believe he would thus dishonor her name by admitting. It could have been squeezed out of him by torture only. Her enemies took their confidential relation as basis for an accusation of infidelity which was, allegedly, known to the whole of the court. But then why did the King not know about it? And how would she dare do such a thing in a court ripe with enemies?

Finally, the fictive Queen turns to the causes behind the behavior of her enemies. They comprise the Queen Dowager, her son, and those nobles and persons from other estates participating in the coup. But Juliana was the prime driving force in all parts of their movements. Here, the fictive letter agrees with the "Rothes" pamphlet. The arrival of Matilda at court had brought an end to Juliana's hope to see her son on the throne: she acted falsely against the Queen; gave her advice to unpopular actions and exaggerated luxury; during the King's travel, she told each of the royal spouses about the other's infidelity, later she spread the rumor of her relation to Struensee. The Queen Dowager abstained, however, from involving the Crown Prince in her accusations in order to conceal her real ambition to change succession. The letter ends with a prayer to the addressee to judge these proofs and spread the message of Matilda's innocence among Englishmen.

In contrast to the rough "Rothes" whose conspiracy theory would have been palpable for most observers with some detail of knowledge of events, Matilda's defense letter is written by a person with considerable insight in the conditions at court during the coup. Here, as indicated, the pamphlet discreetly hides a problem of enunciation: how on earth would Matilda have access to such detailed knowledge about the coup, she who was isolated at Kronborg the very same morning, and where she is supposedly sitting still at the time of writing? Much credible information is related, and even if Juliana, again, appears as top mastermind, arguments are more sophisticated and less error-ridden than in "Rothes". All in all, the letter appears cool, careful, and serious, and its argument that the inquisition commission did behave dishonestly towards the Queen is convincing. The commission's simple purpose was to prepare the ground for a forced divorce of the royal couple rather than to establish any review of what had taken place. The letter does not possess the colorful action of "Rothes" with Juliana as plotting ever since the days of her husband Frederik V, but it constitutes a more refined piece of propaganda based on the principle that the best lie is one which is closest to the truth. Who fabricated the letter we do not know. If it was a foreign court, it must be one with considerably well-informed envoys, informants, or spies.

The viewpoint of the Queen would be even more elaborated some years later in the posthumous London publication *Memoirs of an Unfortunate Queen* (1776) and would remain a source of foreign interpretations of events, particularly in England; cf. the English envoy Keith's memoirs and letters (1849).

Defending Caroline Matilda: Anti-Danish Pamphlets and Plans for Revenge

A number of other international pamphlets added to the increasing unease of the nervous Danish government. We already mentioned the numerous versions of the *Comprehensive Intelligence*, which kept spreading in Germany, Holland, and England. An even more ambitious attempt was the booklength *Special Intelligence on the Victims of State as well as Victims of Justice in this 18 Century, particularly about the counts Struensee and von Brandt, executed this year in Denmark*, published in German in Pelim (Flensburg, in the Danish Duchy of Sleswick).⁷¹³ The anonymous author was a certain J. F. Camerer, archeologist and author living in Haderslev, and his book constituted the first attempt to analyze the whole affair as an issue of comparative historiography. He aimed at collecting all evidence available and compare the case to other eighteenth century court conspiracies, particularly in Russia and Portugal, and to earlier Danish cases of prosecution of royal favorites, such as Ulfeldt and Griffenfeld in the seventeenth century. Unlike these favorites, Camerer claims, Struensee acted out of principle, and a clear sympathy for Struensee shines through in the book. Camerer's large volume, however, never makes its way to the promised in-depth analysis of the present case, and forthcoming volumes announced never appeared until his death a few years later. Interesting, however, is that Camerer adds as appendices not only the Danish *Lex Regia* but also a 50-pages selection of Struensee's own writings from his time in Altona in order to throw light upon his policy ideas. Despite the unfinished character of Camerer's voluminous endeavor, his published volume signaled a brazen characterization of the whole affair: a court conspiracy rather than a miraculous intervention of the almighty.

Another large, anonymous German pamphlet called *Moral Question*, allegedly by an anonymous Dane, asked the simple question why the Queen and the two counts were arrested and claimed the affair was about the arrest of a merry and beloved Queen and a series of men who will be praised by posterity.⁷¹⁴ But it also launched a personal attack on Struensee's caretaker priest Münter, probably in order to undermine the international picture of him under establishment as a well-argued and victorious combatant in his spiritual battle against the impious Struensee. Here, Münter's late embarking on a clerical career is taken as target. He was trained as a

713 [J. F. Camerer], *Besondere Nachrichten von den Opfern der Staaten sowohl als auch von den Opfernder Gerechtigkeit dieses achtzehnten Jahrhunderts; besonders aber von denen in Dännemark in diesem Jahre hingerichteten gewesenen Grafen Struensee und von Brandt*, Flensburg, no printer indicated, 1773 (2 February 1773).

714 [anonymous]: *Sittliche Frage: Warum mussten die Königin von Dännemark Carolina Mathildis und die Grafen Johann Friedrich von Struensee und Enewold von Brandt in Kopenhagen arretiret, erstere von ihrem Gemahle geschieden, und letztere zum Tode verurtheilet und hingerichtet werden? Von einem dänischen Zuschauer gründlich beantwortet*, the pamphlet indicates no place, printing house or year, except from "Elisäum 5777".

philosopher and only at 25, he suddenly received the offer to become a priest because of a call from the Duke of Gotha. This fact lies behind the attack which claims that Münter's priestly appearance hides that not so many years earlier, he had been obsessed by an addiction to "drinking, riding, fun, and cards", but had been able to resume a clerical career only through flattering. Now, he had excluded the Queen from the church's prayers even long before the process against her, which had given a lot of Danes suspicions about him, the newly converted pagan. Münter is here portrayed as a simple political propagandist choosing a clerical career out of opportunism, if not cynicism. The whole conclusion is definitive and runs directly counter to the Copenhagen interpretation: "the whole of the revolution was falsely initiated, the investigations falsely completed, the accusations falsely made, and the conviction falsely sentenced". (80) All had been false.

This was rough political polemics against the standard interpretation, but there also appeared a crisp and serious judicial piece such as the anonymous *Outline of a Defense of the reigning Queen of Denmark Caroline Matilda*.⁷¹⁵ Luxdorph indicates none less that the top economist Christian Martfelt (cf. Chapter 5) as its author, and in any case, the piece bears witness to a highly educated author. It falls in two parts. The first is a painstaking argument in international law regarding the exact legal status of Caroline Matilda, but it takes its point of departure in an elementary compassion with her destiny. Any insensitivity to the destiny of our fellow man is a deviation from the structure of the human soul which may be corrupted by giving credence to false teachings only, it is claimed. So, when the author read a pamphlet on Matilda's destiny, he felt compelled to contribute intellectually to her defense. Yea, his compassion even sort of dictated him these pages as in a fever.

The resulting pamphlet, however, bears no traces of febrile delirium. Its main argument goes that the reigning Queen of Denmark is born a Princess of England and therefore not legally dependent upon Denmark. Her marriage to the Danish King did not turn her into his subject, and she is subordinated to him in one regard only, namely with respect to continuing the lineage. Here, a distinction by Hugo Grotius is invoked, that of subjection vs. subordination. She may have been subordinated in certain respects, but never a subject. Even if she so wished, she would be unable to discard the dignity of her own high house, not even if she had married a prince without *honores regios*, royal dignity. Marriage knows of no lord and servant, and Matilda was subjected to no-one in the world but the constitution of her fatherland, and the King waged no power over her other than that of any husband over his wife. You may say that the royal children belong to the state and that she, as a child-raiser, belongs under the positive law of state. The former is true, the latter is false. In a sovereign state, the royal family is not subjected to the regent. She has not given up her special position by any *pactum ante nuptiale*, a special contract before mar-

715 *Entwurf zu einer Vertheidigung für die regierende Königin von Dänemark Carolina Matilda*, 1773, no place nor printer indicated.

riage. She is also not a part of government, just like other citizens she is obliged by whatever contracts she may sign, and in case of failing her duties, a local authority might confiscate her effects but never her person. In short, her legal position is comparable to that of a foreign envoy. Thus, the process against her is against international law and constitutes an offense of the King of England. Also measured on civil law, the process is erroneous and exaggerated. The Queen was arrested without being caught *flagrante delicti* – red-handed – and her arrest itself is to be counted as *species pænæ* – a form of punishment – particularly regarding a person like her who is *summa dignitatis*, of the highest dignity. A special inquisition has been erected against her, and she has been excluded from church prayers. The chancellery had pronounced a sentence without expressing it, even before the commission had begun investigations. She has been forced to answer the claims of inquisition after having been subjected to a hard arrest which *respectu personæ* – with respect to her person – is comparable to torture. The author is evidently a learned and educated person speaking on the Queen's behalf. The pamphlet puts judicial meat on the bones of the many pamphlets suspicious against the Danish court case, and it is an interesting thought experiment whether the anonymous author would not have served better as the Queen's defender than Peter Uldall did.

The crispness of the pamphlet falls a bit in the second half going from form to matter, to the contents of accusations, but still there are interesting observations. The King was forced to sign the order of the Queen's arrest without giving him time to investigate accusations. And the Hereditary Prince signed first, in order to prevent the King from expressing his viewpoint by not signing. The King who still loved the Queen, may not have believed the infidelity claims. The author, in short, implies that the coup-makers committed offense against the sovereignty of the King. Also, the behavior of Matilda does not indicate any seditious intentions. She brought with her no Englishmen, and she did not gather around her a faction of subjects. How should she be able to lead a revolution? She possessed no means other than those she received from the King, and even many millions would not outweigh the advantages of the King. No national revolution has ever been made without support from a considerable fraction of the army, the court, or the people, and the greater part of these were against her. England could not come to her assistance, and Struensee was the most hated person in the realm whose name alone would make suspect even the most righteous of cases. Would she have dared to put her beloved son and his succession in danger? The lawless procedure, the merciless treatment of the Queen, the indifference to the dignity of the crown, the restrictions on the sovereign power of his majesty and the scorn for the public, all of it reveals that simple lust for power was what animated the Queen's enemies who are seen in this piece as the real usurpers.

The judicial pamphlet was without the entertaining deep state narratives of many of the more colorful pamphlets against the standard interpretation, but it added a judicial backbone that, on a professional level, would have been felt as a

stronger blow against the legitimacy of the Danish coup. The pamphlet concludes with a utility consideration: wouldn't those persons persecuting Struensee themselves, in the long run, prove more harmful to the country than his alleged crime? His crime would live on in imagination only, but his execution will keep contaminating the whole of the nation with the gravest of consequences. Arguments here resemble the fictive letter from the Queen, and that letter might be the writing the author initially claimed was moving him to take up his pen. If Martfelt was really the author, it adds new dimensions to the tensions between Guldberg and him and might add to the explanation of Guldberg's prohibition of Martfelt's large book on grain trade (see Chapter 5).

A strong and entertaining defense of the innocence of Caroline Matilda was the German J. W. F. Freiherr von Krohne's *Prophecy on the certain, expected Fulfilment of the old Saying: Tandem bona caussa triumphat*, quoted in the beginning of the preceding chapter.⁷¹⁶ Writing in 1773, Krohne looks back on events and is clearly well-informed, not only by international news coverage, but also by the access to international publications of court documents of the Struensee case, Münter's conversion story, and other German publications. Krohne wittily casts himself as a prophet in rags in the vein of the current celebrity Martin Zadeck and claims, in his Latin motto, that good cases will eventually triumph. Such a case is that of Matilda. Krohne's interest in the case testifies to Danish connections. He served as an official at various small German courts, also tried his luck in Russia and Poland. In 1770, he had been promised expectancy of a Danish position by Bernstorff. Writing in 1773, he was in Warsaw or Hamburg working on the large German lexicon of nobles which would prove to be his main lasting contribution. His prophecy, however, is a challenging piece which satisfies every fear the apprehensive Danish government might nourish about international counterpropaganda.

Krohne's overall aim is to predict Caroline Matilda's return to the throne based on her forthcoming acquittal from all accusations, but that takes him deeply into a discussion of Struensee's court case. Also, Struensee will obtain redress, and Krohne asks whether he will not "have erected, in Denmark, a column of honor, instead of the pole on which his head has now served feeding ravens, when, after some years, a commission of revision will be appointed? Struensee is mourned, and if the conviction has been made that he has attempted to undermine the King's sovereignty against the *Lex Regia*, who knows if it will not be revealed that not he, but rather his enemies, have done this, but that the Cabale of the latter has been spun finer than Struensee's?" (15) Krohne directly questions the legitimacy of the coup-makers vis-à-vis the *Lex Regia*, and all points to the fact that the Danish government knew well that their grasp of power did not have any more legal backing than Struensee's.

716 [J. W. F. von Krohne], *Weissagung von der gewiß zu erwartenden Erfüllung des alten Sprichworts: Tandem bona caussa triumphat*, no place or printer indicated, 1773.



Fig. 54: Baron J. W. F. von Krohne was an adventurous character, vagabonding between courts of Northern Europe. In 1773, he authored a prophecy about Caroline Matilda’s return to the Danish-Norwegian throne, building his argument upon a detailed criticism of the case against Struensee which appeared to him as a mere show trial. *Joannes Wilhelmus L. B. â Krohne S. R. M.*, painting by unknown artist, n. d. © Historia Auktionshaus.

Krohne’s main line of attack is directed against Wivet’s prosecution, a soft spot indeed in the Danish court case: “The fabricated accusation against him is childish, foolish and ill-constructed, the Struenseenian defense, on the contrary, is beautiful, concise and convincingly written”. Read both, he recommends the reader – everybody will then judge against the commission. Wivet’s prosecution is so badly written that he should be taught grammar, rhetoric, and logic– the beginner’s curriculum in mediaeval universities. What Wivet dislikes is really Press Freedom: Struensee “gave Press Freedom. That was used by learned men to the philosophical investigation of prejudices protected by law. To throw around accusations for blasphemy against such persons is the common counterproof from theologians who do not know what to say. Such was Struensee’s destiny. The Wivetian accusation was his thanks” (17). Wivet should rather be a prosecutor in a “Konsistorium”, that is, in a clerical court.

From here, Krohne moves to the delicate issue of morality under Struensee’s government. In all big cities, he claims, even the most strict authorities allow for the existence of a certain kind of women “who, for a modest payment, have sufficient

compassion to receive from soldiers, merchant apprentices, sailors, and such kinds, whose conditions of life do not allow them to marry, a certain surplus which they are not able to offer to a hollow tree” (19). Krohne’s virtuous euphemism for prostitution claims it has always existed and been tolerated by authorities – the upshot being that the existence of “Jungfern-Comtoirs”, maiden offices, i.e. brothels, in Copenhagen was not Struensee’s initiative at all. Licentiousness had always already existed in parts of Copenhagen and Struensee could not be blamed for that. As to the issue with the King’s sovereignty, Krohne asks: doesn’t the King exercise his inherited sovereignty better through a man of whose loyalty he is certain, than through a State Council of nobles who always consider the rights of their ancestors in trying to change monarchy into aristocracy? Krohne thus continues Struensee’s criticism of nobility, in effect supporting his and his party’s revision of absolutism. Struensee did commit the error of not learning Danish, that is true, but he was busy and maybe he planned to pick it up later. The fact that Wivet, again and again, turned to pejoratives and relating Struensee’s life just goes to show what he was missing: *factis et delictis* – facts and crimes. Struensee is claimed to have been cheeky and daring indeed when seeking to become doctor of the state. But many chancellors and presidents come from humble backgrounds, and Struensee had documented knowledge of principles of state governing – Krohne refers to Struensee’s 1763 Altona periodical. Like Camerer, Krohne knew about Struensee the author. The accusation against Struensee’s love for women is belittled as prudish: “Struensee had a free relation to women. Is that something to say when you accuse someone on life and death? It is just a sign that he has been more lovable than Mr. Wivet” (27). Krohne shoots in all directions, attacking most of Wivet’s claims. Why was Struensee a stranger? – there were high Danish officials in his family both on the fatherly and motherly sides. Actually, it is Wivet who should be accused of lese-majesty: to tell a King that his minister is a fool and a liar amounts to the same thing as to say that the King himself was not wise enough to judge his minister. Krohne here touches dangerous grounds: implicitly, the new government also implicated the King in its attacks on Struensee although it rarely came out in public but for daring elite pamphleteers like Suhm or Langebek, or the unlucky Thura.

As to the main point of contention – again, the relation to the Queen – Krohne is convinced about her innocence. She was disliked by the “Cabale” only because she was intelligent, insightful, and determined – that was why they had to invent the infidelity accusation and plant the relevant rumors. Krohne does not at all believe the confessions of the two alleged lovers and points to the lack of precise word-for-word reports about those confessions in court: they are referred to, but they are never presented verbatim in the court proceedings. An anecdote touches upon Struensee’s relation to his own Press Freedom legislation: “When the State Council was abolished, the most evil pasquils about him appeared everywhere. One of them was sent for publication in the public paper. Its publisher sent it to Count Struensee with the question of what he would say to this? He answered: As regards his person, it

could easily be published, but the style of it was so bad that the piece would be of little honor to the paper, the publisher was now free to do what he wished” (38–39). The anecdote is apocryphal but testified to a growing international rumor of a heroic Struensee rather than a villain. Such a rumor would find further support in Krohne’s stoic Struensee quote from the scaffold: “I have had enemies, but I did not believe they would drive their enmity this far” (56). The Queen was but a sacrificial victim of the Cabale – Krohne recounts the story of how confession was lured out of her by pretending that Struensee had already confessed. She did not believe that, to which the interrogators answered that in that case he would have lied which was also lese-majesty so he would deserve a death penalty for that. So, she asked: will I save Struensee by saying yes? They nodded, and she said yes. All of these truths, so Krohne’s prophecy, will be known in Denmark in due time. The coup-makers will be removed, old faithful officials will return, Caroline Matilda be reunited with the King. Krohne congratulates Denmark with this day soon to come.

All in all, Krohne’s pamphlet incarnates some of the worst fears of the new government. Not only was the case against Struensee being painted as a sad show trial, but the very legitimacy of the new government was questioned and a demand of seeing the Queen back on the Danish throne was articulated in public. Not long after, Krohne got a position in Hamburg, and it is an open issue whether Krohne may have inspired or even been in direct contact with a group there harboring similar thoughts and working to act upon them. A network of exiled, younger Danish noblemen in Hamburg and Lübeck – Ernst Schimmelmann, August Hennings, Ferdinand Ahlefeldt, F. L. E. von Bülow, J. P. Texier – were developing such plans. Other participants seem to have comprised the military commandants of Glückstadt, general Sames, and of Rendsburg, our old acquaintance colonel Köller, maybe even the King’s brother-in-law Carl of Hessen, commandant of Norway but living in Sleswick. Krohne had visited Celle and spoken to the exiled Queen’s chamberlain von dem Busche, if not herself, and on 19 February 1773, he wrote von dem Busche: “People believe, and it is certainly true, that the party of Her Majesty the Queen in Copenhagen will soon get the upper hand and that Her Royal Highness will return with the greatest satisfaction. This is not dreams, but the truth”.⁷¹⁷ Krohne referred to the officer Henrik Gude – whom had been arrested among the Struensee supporters the year before – now again commanding a regiment in Copenhagen, and attached to the letter his own pamphlet, asking von dem Busche to pass it to the Queen. Von dem Busche, however, kindly refused to show the pamphlet to the Queen in order not to disturb her tranquility, but it is known that already at the time she was corresponding with Struensee’s brother C. A. Struensee, now in Lübeck, about the possibilities of a counter-conspiracy (*ibid.*). Krohne’s prophecy, in any case, demonstrated to a larger public that on the base of non-theological interpretations of the coup, the step to a countercoup might not be a remote idea. The year after, in 1774,

⁷¹⁷ Quoted from Tillyard 2006, 272.

the groups mentioned would indeed labor to organize a more coherent effort to actually put Matilda back on the throne.

Government-instigated pamphlet wars, judicial expertise, polemics, conversion stories, court documents, compassion, prophecies – many genres, voices and ingredients mixed into the growing international struggle over the Copenhagen events. Already in 1773, they were so well known as to be put to use in an anonymous German comic opera, *Martin Velten* with a rags-to-riches story.⁷¹⁸ Martin Velten is a shoemaker hitting it big only to fall back again, but during his brief stay at the top, he tries to make a court case against a love rival. This case immediately invites detailed comparisons to the Struensee court case. During an interrogation, one of Martin's friends answers on behalf of the accused rival who is not present, and so it is easy to find Martin's rival guilty in having slept with the girl they fight over, that he would sack superfluous soldiers, bite the most holy person, etc., so the absent rival is quickly found guilty in lese-majesty. We recognize the accusations from the cases against Struensee and Brandt. Martin concludes: we must make a count out of the culprit, immediately, so that we can take the title away from him again! The sentence involves the breaking asunder of the rival's new coat of arms, the cutting off of hand and head – unfortunately, the punishment must be carried out on a proxy picture of the rival, as he managed to escape in time. The details of the Struensee case were now sufficiently known to be used to humorously characterize a mock trial conducted by a fool character in a German comic opera. Written by C. F. Weiße, the opera libretto was even put into accompanying compositions in 1778 by the musical prodigy C. G. Agthe, “the Mozart of Mansfeld”, and the result was staged in Russian-governed Estonia as well as in the Duchy of Anhalt-Bernburg in the middle of Germany.⁷¹⁹ International hearsay of a show-trial in Copenhagen was now established to a degree that it could be used and spread wider in musical entertainment.

This also went to demonstrate the futility of the efforts sacrificed by the Danish government in its attempt to control international perceptions of the 1772 events. The peak of this vain labor was probably the already-mentioned book confiscation thrust in Leipzig in 1772 to 1773. The initiative led to the seizure of all in all 1716 copies of writings deemed dangerous by the Danish government, to a total value of 281 German Thaler and 2 Groschen which the government had to pay bookprinters in compensation. Among writings confiscated, we find a good handful of the pamphlets which Luxdorph collected: no less than 1493 copies of the Letter from the Queen at Kronborg, eight copies of a German version of the *Comprehensive Intelligence*, six copies of Camerer's book, 14 copies of “Rothes”, a few copies of collections of writings like a volume with some of the alleged letters between Struensee and his family but also Münter's conversion story, the German translations of some

718 [Christian Felix Weiße], *Martin Velten eine Komische Oper in 3 Aufzügen*, Leipzig: J. H. Heinsius, 1773.

719 Cf. Griffel 2018, 553, and <https://operone.de/komponist/oper-titel.html>.

Danish pamphlets and some further German titles hard to identify. But also copies of the court case minutes were seized: 108 copies of the *Schriften* and 69 copies of the *Des ehemaligen Grafens Johann Friederich Struensee Vertheidigung*. The writings captured were transported to Copenhagen for destruction.

It is hardly possible to judge the more general international dissemination of individual such titles on the base of this one Leipzig sample from the fall of 1772. But later titles like Krohne and *Martin Velten* demonstrate that such international censorship actions – which must have been both complicated, costly, and time-consuming for the Danish administration to manage at a remote distance – hardly had much effect. The same goes for the pressure which the Danish court strove to impose on versions of Copenhagen events in the international press. In all probability, the ongoing spread of pamphlets more or less directly supporting the other side, that of the new Danish government, like Suhm's *To the King*, international versions of sermon campaign pamphlets, not to speak of the two eminently successful conversion tales, served the case of the Danish government's side better than prohibitive intervention attempts at publication markets far beyond the borders of the realm.

International interest in Danish politics continued. As Suhm's *Euphron* was published in a German version in Copenhagen 1776, including its disputed "Rules of Government" with their list of proto-human rights (see Chapter 3), it also reverberated internationally. A reviewer in The Hague journal *Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux-Arts* claimed that the political advice given was "adaptés à la constitution et l'état présent du Danemark". The reviewer concludes that those who take interest in the happiness of Danes should wish that the author of this moral tale, as famous as he is for his excellent works, should receive a call to govern the education of the country's young prince one day to govern Denmark.⁷²⁰ Now, Suhm was less certain to be counted among the supporters of the Guldberg government.

As a postscript it should be mentioned that pamphlets like Krohne's were not without real-life correlates nor possible political effects. The already-mentioned conspiracy group of Danish noble exiles in the Duchies actually went a long way in the direction of actually staging a counter-revolution establishing Caroline Matilda as reigning Queen of Denmark during 1774 to 1775. An information network to the exiled Queen and her royal brother in London was established, sympathizers in Copenhagen were contacted, couriers were engaged. The young English nobleman Nathaniel Wraxall was hired as a sort of liaison officer between the Danish Hamburg group, Caroline Matilda in nearby Celle, and her more hesitant brother King George and his court in London, and already the same year, Wraxall published an exciting narration covering the whole affair: *Cursory Remarks Made in a Tour Through Some*

720 "Ceux qui s'intéressent du bonheur des Danois, doivent désirer que l'Auteur de ce conte moral, si célèbre d'ailleurs par tant d'excellentes productions, soit appelé à diriger l'éducation du jeune Prince qui doit un jour gouverner le Danemarck". *Bibliothèque des Sciences et des Beaux-Arts*, XLVI, La Haye 1776, 430–437.

*of the Northern Parts of Europe, Particularly Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Petersburg.*⁷²¹

It all ended prematurely, however, by the young Caroline Matilda's death from scarlet fever in Celle on 11 May 1775, 23 years of age, maybe a matter of months before coup plans might have materialized. Given the acute political context, of course, immediate rumors began circulating that she had been poisoned by Danish agents informed about the new Cabale with her at its head, brewing against Copenhagen authorities. It is indeed beyond doubt that the Danish government, now with Guldberg in a position in the Cabinet not unlike that of Struensee's in 1771, had sensed, all of the time, a nagging unease or even direct danger emanating from Celle. The fear that Crown Prince Frederik, once grown up, might chose to side with his mother and call her back to Copenhagen, had been explicitly voiced among the coup-makers. Caroline Matilda remained an unsolved problem, a dangerous political potential put on hold. Matilda might have been divorced from the Danish King, but she had retained her title as a Queen, and as the pamphlet on international law had made clear, there was no unanimous agreement on her legal status. A strong counter-coup would be in no bad position to claim her as legitimate regent of Denmark, also because of her ex-husband the King's mental state and his more and more evident inability to govern. Her early death, however, signaled the end of such coup plans against the Guldberg rule – albeit not of others. No proof has ever been found of her being poisoned.

The Struensee affair in a certain sense took Danish Press Freedom far beyond the borders of the realm. It exploded in an international press and publication storm over several years, demonstrating that what had once begun timidly in the republic of letters with small-circulation periodicals of the seventeenth century now had grown to form a full-fledged European public sphere with information traveling across the continent in a matter of weeks, if not days. It also demonstrated a new condition which seems to have formed an unexpected lesson for the new Danish government struggling to return to safe, old-fashioned, pre-enlightened absolutism. Namely that if it was still possible, to a large extent, to monitor the contents of a national public sphere of a mid-size European state like Denmark-Norway, the European public sphere at large was now quite another case. The new Danish government did much to contain bad international press against the lacking legitimacy of its coup d'état, against the missing legality of its prosecution of political opponents, against the cruelty of its punishments, against its treatment of an English princess, against the international reputation of its return to pre-enlightened absolutism, if not despotism. But mostly with little success. While the new government did prove able to slowly contain Danish Press Freedom domestically, it seemed to be surprised

721 With a swift German translation the same year: Nathaniel Wraxall, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise durch das nördliche Europa besonders zu Copenhagen, Stockholm und Petersburg gesammelt von Nathanael Wraxall. Aus dem Englischen*, Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Junius, 1775.

to learn that European Press Freedom, even if not in any way explicitly codified, no longer prevented widespread public criticism, if not slander of foreign powers. In a European perspective, the vast publicity of the Struensee case involved both scandal, sentimentality, compassion, shock, fake news campaigns and political reflection. Reactions ranged from Grub Street hacks to serious comment. As to the latter, the Struensee case brought new fuel to the ongoing debate of the character and possibilities of absolutism which would develop further to terminate in late eighteenth-century reforms and revolutions.

No single European state had full freedom of the press, and in every state, certain political, religious and other utterances would be liable to prosecution. But at the overall European level, there would almost always be states where such prohibitions of another state did not apply. On the level of the European learned republic, now, Press Freedom reigned in the sense that no single state was in a position to exempt itself from open international criticism. If international debate, thus, proved both irredeemably unruly and uncontrollable, the new Danish government had to remain satisfied with the narrower possibility of controlling its home turf. Domestic policies of 1772 to 1773 would show the new government slowly improvising a way of containing the local dangers of Press Freedom in Denmark-Norway.

14 The Slow Smothering 1772–1773

Press Freedom Debate after the Coup

How does Press Freedom die? The Danish-Norwegian case offers a particular, very detailed answer to that question – with a host of intriguing implications. In this chapter, we shall trace the slow moribund process of 1772 to 1773.

The coup-d'état of 17 January immediately had drastic effects on the new public sphere. We already heard how Josias Bynch happened to publish a rude satire of the King just three days before the coup – only to scramble, panic-stricken, to make up for it with a breathless celebration of the King a mere seven days after. That was symptomatic: writers and authors were shell-shocked and knew little about what the transformed situation might bring for their destiny.

Debate about Press Freedom itself did not cease, but its character abruptly changed. Now, much focus shifted to one author policing the limits of what another author should be allowed to write. An anxious atmosphere of mutual control and reciprocal criticism spread, while the fertile, creative space of possibilities of the “Golden Age of the Press” of the year before swiftly narrowed. Political and religious criticism became rare, as did libel and slander – with the one major exception of the imprisoned top suspects Struensee and Brandt and their accomplices who were now free game, as we saw (see Chapter 11). The vast majority of writers now appeared to agree, directly or tacitly, with the theological coup interpretation and took care not to support explicit criticism of the new coup government struggling to stabilize. The worst argument a pamphleteer could face, now, was the accusation of being a concealed Struensee accomplice or supporter – we find examples of debates where all participants played that card against one another, as in *Adresseavisen*.

Even book-printers would now go for each other's throat, despite of being in the middle of a roaring bull market where printing presses were glowing and revenues skyrocketing. In a convoluted debate using indirect attacks by anonymous intermediaries, punches presented in advertisements, betrayal of author pseudonyms, and the like, the two most prolific Press Freedom printers, A. F. Stein and J. R. Thiele were engulfed in infighting.⁷²² Each accused the other of cynically profiting from printing pamphlets with completely unsubstantiated news claims about the imprisoned Struensee – both of them, one could add, were guilty as charged.⁷²³ An ally of Stein had initiated the debate which also included a rude public attack on one of

722 On the book-printer feud, see Horstbøll, Langen & Stjernfelt 2020, vol. II, 355 on.

723 Pamphlets such as [J. L. Bynch], *Et mærkværdigt Brev til Grev J. F. Struensee fra hans fader. En Oversættelse*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (3 February 1772); and [anonymous], *Struensernes, Falkenschiolds, Brandts, Gählers og Fleeres fortrolige Samtale og indbyrdes Opmuntring til at udføre sin anlagte Plan. Synges under den Melodie: Nu have vi sviret saa længe*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (7 February 1772).

Thiele's bestselling authors, Josias Bynch, ridiculing a series of his anonymous pamphlets and indirectly divulging him as their author. Thiele struck back, claiming to reveal that Stein's review journal of Press Freedom Writings after the coup, *Critisk Journal*, was edited by Norwegian theologian I. C. Grave whom, what was more, he accused of granting favorable reviews of Stein's own publications in his journal.⁷²⁴

Below this surface of mutual attacks for hypocrisy and attempts to oust each other's authors lay the fact that the two printshops had rather different profiles. Stein was the more conservative, if not elitist, and had published pamphlets by learned authors such as Suhm, Guldberg, and Langebek, even if he might also house Martin Brun and other less scholarly writers. Thiele, on the other hand, specialized in rude street songs, satirical woodcuts, and outright provocateurs like Bynch and Junior Philopatreas. And even deeper lay the fact that the two writers having their anonymity compromised – Grave and Bynch – had recently published completely opposed pieces on the large riddle which was the Great Clean-Up Party. Grave had mockingly described in detail a number of the “cleansed” prostitutes with, for a theologian, an impressive knowledge about nicknames and personal characteristics of those girls, while assuming the viewpoint of the angry mob attacking the brothels.⁷²⁵ Bynch, on the other hand, had taken the viewpoint of the naked, persecuted girls.⁷²⁶ A deep and disturbing political bass note thus was audible at the bottom of this debate: Stein and Thiele pro and con the excesses of the mysterious Great Clean-Up Party, respectively. Attentive readers might go a dangerous step further, guessing: pro and con the new government as well? This antagonism between the two most active Press Freedom printers would culminate at the end of the year with the last large feud of Press Freedom, between Bynch's provocative *Homiletic Journal* (Thiele) with its cheeky attacks on priests, and Brun's clenchedly virtuous *Anti-Journal* (Stein) (cf. Chapter 6).

724 [I. C. Grave?], *Critisk Journal over alt hvad der er skrevet i Anledning af den 17de Januarii*, [Nos. 1–2.], Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (February 26 1772 [1], 5 June 1772 [2]).

725 [I. C. Grave], *Frøken-Contoremes udødelige Navnes ynkelige Ruin, Forfatted i Riim under den Melodie: De Røvere skulle at stiele gaae, saa langt i fremmed Lande. See Peer 7. Kiempe Vise*, Copenhagen: [A. F. Stein?], 1772; [I. C. Grave], *Fortsættelse af Frøken-Contoremes Ruin. Under samme Melodie som Det forrige*, Copenhagen: [A. F. Stein?], 1772.

726 [J. L. Bynch], *Det ulykkelige Udlæg, som skeete uden Dom og Execution Natten imellem den 17 og 18 Januarii paa de 56 Ponse-Contoirer og Ølkipperer, samt Betienternes Ubarmhertighed imod det smukke Kiøn, som gjorde Forretningen*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (5 February 1772); [J. L. Bynch], *Et Par Ord fra de endnu huusvilde Nat-Nymphes til Grev Struense, forfattet i deres sidst holdte Conseil i Dukke-Skabet, og til trykken befordret af En drukken Engelskmand*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (10 February 1772).

Clandestine Criticism of the Coup Government: Ewald's *Harlequin Patriot*

Public textual processing and interpretation of the Great Clean-Up Party events called out, as we saw in Chapter 10, many pamphleteers through the late winter of 1772. The national poet in-the-making Johannes Ewald had been very active during the Press Freedom Period and even participated in public debates about the new Struensee pamphlets where he defended the pamphleteers against attackers. He saved, however, his reflections on the delicate and dangerous issue of the Clean-Up Party to an intricate comedy published in the fall of that year: *Harlequin Patriot*.⁷²⁷



Fig. 55: The later national poet of Denmark, Johannes Ewald, was very active during Press Freedom. He published several pamphlets and wrote a counter-piece to theater manager Niels Krog Bredal and the officers during the Theater Feud. After the coup, he actively defended the right of pamphleteers to publish, and his complicated comedy *Harlequin Patriot* launched, in the fall of 1772, a hard criticism of the Great Clean-Up Party and the restrictions of Press Freedom, yet cautiously wrapped up in the many layers of the intrigue. *Johannes Ewald*, painting by Erik Pauelsen, ca. 1775–1780. © Frederiksborg Museum of National History, photo: Ole Haupt.

On the surface, it is a pretty simple character comedy, in which a foolish father refuses to marry off his daughter Agnete to her suitor Leander – although with the

⁷²⁷ Ewald, Johannes, *Harlequin Patriot eller den uægte Patriotisme. En comisk Comoedie i tre Handlinger paa Vers*, Copenhagen: Rothens Arvinger og Prost, 1772 (October 1772).

twist that she, unlike her mother Lisette, supports her father Harlequin in refusing her suitor. Leander is a son of Harlequin's patronizing, wealthy neighbor Jost, but Agnete prefers the monomaniac Press Freedom pamphleteer Skriver (Writer) over Jost's son. Harlequin himself supports his daughter's alternative liaison because he himself is obsessed with writing pamphlets – to a degree so that he all but lives in his own political fantasy world and is no longer accessible to reason, nor to his wife Lisette who is all but giving up communicating with him. Jost decides to push through the marriage plan by brusquely reminding Harlequin about the large debt that he owes him, threatening to go to the court, an initiative which eventually serves to cut all ties between the two potential fathers-in-law. Things are only solved after the two pamphleteers Harlequin and Skriver get into a brawl, and Harlequin realizes he has been much too obsessed with writing. Happy end: Agnete and Leander may finally get each other. At the time, the comedy was read as a satire of the pamphleteering craze of the Press Freedom Period, and in large stretches it reads like a *drame à clef* with Harlequin a sort of fusion of Brun and Bynch. Jost – again and again advising Harlequin to give up political speculation and publishing – appears, in this reading, as the moderate voice of reason, struggling to call crazy Harlequin back to reality. Through the Jost character, Ewald casts a satirical glance on many Press Freedom writers, poor eternal students and good-for-nothings all of a sudden proudly parading as wise men of state.

This surface, however, hides a deeper level, already signaled by the strange appearance of the stylized and double-bottomed commedia dell'arte character of Harlequin in the midst of urban bourgeois realism. In many of his dialogues with Jost, Harlequin articulates a frightened, indirect defense of Press Freedom – as if to signal that in the political atmosphere after the coup, such defense could be expressed indirectly only.⁷²⁸ What is more, in these dialogues Harlequin implies, by allusion, a whole, politically delicate set of previous events before the beginning of the comedy narrative, closely connected to the Great Clean-Up Party. Harlequin, it seems, has not been able to care for his family, and so his wife Lisette has had to turn to prostitution (“Lisette” was a period nickname for prostitutes). In a nightmare, Harlequin sees raging sailors attacking – did they, on the fateful night of 17 January, rob his house, rape his wife, and maybe even his daughter? Is that the reason she must be married off so hastily? And what had Jost to do with it all? Jost accidentally runs his mouth and stumbles to reveal that he himself had taken an economic interest in the Clean-Up Party and the robberies by the drunken sailors. So, Harlequin, in a glimpse, realizes that Jost actually enriched himself on the Clean-Up Party which is why he has been able to buy Harlequin's debts from his usurer connection so that Jost now became Harlequin's main creditor.

⁷²⁸ Recent interpreters have insisted on the Harlequin character as defender of Press Freedom: Christensen 1975; and Jensen 1984.



Fig. 56.1: Three phases of *Harlequin Patriot*. First, Harlequin is wallowing in phantasies about Press Freedom while his wife Lisette and daughter Agnete focus on their housework, unable to contact him. Later, Harlequin tumbles over in a fight with Agnete's suitor, the parody of a pamphleteer maniac named Skriver (Writer). Finally, Harlequin and Lisette are reconciled to the left in the closing scene while Agnete and Leander, to the satisfaction of Jost, agree to marry.

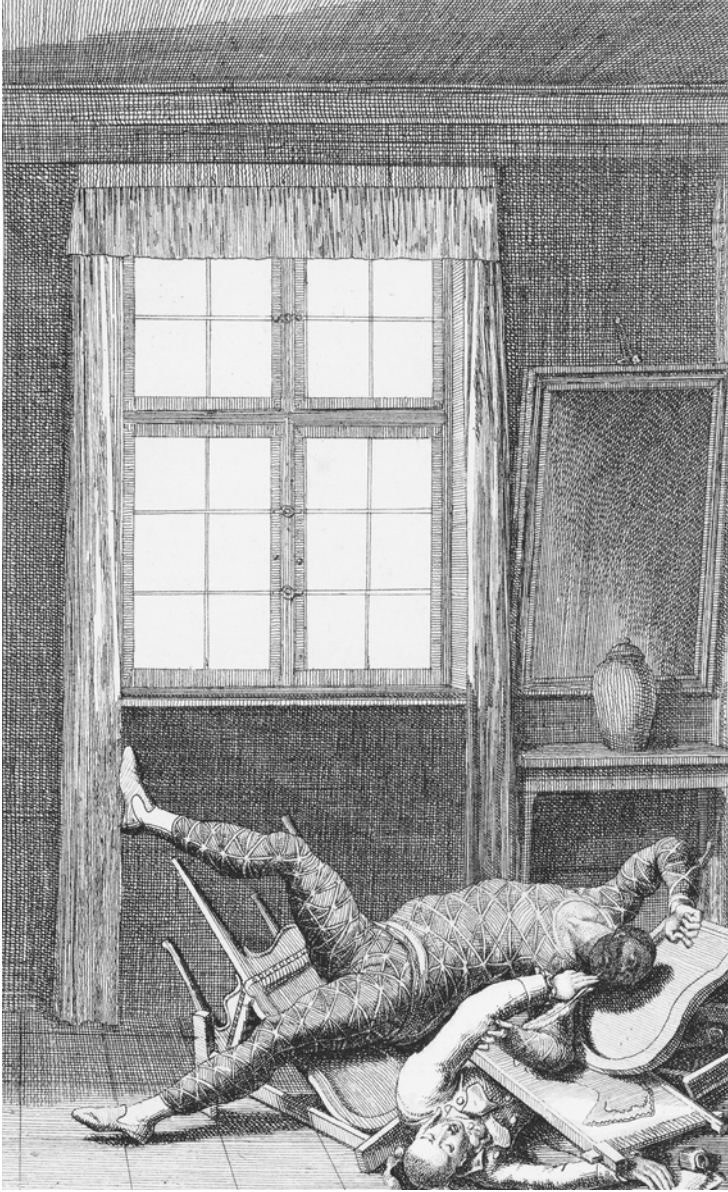


Fig. 56.2



Fig. 56.3: *Harlequin Patriot*, three coppers by Daniel Chodowiecki, from Johannes Ewald: *Samtlige Skrifter*, vol. 4, 1791. © Royal Danish Library.

All of this complex of events is implied by subtle allusions only, as what really lay behind the disagreements between the two neighbors. In the mouth of Harlequin, stuttering with half-finished sentences, this cleverly hidden series of events permits Ewald to present dangerous intimations about the Clean-Up Party: it was much more organized than it seemed, certain persons got wealthy from its thefts and robberies, and behind it all were sailors from the Navy, that is, the King's men, that is, the King himself, that is ... the new coup government? In this intricate way, Ewald was able to imply very serious allegations against the court and the coup-plotters now in power, indirectly exploiting circulating city rumors that it had been well-dressed officials in the streets who gave the first signals to the sailors to begin ravaging, looting, and raping.⁷²⁹ Few if any, however, in the period saw these deeper layers in Ewald's comedy. It was never publicly performed during Press Freedom, nor in Ewald's lifetime, even if it seemed to have been written with the Royal Theater and its actor troupe in mind.⁷³⁰ But the comedy soon found a strong admirer who seemed to have recognized these hidden layers, the young literary scholar, publicist and Free Speech proponent Knud Lyne Rahbek, who emerged as an important voice in the 1780s as editor of the *Minerva* journal.⁷³¹ He had been a pre-teen boy during Press Freedom, and he saw to that Ewald's comedy enjoyed several private performances in the 1780s, oftentimes with himself in the title role as Harlequin the pamphleteer.⁷³² He was also a driving force behind the eventual public performances in early nineteenth century. In all cases, Ewald, in this ingenious comedy, artfully embedding the quick back-and-forth dialogue in alexandrines, demonstrated that now, after the coup, political criticism of the government was possible only by relying upon very subtle means.

Government Initiatives against Press Freedom

The new government had quickly begun rolling back a number of Struensee's signature achievements – from his dismantling of the State Council, his relaxations of

729 Ewald may also have had personal reasons to articulate his criticism in a subdued manner. Much of his early career had been built upon writing texts for the composer J. A. Scheibe's cantatas to performances at court, beginning with a burial cantata on the death of Frederik V in 1766. Thus, Ewald was an author well-known and favored by the royal court.

730 Maybe one reason it was not performed at the Royal Theatre was that colonel Köller, as one of many honors after his efforts during the coup, became a member of the board of the Royal Theatre from May 1772. He might have had issues with Ewald who had wickedly satirized him as the officer "Bürgerschreck" (Citizen-fear) during the Theater feud only half a year earlier. On Rahbek playing Harlequin, see Jensen 1984, 42. The first official performance of *Harlequin Patriot* was 1806 in the Court Theatre, by then a sub-scene of the Royal Theatre, with all in all seven performances until 1815.

731 See Rahbek, Knud Lyne 1791, "Forsøg til en Charakteristik over Harlequin Patriot", *Dramaturgiske Samlinger*, Femte Hæfte, 1–65.

732 See Jensen 1984, 42.

morality legislations, his abolishment of torture, and to smaller signal issues such as the change of the pietist Vajsenhus to a trade-oriented high school, or his “box” at a Copenhagen hospital where unwanted children could be deposited for state upbringing. Press Freedom, however, proved a trickier issue to the new government and the next two years would prove one long test of how to slowly close it down. Initially, the new government profited from the surge of post-coup pamphlets, the vast majority of which raged over Struensee and more or less directly supported the coup, but all points to the fact that the government found itself faced by a dilemma. On the one hand, Press Freedom was popular, and it would be a risky sign to obliterate it openly by reintroducing pre-print censorship. On the other, the new government knew well that it was itself a coup regime with shaky legitimacy which might be easily threatened by unlimited debate. Everybody had in fresh memory how Press Freedom had suddenly and unforeseeably turned against Struensee himself, and the *Lex Regia* did not mention the possibility that concerned noblemen or commoners could take the unprecedented step to put the King under administration, such as had happened during the coup. In that sense, the coup government could claim no more legitimacy than Struensee who also ruled without legal basis in the *Lex Regia*, but yet with the consent of the King. Substantial parts of the elite, both among officials and nobility, had supported Struensee, and a counter-coup, maybe with support from England, France, Sweden, or other international players, would haunt the new regime as a constant specter – also because such forces might profit from articulating themselves freely in the new public sphere.

On 7 February, chief constable Vilhelm Bornemann asked the Chancellery about how to deal with the many pamphlets suddenly pouring out about the prisoners in the Citadel. They were undoubtedly libelous, but still the police director proposed to overlook if not accept them, as they were aimed at persons intensely hated by the nation. The result was that Bornemann was instructed to inform the book-printers to make sure that no libel, pasquils, or seditious writings be printed – which he did 24 February. It went without saying that the attacks on Brandt and Struensee would not count as libel. Each book-printer was obliged to respond to him in writing so that none of them could later excuse themselves with reference to ignorance about the decree. Only two days later, Bynch’s byzantine answer to Suhm’s *To the King*, in which he attempted to act as the King’s defensor against Suhm, was counterargued in a long sarcastic pamphlet ending with directly threatening Bynch with imprisonment. Much points to the fact that it was written by pastor Schönheyder, one of the sermon campaign pamphleteers close to the new regime, and it functioned as a blunt public warning that Bynch had been going too far, a warning also aimed at pamphleteers at large.

On 16 March, a Cabinet order warned that also Copenhagen political newspapers went too far in their news report, “attacking the interests of His Majesty”, so all news articles about the lands and territories of His Majesty in the press would henceforth

be supervised by the Chancellery.⁷³³ On 30 March, *Adresseavisen* was given a fine of 1 rix-dollar for having passed on a rumor about fever in a military garrison, and April 4, newspapers were prohibited to publish public decisions and ordinances earlier than official announcements, particularly as regards the military. Also, pamphlets were now hit by restrictions. In *Aften-Posten* no. 2, in the middle of March, a “city rumor” claimed that a “French criticism of a certain Danish writing” had been confiscated. That referred to a clever, incisive attack on Suhm’s *To the King* written in French, maybe by a visiting French actor, rumors had it.⁷³⁴ After a long procedure, the case ended with a 4 ri-x-dollars fine to book-printer Stein who could not or would not name the anonymous author.⁷³⁵ That was the first punishment referring to Struensee’s 7 October restrictions, decided per police decree rather than a court case.

Simultaneously with these Copenhagen events, a more serious effort was being made in the second city of the realm, Altona close to Hamburg. Here, the bookprinter J. C. Haberkorn published what seems to have been a German translation of one of the emerging English articles in defense of the recently incarcerated Queen Caroline Matilda. *Gazette de Leyde* reports on the case on 17 March, dating its Altona source as 8 March, but the news is not reported in any of the local news outlets in Altona nor in Copenhagen. Haberkorn had recently moved to Altona after a long stint as a printer in London, and it seems he remained in connection to parts of the English publishing world, selling English journals from his printshop. According to the *Gazette*, his print committed the mistake of attacking not only a specific minister but also the new Danish government as a whole, and it was swiftly prohibited in Altona. Reportedly, Haberkorn himself was punished with penal labor at the fortifications of Glückstadt, a destiny he only seems to have escaped by pardon on 15 March 1775, three years later, soon after which he passed away.⁷³⁶ The case thus seems to have been the first inkling of what turned out to ignite an international pamphlet war: the controversial character of the surviving culprit Caroline Matilda and her role in events. So, Altona seems to have been the first place in the realm where the new government really showed its fist against Press Freedom. The city had quite a reputation for liberty, if not depravity, maybe that would have been a reason for a harsher Danish policy here than in Copenhagen. Another possibility may be that it was considered more precarious to provoke the mobs of Copenhagen by tough policies than in

⁷³³ Quoted from Holm 1890–1912, vol. V, 149.

⁷³⁴ [anonymous], *Critique de la lettre de Mr. Suhm*, no indication of place or printer, 1772 (probably February 1772).

⁷³⁵ [anonymous], *Critique de la lettre de Mr. Suhm*, Copenhagen [A. F. Stein?], 1772; National Archives: Danish Chancellery: 1. departement: Kancelliets breve, 1771–1773, copy of police inquisition as to *Critique de la lettre de Mr. Suhm*.

⁷³⁶ See Jefcoate 2015, sect. 7.12, according to which Haberkorn’s print was a single leaf with bilingual English-German text. We have not been able, however, to locate an extant copy of Haberkorn’s controversial print.

remote Altona. The overall picture in Copenhagen, in any case, was milder. Here, the new government was slowly narrowing Press Freedom per decree, Cabinet Orders, or Chancellery warnings, accompanied by small, arbitrary punishments.

Back to Censorship? The Cautious Deliberations of the Coup Government

Now, two new pamphlets gave rise to government ideas of simply reintroducing pre-print censorship. It was the already mentioned *Comprehensive Intelligence* (8 May) and *The Transformed Denmark* (18 May).⁷³⁷ The former, relating detail about coup events while marginalizing God's role in them, gave rise to the two above-mentioned public warnings by the government in *Adresseavisen* announcements in late May to early June.⁷³⁸ The latter was also loyal to the new regime but simultaneously presented a positive evaluation of several Struensee reforms such as the Finance College, the Copenhagen Municipality, and the general nursing institution.

In the latter of the two public warnings, the government generalized the scope of its admonition to all writings “without authority”, a diffuse and vague warning, likely to scare authors. But what and who was supposed to endow a piece of writing with “authority”? If one follows the rationale in the government's order regarding the sermon campaign, it was only the printed sermons that had authority and were given the seal of approval by the regime. As mentioned, the government would have several reasons to fear this pamphlet. In the internal Danish political context, its role was to awaken the new government as to the political dangers in pamphlets going into details about how the coup was completed. It was not at all an issue of loyalty, as the pamphlet painted a very dark picture of what the new government saw as their main enemies, Struensee and Caroline Matilda. Rather, it was a problem that it was a description breaking with the “authority” with which the sermon campaign had attempted to silence the issue of the detail of human activity involved in the planning, completion, and purpose of the coup. Knowing the rabid effects of the pamphlet market on the destiny of Struensee, it would be acutely dangerous to allow for free investigation into the concrete cogs-and-wheels machinery of the coup, including the individuals involved, their concrete intentions, and their lack of legitimate reasons to interfere in state matters. In short, the meticulously elaborated public supremacy of theological coup explanation was under threat.

Fortegnelsen (no. 332) wrote that the booklet was characterized by a peculiar mixture of truth and fable and merely stated that ‘the wit is all over as one might

⁷³⁷ [Heldvad (or U. A. Holstein?)], *Det forvandlede Danmark, eller U-partiske Tanker over de nyere Forandringer*, Copenhagen: Godiche, 1772 (18 May 1772).

⁷³⁸ The first government warning: *Adresseavisen* nr. 89, 1 June 1772; The generalized warning: *Adresseavisen*, nr. 92, 5 June 1772.

expect it from places where beer mugs heat up the power of imagination’, in other words: real information mixed with drunken nonsense. As was mentioned (see Chapter 11), *Comprehensive Intelligence* was to become one of the most widely distributed representations of the events at court, also internationally in a series of variants, probably because, after all, it presented a version with the participation of some of the real coup-plotters.

Two events coincided with the public warnings triggered by the “Comprehensive Intelligence”. In late May, the more aggressive Christian Fædder replaced Borne-mann as police-in-chief. And simultaneously, the new State Council began pondering, in secrecy, which legal action to take, probably spearheaded by the Hereditary Prince who seems to have been particularly suspicious against Press Freedom. May 28, Count Thott from the State Council wrote to the Chancellery that under the pretext of Press Freedom, “much is printed and sold which is both invented and indecent”, so new legislation should be considered. Science, in the broad sense of Danish “videnskab”, however, should enjoy exemption: “Freedom to write will remain with regards to the sciences in a decent way”, but still “nothing regarding court or state must be printed without prior censorship by the Danish Chancellery”, just like “no individual may be indecently attacked or named by public writings”.⁷³⁹ Political and personal criticism should once again be submitted to pre-print censorship, and the State Council implied that the Chancellery articulate new measures to be taken. That would be the beginning of a long negotiation between top politicians and officials, finally terminating with new legislation from October to November 1773.

While the Chancellery was considering what to do with the May instruction from the Council, the Bynch affair with *The Statesman* erupted and his ensuing fine and imprisonment developed in full public view over summer, showing that the spring warnings had not been empty words. Even the reprint of an old writing by count Bernstorff – the former Minister of Foreign Affairs dismissed by Struensee – with a new preface praising the recently deceased count was prohibited on 27 June. Not even the pre-Struensee government should be praised in the gradually narrowing public sphere.

In the Danish Chancellery, however, hesitation grew against the alarmist demands of the State Council. Luxdorph, in fact, proved the Chancellery member most favorable to reintroducing preprint censorship, even if he insisted that the public should remain free to discuss all ordinary proposals for legislation. Counterarguments by the judicial expert of the Chancellery, Henrik Stampe, however, won out in the first round. He cautiously implied that any new legislation which might give the impression of restricting Press Freedom would bring danger to the new regime, and he recommended that nothing more than repeated public insistence upon the 7 October restrictions should be presented for now. Stampe’s argument won out in the

⁷³⁹ Letter from the State Council signed O. Thott, 28 May 1772, National Archives: Danish Chancellery: Indlæg til Sjællandske Tegnelser 1773 (F12–2), no. 559.

Chancellery, and on 16 July the nervous State Council postponed further work on the issue until the end of the year.

By then, the situation had changed considerably. The amount of Press Freedom Writings had decreased significantly over fall, and the Brun-Bynch debate over reviews of sermons became the pretext of the first legal restriction to Press Freedom after the coup: the improvised Lex Bynch against written reviews of sermons of 24 December. Simultaneously, the commission court case against Thura and his *Patriotic Truth-Teller* was progressing. Probably, it was these cases that prompted Chancellery to resume work on a new Press Freedom legislation by December. Also, political events seem to have played a role – through the fall months of 1772, recurring rumors spread about intrigues or even coup conspiracies against the new fragile government, which led to the banishment of a number of persons from court in September.⁷⁴⁰ Authorities not only saw pressure on the top level of the court, however, but also from below. The Copenhagen mob could not be trusted after the Great Clean-Up Party and two years of Press Freedom. On 7 December, the new Municipality of Copenhagen submitted a demand to the State Council for stricter legislation:

By the least of occasions, the mob gathers 2–300 persons, behaving in the most violent way, based on increasing liberty and cheekiness over several years, which has never been investigated nor punished. The ordinary man cannot understand that he should now consider the police differently than before. There is no income in these expensive times; great poverty along with the terrible pasquils, which are publicly displayed, which are in the hands of everyman and are discussed in all beerhouses and pubs, have depraved completely the way of thinking of the ordinary man.⁷⁴¹

The wild abandon of Press Freedom, in short, lived on in the behavior of street mobs. Given these conditions, the magistrate recommended severe, arbitrary punishments all the way up to executions, e. g., four months forced labor for public whistling, the closure of all serving establishments by 10 pm, and a prohibition against all brazen writings. Most of the proposals of the magistrate never saw daylight but its alarmism probably contributed to the Chancellery's resumption of work on new Press Freedom legislation later in the month. In a working paper from 17 December, the analysis of the Chancellery was that "evil-spirited human beings have the occasion to publish their bad way of thinking, and the naïve and thoughtless will be punished and otherwise inconvenienced". Possible restrictions mentioned are like those proposed by Thott in his May instruction, but also extending to a new supervision of "so-called weeklies and other periodicals", particularly as to what is written there about court and state. Another draft of the same day points to two other problems: that book-printers are tempted, for economic reasons, to print what is but

740 Such as the wife of field marshal Numsen who was banished to Vallø in Zealand and the former hairdresser of Queen Matilda who was sent abroad, cf. Koch 1892–1894, 74.

741 Quoted from Bruun 1901, 595.

invented and indecent, and to attack and name persons.⁷⁴² The summer resistance of the Chancellery against Council alarmism was vacillating in the new situation.

None other than Luxdorph was now trusted the task of drafting a new law reintroducing pre-print censorship.⁷⁴³ An outline from 7 January 1773 is preserved with critical marginal notes from Stampe. The main idea in the draft is the reintroduction of pre-print censorship pertaining to three explicitly indicated trouble domains: the doctrine of God, government, and good mores. This would form a major restriction indeed, in so far as religion, politics, and morality had been three of the most hotly debated issues all through Press Freedom. As to politics, printable state news should be restricted to what is sent to the press from ministries, just like the age-old problem with foreign envoys overlooking the press is taken up again: no critical or indecent mention of foreign courts should be tolerated.

Thematically, Luxdorph's draft is a considerably narrower restriction, both as compared to the State Council instruction of May and the December drafts, none of which had mentioned religion at all. Something points to the fact that the Chancellery had, over Christmas, between 17 December and 7 January, received a theological-ethical awakening if not an outright order. Probably, also the *Lex Bynch* of 24 December would have suggested an idea of a more general protection of the clergy against criticism. Another, additional possibility is that an important political development had taken place behind the scenes in the meantime. Andreas Schumacher – who was both Cabinet Secretary and member of Chancellery – had been dismissed. He had already been under suspicion during the September intrigue mentioned, and 24 December he was, by the Hereditary Prince, appointed county official in remote Segeberg in Holstein. Such an appointment was widely considered equivalent to dismissal, if not banishment. Schumacher had been top official all through the Struensee period and had penned the original Press Freedom law in September 1770. Seemingly, he was now considered unreliable. On the top of that comes that the day before, the Hereditary Prince mentions, in his diary, to have rejected a comprehensive coup attempt. We know of no details about this event, but it is probable that it would have fed into the sacking of Schumacher. Was it the Hereditary Prince and the State Council which – scared by another new coup threat – resolved to protect the realm against ungodly forces by pressing through the *Lex Bynch* in order to finally stop the only remaining Press Freedom loudmouth, Bynch, and simultaneously instructing Chancellery to include attacks against religion in its ongoing work on a new legislation? Luxdorph, in any case, seems to have attempted to protect a core of Press Freedom in his draft. Censors must be mild, they should encourage good authors and process cases quickly, and renowned authors could enjoy exemp-

742 The December 17 drafts: National Archives: Danish Chancellery: *Indlæg til Sjællandske Tegnelser 1773 (F12-2)*, nr. 559, no date, sheets marked “3” and “4”.

743 Luxdorph's January 7 draft: National Archives: Danish Chancellery: *Indlæg til Sjællandske Tegnelser 1773 (F12-2)*, nr. 559, no date, a sheet marked “5”.

tion from censorship. Luxdorph imagines university deans to be responsible for the new censorship – as against the State Council which had proposed the Danish Chancellery as the new institution responsible for preprint censorship. Probably, Luxdorph and Stampe realized what a huge workload this might imply for the small Chancellery, so they tried to push the burden elsewhere by advancing another body responsible for the task.

All of the collected efforts of Luxdorph, Stampe, and the Chancellery, however, proved to be in vain, and during the spring of 1773, the government seems to have finally given up on the ideas of reintroducing pre-print censorship. We do not know the exact reason, but certain indications may be mentioned. During that period, it became increasingly obvious that Press Freedom was drying up anyway. The sum total of sneaking 1772 restrictions seemed to be doing their work. The two most active pamphleteers, Brun and Bynch, ceased to publish by January 1773, Bie remained in prison, and signal cases against Bagge, Schmettau, and Thura were approaching the end. Probably the government concluded that pre-print censorship might not really be necessary after all. Instead, they embarked on a strategy of discreet suppression, broken only by few signal cases to sow a suitable fear in the publication circuits of Copenhagen.

The Large Signal Cases of 1772 to 1773

As noted in the chapter on the critique of religion, there was a prolonged case against the deist general Schmettau in Holstein. It had its roots back in the summer of 1771, but was only now, in 1773, that it was drawing to a close. Prohibitions against Schmettau's prints, which had not been intended for the public, were not canceled, but the demanding case against him was discreetly closed without punishment 19 March. The State Council ordered, in the name of the King, the German Chancellery to terminate the case, with the argument that a sentence "will make people more curious to read and find this evil and harmful writing; thus, it is Our will that Our German Chancellery should immediately order Our Consistorium to put an end to this case" (77).⁷⁴⁴ The Consistorium was the system of clerical courts in Holstein responsible for the case.

Maybe this cautious decision was informed also by the simultaneous case against Thura. His vicious attacks on the King as the real responsible behind Struensee's initiatives had, when it came out in September 1772, caused public attention, particularly after Thura was arrested and a commission court was appointed to persecute him. The journalist Niels Prahll wrote, in his comments about the case, that "when mumblings were heard that this piece of writing would be confiscated, then

744 This and following information stems from Nyerup (ed.) 1791, 49–86, and page numbers refer to this if not otherwise indicated.

many people got a desire to get it and read it; for all human beings are of the nature that they yearn the most for what is forbidden [...]. The Truth-Teller was, in those days, the object of everybody's conversations".⁷⁴⁵ The prosecutor demanded execution with torture for lese-majesty, but the long court case, conducted in the private home of one of the judges, ended with a pardon from the King on 9 April 1773 – yet a pardon which few would call merciful. Thura was banished for life to the small fortress islet of Munkholm off the Norwegian coast at Trondhjem. Prahls pamphlet of comments not much later is worth quoting also because it publicly highlighted a systematic bias now in the closing era of Press Freedom. Prahls ironically commented upon Thura's harsh sentence as compared to how Suhm (in his *To the King*) and Langebek (in his *New Example*) had presented very similar attacks on the King without any legal steps being taken against them. Prahls irony is thick: "But there is a huge and infinite difference between the noble audacity of these men, and the brazen impudence of the Truth-Teller. Is it not so?" (7) There might have been truths in what the Truth-Teller said, Prahls ventures to add, but he had no proper calling to express them and no reputation to defend them (16). Prahls pointed to an alarming asymmetry in Press Freedom now in its closing phase after the coup. Well-connected elite scholars like Suhm and Langebek were free to even attack the King himself, while an unemployed, aggressive theologian like Thura was measured with a completely different stick. No equality before the law. That was true, but it was a truth not popular, particularly now when the Thura sentence should sound the large signal to authors and book-printers that Press Freedom was about to close. Which is probably why the Chancellery sent, on 24 May, an order to the police-in-chief to confiscate Prahls pamphlet, and another order to the University to publicly reproach their unruly student threatening with further action if he did not comply.⁷⁴⁶

Another case, even lengthier than Schmettau's, which was now also slowly coming to an end, was the protracted prosecution of brewer Christian Bagge for his 1770 to 1771 pamphlets attacking the brewers' guild. He had been one of the very first to exploit the new Press Freedom in October 1770 with a series of attacks on the brewers' guild and its alderman Andreas Storp who had shot back by proceeding against him. Only in June 1773, the case came up for judgment, and in August, Bagge was sentenced to a fine of 40 rix-dollars plus 30 rix-dollars to cover legal costs. Not a small sum for a brewer whom the case had pushed out of business. The judge found that Bagge's problems, for which he had attacked the brewers' guild, were but his own fault, that Press Freedom was no defense for his utterances, for it did not allow for libelous writings and unprovable accusations, and that Bagge's use of words like "unjust, base, violent, brazen, ungodly, etc." were deemed offensive to alderman Storp and the guild commission. If the case against Schmettau had warned authors

745 [Niels Prahls], *Den Patriotiske Sandsigers Bedrifter, Bedømmelse og Dom*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1773 (23 April 1773), 6.

746 On the police orders, see Jakobsen 2017, 208.

and printers no longer to publish against religion and the Thura case warned not to publish against King and government, the Bagge case sent a signal of not attacking high-standing officials and wealthy or recognized commoners. Case for case, Press Freedom was curtailed.

One classic issue, however, remained. The import of dangerous foreign books which had always been trickier to control than home-market publications. The last large case of 1773 addressed this problem. The case took its beginnings in Elsinore where a traveling bookdealer named H. L. Bardewijck marketed certain foreign publications in his catalogue of books for lease or sale. Most of his books were in Danish, but he also featured some German and French offerings in his stock. Here, for instance, were the German versions of “Roths” and Queen Mathilda’s fictive letter from nearby Kronborg of which we heard in Chapter 13. The Danish Chancellery took the case very seriously and appointed a commission court of local Elsinore top officials. Bardewijck claimed, however, that his motives were purely commercial, not political, which seems to suffice to get him off the hook. During interrogations, however, he had made some incautious claims such as that “honorary monuments would be erected for Struensee and Brandt, that there was more than one Struensee, that the King was being ill-treated, and other careless, deceitful and audacious words” – yet, no really evil intention could be proven in him.⁷⁴⁷ The commission settled for the mild sanction of banishment to his home county of Oldenburg (about to leave Danish rule anyway), but it also traced local customers and made them sign declarations that they were no longer in possession of the critical volumes from Bardewijck. Despite the portentous commission case, it all ended as a bagatelle.

Bardewijck’s confessions led, however, to the discovery of a larger and more principled case. Bardewijck had indicated that his book stock stemmed from the bookdealer C. G. Proft on Børsen in Copenhagen.⁷⁴⁸ Bardewijck held the books on credit and thus in a sense functioned as Proft’s colporteur. Interrogated by the Copenhagen police through summer, Proft was accused of illegal imports and sentenced, in August 1773 after two articles of the Danish Law of 1683 (the obligation to censorship and the prohibition against seditious writings) as well as after a law of 1689 prohibiting the import of insulting writings. The result was a staggering fine of 500 rix-dollars, sufficient to put even wealthy subjects to the brink of ruin. Proft sought to convince the King to pardon him in a supplication in September, arguing that he had not been present at the meeting where prohibitions were made public – probably the above-mentioned February 1772 police meeting with the book-printers. He added, not unreasonably, that with such large penalties, the prohibition ought to have been properly published and not presented in oral communication only. He further argued that Bardewijck had fetched the books at his stall in the Bourse before he himself had occasion to learn about their contents, just like he questioned if you

747 Quoted from C. Bruun 1901, 405.

748 The presentation of the Proft case follows Jakobsen 2017, 191 on.

could really “demand of a bookdealer that he knows the contents of all his books”.⁷⁴⁹ Finally, he argued that he had only followed normal practice at the book market and that fellow bookdealers marketed far more controversial pamphlets which he would never have admitted in his bookstore.

The Chancellery, however, was mild and argued for reducing Proft’s fine to a mere 30 rix-dollars referring to the danger of pushing him out of business completely. Police compromise settled upon 100 rix-dollars, still a sizeable penalty. Another supplication for reduction was rejected in March 1774, but Proft did manage to stay in business. In 1776, authorities again had Proft in the searchlights, when a printed Danish translation of Goethe’s *The Sorrows of the Young Werther*, ready for sale, was confiscated by the police after request from the theological faculty.

The case gives us the interesting information that the import and sale of such infamous, foreign writings was no abnormal practice in Press Freedom Copenhagen. This is probably the reason behind the Luxdorph Collection’s two whole volumes of such writings (see Chapters 12 and 13) – and also behind the fact that this was considered an issue of such an importance that a very large fine was found necessary to send a signal to book importers to stop it. Such books, probably, would have been contraband hardly for sale in the open, rather as under-the-table sales to trusted customers with special interests. Bardewijck’s error, then, would have been to market such ware openly in his catalogue. Without this small slip-up, Proft might never have caught the attention of authorities.

Why no further parallel cases were opened against Proft’s bookdealer colleagues may be explained by the argument from the Schmettau case in spring: such cases would function only as indirect marketing for the books prohibited. Authorities walked a thin line between wishing to send a strong warning to book importers but simultaneously to avoid making noise and public fuss alarming a wider audience in the press. It may be added that the aim of authorities in the Bardewijck-Proft cases seems to have been very precise: to target the spread of alternative interpretations of the 1772 events and, through that, attacks on the legitimacy of the new government. The target was not Enlightenment or extremist literature in any broader sense. Foreign, radical literature was still openly for sale in Copenhagen. In *Adresseavisen*, on 6 December 1773, after the Proft case and immediately after the legal restrictions on Press Freedom of October–November, the large bookstore on the central square of Kongens Nytorv, Claude Philibert, ran a whole-page advertisement for French books in *Adresseavisen*. Here, you could buy the whole of Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie* in 13 volumes plus four volumes illustrations and continuations, just like the new, comprehensive anti-colonialist treatise by the Diderot circle titled *Histoire philosophique et politique* with Abbé Raynal as main author on the title page, was on

⁷⁴⁹ Quoted from Jakobsen 2017, 193.

offer of subscription for 4 rix-dollars and 4 mark.⁷⁵⁰ The precise targets of Chancellery and police were foreign publications intervening in the Struensee case and Danish government issues.

All of the large 1772 to 1773 cases, against Schmettau, Thura, Bagge, and Proft bore witness to a certain line in government policies. Restrictions on Press Freedom, whether by court, commission, chancellery, or police were introduced, as much as possible, without awakening the attention of the broader public.

The Disappearance of Press Freedom – the October-November Decisions 1773

Such a policy would also govern the final patch lacking in the ongoing containment scheme: state control of newspapers and periodicals. Several of the small penalties against *Adresseavisen* since the coup had dealt with urban rumors, and this issue gave rise to a general prohibition against city gossip in the papers on 5 May 1773. This initiative addressed even apparently innocent issues like the appointment of named officials or a case like the one in September 1773 against *Adresseavisen*, which had brought news from Elsinore that there had been fireworks on the occasion of Queen Dowager Juliana Maria's birthday.⁷⁵¹ The concrete pretext for punishing was completely harmless and the reason was probably that it was proving difficult to define the precise kind of urban gossip which should not be allowed to print, pertaining to state and politics. The easiest step, then, was to forbid the whole category all at once.

This led in the direction of the law of 20 October which was, already at the time, perceived as the definitive closure of Press Freedom. As we saw, State Council and Chancellery had been discussing new Press Legislation ever since May 1772, if not before, and ambitious ideas of a new pre-print censorship law were in the making. On 12 September, however, Hereditary Prince Frederik wrote to the Chancellery and asked for a plan of how to sentence newspaper writers if they published offensive texts, thus going in the direction of post- rather than pre-publication censorship. The Chancellery now developed a new piece of legislation, published on 20 October, which would become the judicial basis for state control with the press in Denmark-Norway until 1790.⁷⁵² Earlier, this law was often seen by observers and scholars alike

750 This relative liberty, however, would be contested in 1779, when a Danish translation of the *Encyclopédie* was “thwarted”; see Baden 1833, 259. Seemingly, the sale of French copies to a small elite was tolerated, while the prospect of a Danish version with a wider reach was considered beyond the pale.

751 Jakobsen 2017, 185.

752 Importantly, this new legislation did not cover the duchies of Sleswick-Holstein which is why Struensee's Press Freedom, including its 7 October 1771 restriction (valid there as of 18 October) remained in force all the way to 1820.

as the end of Press Freedom in a more absolute sense, but initially, the law only addressed papers and weeklies. In that sense, it was a step back to pre-Press Freedom days where there had also been different procedures for books and writings (pre-print censorship at the university) and papers (shifting censorship structures, e. g., involving Chancellery or city councils). The motivation was that papers kept publishing problematic material that “most times discloses the bad way of thinking and the evil intention of the author, or also his ignorance or small or lacking understanding of the things written about”.⁷⁵³ This was considered sufficient reason to intervene.

What could no longer be published was now categorized as follows. Newspaper publishers should not 1) publish things not fit for papers or transgressing their privileges. This included texts pertaining to 2) state and government, 3) common arrangements, 4) pasquils attacking persons, 5) urban gossip, or 6) other invented narratives containing anything offensive, indecent, etc. and the like. Several formulations of the law text are taken from the drafts around the turn of 1772 to 1773, but pre-print censorship was now given up in favor of post-print censorship of newspapers and magazines, such as had already been practiced in a more spontaneous way for some time. Importantly, enforcement of post-censorship now became the responsibility of the police. This does not seem to imply that the police-in-chief would very actively supervise the print market, rather that he should stand ready to intervene on the occasion of requests from Cabinet, State Council, Chancelleries, or on reports from subjects offended or otherwise involved. The chief of police was given authority to react immediately against infringements of the law by prohibiting publications and giving publishers a fine between 50 and 200 rix-dollars at discretion, to be paid without any possibility of appeal. If the responsible printer or author was unable to pay, the fine would be converted to a prison term. This would later be one of the standard complaints of 1780s liberals over the law, referring to the police chief’s despotic “Gehenna on Gammeltoiv” (the police headquarters being situated at the city hall square of Gammeltoiv).⁷⁵⁴ Danish historian Jesper Jakobsen interprets the law as a sort of trifle limit, describing a class of minor violations to be treated administratively as opposed to more serious infractions in books and pamphlets in need of court cases.⁷⁵⁵ It must be said, though, that the size of fines would be, to most people, no trifle, so that the trifle-like is seen from the point of view of authorities rather than that of authors or printers. The law was communicated by the police to publishers of papers and periodicals, but it was not published in the press, and as opposed to the legislations of September 1770 and October 1771, it triggered no discussion in

⁷⁵³ Fogtmann 1786, I, 438–439.

⁷⁵⁴ P. A. Heiberg, *Vise for Oktober 1791*, <https://kalliope.org/da/text/heibergpa20170925225>.

⁷⁵⁵ Jakobsen 2017, 222 on.

papers or pamphlets.⁷⁵⁶ The government seemed to have learnt a lesson from the large cases of 1772 to 1773 – best to handle such issues in discretion.

Of course, rumors spread among writers. Suhm bitterly exclaimed, in his secret diary in December: “So, Press Freedom has been canceled, and we are worse slaves than before”.⁷⁵⁷ Quickly, new proceedings appeared, e.g., the usual suspect of *Adresseavisen* was fined for no less than two December issues (nos. 194 and 197, 15 and 21 December, respectively), 50 rix-dollars to be paid each time. First, they had reported that the theologian Christian Schmidt had been appointed adjunct bishop in Norway. That was certainly not precise, as he was named *ordinary* bishop, and even if the paper took care to correct this crucial error on the front page two days later, it did not help. Even worse, four days later, the paper brought a critical, pseudonymous comment by O. D. Lütken upon the size of farms, indirectly an argument against peasant emancipation. Even if the piece thus supported the government in rolling back Struensee’s relative relaxation of forced labor of the peasants, it did so by attacking another author and, thus, was categorized as a criminal pasquil. These were minor, if not microscopic cases, and still 50 rix-dollars was a lot of money. Hans Holck at the *Adresseavisen* must have felt that the new law targeted him and his paper specifically. These were strong messages to send in order to beat *Adresseavisen* into obedience.

Already briefly after the publication of the law, however, there had been a case indicating that the law could in fact, by analogy, be used against independent publications like pamphlets and books as well. An anonymous attack on the lottery, *To the King! On the Evil Consequences of Lottery in the Danish States*, claimed that as losing players might be brought to ruin and commit suicide, profiting on the lottery would be equal to blood money.⁷⁵⁸ The lottery, however, had been hotly contested in many pamphlets for three years now, and nobody had thought of protecting it against public attacks before.⁷⁵⁹ What had happened? Probably the reason was that the state had, the same year, taken over the lottery in the hope that revenue from there might aid to cover the growing state deficit. The Hereditary Prince and the State Council did not wish to see open, bloody criticism of the government’s state deficit policies.

756 No mention is found in *Berlingske Tidende*, *Adresseavisen* nor *Postrytteren* (the latter having the privilege to publish government information), nor in the otherwise rather detailed section “Excerpts of regulations and posters published in 1773” in the *Veyviser*, the Directory of 1774.

757 Suhm 1918, 82.

758 [Nikolaus Friborg], *Til Kongen! Om Tallotteriets onde Følger i de Danske Stater*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1773.

759 The case is referred from Edvard Holm 1890–1912, vol. V.1, 161 who does not, however, take into account state acquisition of the lottery the same year.



Fig. 57: We do not know which depiction of Caroline Matilda may have triggered the decision of 27 November 1773 to extend the restrictions of Press Freedom to cover also coppers and much else. But a print which would obviously have appeared very annoying to the new rulers is this one, looking nostalgically back on the time of the Queen in Copenhagen. In the increasing popular dissatisfaction with the court during the Struensee period in 1771, one pretext of criticism among many had been that Caroline Matilda liked to dress in male attire and go riding using a men's saddle. This print, quite on the contrary, celebrates the exiled Queen and sentimentally looks back to her riding trips: "How often did we not rejoice / we Danes and Norwegians / in seeing every road and street / where our dear Queen did ride?" But, alas, those times are past: "On horseback she's no longer seen / That pleasure was but short –". To the left in the picture, the Queen stands with tiny Princess Louise Augusta; to the right, she has mounted her men's saddle. Probably, the print should be read as a cartoon where several events are depicted in the same frame. But who is the well-dressed gentleman introducing the sequence gazing down from his window to the left? A maybe deliberately unclear point in the accompanying text goes: "By grace She won our heart/ To love You she us taught". We hear nothing otherwise about this "You" to whom the broadsheet text addresses itself. Who is the person whom the Queen should have taught the people to love? The King or Struensee? – the ambiguous text does not spill the beans, but it seems obvious for the reader to conclude the latter. *The Great and Powerful Queen Caroline Matilda on Horseback (Den Stormægtigste Dronning Caroline Mathilde til Hæst)* colored woodcut, n. d. © Royal Danish Library.

This probably fed into the hasty event already a month after the 20 October legislation. Now, the law was broadened to cover a much wider range of publications in a resolution of 27 November. Here, the October law was generalized in a number of directions. First, it was extended from Copenhagen to the rest of the realm. Second, it was generalized to cover also woodcuts and coppers which had emerged as strongly popular print genres since the January coup. The particular occasion was a copper of the exiled Queen Caroline Matilda sold at Børsen, which was traced by the police, through Ignatius Veitz' stall with paintings and prints, and confiscated at the workshop of engraver Jonas Haas. Now, the law would cover that everything "against the law and His Majesty's orders, whether it takes place by printing or copper or however it may happen, should be punished after what has already been decided for the flying papers".⁷⁶⁰ The imprecise expression "or however it may happen" has led to some later discussion of whether the law now also comprised books and pamphlets. The quick action against the lottery pamphlet, however, supports the interpretation that the generalization of the 20 October law was also intended to pertain to such independent publications. Maybe the vague expression was no judicial oversight but rather a deliberate legislative strategy. Now, authorities had the possibility to intervene against any possible media expression as needed.

It is a strange fact, however, that the November decision was never published as a formal piece of legislation. It took the shape of a Chancellery writing sent to the leaders of counties across the realm while the information about coppers was only addressed to the police-in-chief of Copenhagen. Apart from that, it was communicated, again, at a meeting with bookdealers only. It is an embarrassing fact that Danish absolutism did not yet live up to the elementary and ancient judicial standard that laws acquire validity by being published. The publication of Fogtman's collected legislations from the 1780s finally made up for this, but also here, the November decision is wanting. The picture is that absolutism, in the eyes of the coup government, took the public sphere as a sort of private property of the King, in which court and government would act as they pleased.

It is an open question what exactly prompted the government to these two quick initiatives of October to November 1773. Press Freedom Writings were now very few, and the urban gossip attacked in the newspapers were minuscule problems. Maybe the reason can be found in the fact that through most of 1773, the anxious regime continued being surrounded by rumors of intrigues against its rule. Thus, there were hearsay of a large-scale serious attempt in July to August 1773 orchestrated by none less than the King's brother-in-law, Charles of Hesse, supported by chamberlain F. F. von Krogh, Sophie von Raben, the old top official A. G. Moltke's second wife who

⁷⁶⁰ Quoted from Jakobsen 2017, 229.

was also a chambermaid with the Queen Dowager, court intendant W. J. Wegener and other central court figures.⁷⁶¹

An interesting example from Luxdorph's continuing collection of Press Freedom-related publications even after November 1773 shows that the new laws actually would be used against independent pamphlet publication. It concerned the anonymous *Morpionade, a Heroic Poem*, maybe written by the later influential literary scholar C. H. Pram, dated 24 May 1774, half a year after the November decision.⁷⁶² In that case, it would be the young Pram's debut at the age of 18, and its glowing intensity would not seem improbable for a teenager. It was dedicated to Miss Karoline Halle, a 19-year old actress who was not, however, pleased with reading it, even if a sanguine preface three times exclaimed "Most Beautiful!" to her celebration. In an antique setting, the poem follows how the youngster Morpion, obsessed with his happy love for the beautiful Cotytto, is challenged by two old, wicked witches. They are jealous and construct an intrigue against the loving couple using supernatural creatures posing as human avatars in order to spoil young love. One of the witches thus manages to force her way to Morpion's bed. In the overall picture, however, the witches' plot fails, and the tale ends happily ever after, but during the narration, the author committed two daring descriptions. One is of how Cotytto, consumed with eroticism, lies asleep: "The fire of purple swim on her snow-white cheeks, silver mountains rise from the hidden ribs of the moving breast. And the golden summits of those mountains gave a view of shining ivory fields, and to golden woods. O proud lust for armies of Morpions; here lie spread – how luscious – the proud pillars that bear the most delicious nymph and most affectionate voluptuousness". The lustful painting of the sleeping beauty with widespread legs and her pubic area attracting lice and our hero alike was audacious. Even worse, however, the god Eros himself, fooled by the two old witches, commands Cotytto to be unfaithful to her Morpion with his rival Stigmosion as her revenge for seeing Morpion in bed with one of the witches. It takes Eros' mother Venus to finally disentangle the plot and reunite the lovers, but that does not make Cotytto's adultery undone. She could not possibly disobey a god, the narrator insists to her defense, as if knowing he is indeed transgressing the limits of decency.

761 Suhm 1918, 81. Krogh and Wegener were, at the time, sent to take up minor official positions in Holstein and Sleswick; Charles remained commander of the army in Norway, but now from his seat in Sleswick. There is not much information about such a coup attempt in late summer of 1773. Either it is based on rumors only, or else the government may have chosen to silence the case not to display its own weakness. It is known that Guldberg and his group probably erased all traces of the coup plans of January 1772 from archives; it is not unthinkable they would also keep silent about plots questioning their own legitimacy.

762 [C. H. Pram?], *Morpionade. Et Helte-Digt*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1774.



Fig. 58: The young actress Karoline Halle acquired fame towards the end of the Press Freedom Period, and in her fan-base she counted an impressionable author covering himself behind the pen name of Morpion. Maybe he was the young C. H. Pram, later an important critic, but in any case the passionate author described, in a heroic poem, his erotic infatuation with Miss Halle in a piece of celebrity porn so incisive that the bookprinter Thiele had to pay, in 1774, a large fine for having printed the *Morpionade*. Simultaneously, the case demonstrated that the 1773 legal restrictions of Press Freedom of papers and broadsheets might also be used to prosecute pamphlets and books. Halle later rose to fame in Sweden as the prima donna Caroline Walter. *Caroline Walter*, French copper by Louis Marin Bonnet, n. d. © Royal Danish Library.

Given the preface, Karoline Halle could not but read Cotytto as an image of herself and she found such an adulterous soft porn portrait to be an attack on her female honor. Little did it help that nobody could doubt Morpion's as well as the author's sincere fascination with Cotytto and Halle – and little did it help that the author modestly hid himself behind a derogatory alter ego (Morpion – French for “louse”). Halle filed a formal complaint, and the police took the case very seriously. The police decision referred to both of the October to November decisions, and book-printer Thiele was fined with 50 rix-dollars because he had not been able to force the author to show up at the police station. Thiele did name the author, though, and several times he attempted to submit supplications to be pardoned from paying, but in vain. The case proves that the phrase “or however it may happen” of the November decision did, in fact, extend beyond papers and periodicals and could be used also to target independently published books and pamphlets with arbitrary police decrees.

This sentence, however, was also not published, and when a later Free Speech warrior, the young literary scholar Rasmus Nyerup began publishing in the 1780s he knew neither about the November decision nor the *Morpionade* sentence of ten years earlier. Thus, when he got involved in a censorship case of his own, he was sentenced after a law he himself found he had no possibility of knowing.⁷⁶³

A Death in Discretion

In the eyes of most observers, the October 20 law was what ended Press Freedom. But that was almost the owl of Minerva flying in dusk. Already a month earlier, in the last annual volume of the Press Freedom review periodical *Fortegnelsen*, the swan song of Press Freedom was articulated. The later very famous publisher Søren Gyldendal gave a motivation why his bi-weekly review magazine would now cease to come out: Press Freedom had been “restricted, its effects stopped which would also have happened even without any explicit restriction and effectively has happened since that time, at least as regards the good effects of freedom, to a larger degree than ever intended by the first restriction”. The restriction mentioned is that of October 1771, but there were also further reasons. The market was satiated, demand disappeared and supply with it: “The patience of readers was weakened, before you read everything, but bored because of the amounts of bad writings, now you read but nothing; the will to buy decreased and all of the patriots, good as well as evil, with time began to disappear”.⁷⁶⁴ Now, no more Press Freedom Writings appeared than could be reviewed in existing papers. Should *Fortegnelsen* have survived, it should have been extended so as to cover all publications. In short, Press Freedom Writings were disappearing, in number as well as in character.

Press Freedom began with flying standards, wild optimism, international attention, and raging debates. It ended with a whimper, and there was not even many weeping at the funeral. Unlike the original Press Freedom law and the restriction of October 1771, the October to November decisions of 1773 did not give rise to attention or debate. They all but passed unnoticed. This sadly confirms the political wisdom of the government in not reintroducing pre-print censorship which might have triggered more aggressive reactions in the public. Now, Press Freedom remained, in a thin, formal, judicial sense, while political control with the public sphere had gradually been reestablished with a series of other, more discreet means. Later governments would still pride themselves of Press Freedom as it happened even in the very restrictive 1799 legislation 30 years later – all while it was possible to continuously intervene by decree and post-censorship and, in hard cases, with a commission court if necessary. By this development, importantly, the control with the contents

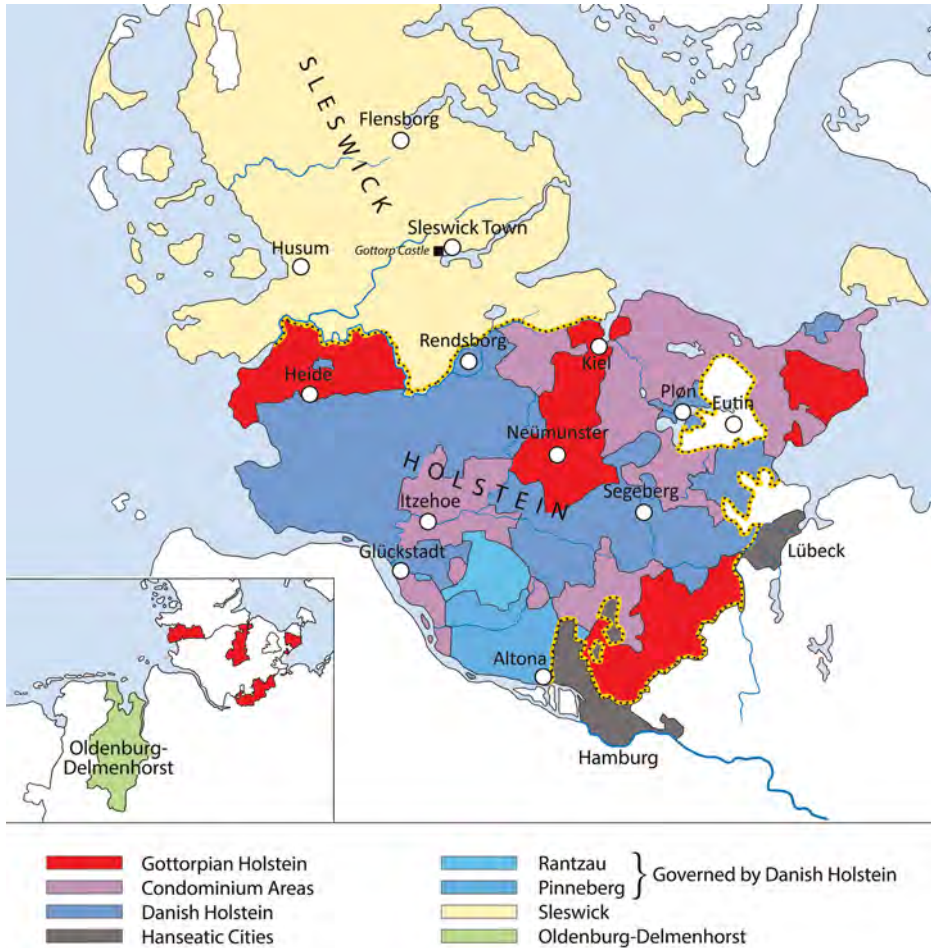
⁷⁶³ Nyerup is furious with this as late as when editing *Luxdorphiana* in 1791; see 153, 227 on.

⁷⁶⁴ *Fortegnelsen*, vol. 3, 434.

of the public sphere had slipped away from the learned elite at the University and in the Church, who had held the upper hand during centuries of pre-print censorship since 1537. Now, control had become politicized and had become the prerogative of the police in close collaboration with the government. In that sense, the outcome of the Press Freedom Period was an important step in the direction of secularization of absolutism. It was now political arguments rather than theological ones which would decide what could be published and what not. That did not refrain police or Chancellery from obtaining advice from the theologians in the Academic Council from time to time, but the initiative had passed out of their hands.

There was no official solemnity or celebration of the end of Press Freedom but still, it is possible to find traces. Immediately after the 27 November decision, the Guldberg government organized a new sermon campaign to take place in all churches on 1 December 1773, again with a massive publication of pamphlets to follow, just like in the hectic days of January-February the year before. The occasion, though, was different: it was the final completing of the longtime goal of the Estate Change with Russia in the treatise of Zarskoye Zelo in August 1773. The decade-long struggle of now-deceased count Bernstorff to barter the counties of Oldenburg-Delmenhorst for the disseminated “Gottorpien” parts of Holstein under Russian control was finally won. All of Holstein was now united as one Duchy under the Danish King as a Duke. That was the struggle that had taken Denmark into a long appeasement policy vis-à-vis Russia, which had prompted the Saint-Germain–Rantzau–Gähler faction to disagree during the 1760s, the faction which would end up being Struensee’s party in 1770. The Estate Change had only become possible now, after Struensee was gone and persons indigestible to Russia like Rantzau and von Osten had been screened out of the new government. So, the celebration was also a feast for the final victory over the foreign policy faction behind Struensee, and, more generally, over their widely differing conception of absolutism.

Luxdorph was in no doubt about the character of Press Freedom Writings of this second round of sermon pamphlets, for he consecrated a whole volume of his collection to them. Maybe it was because he saw that the new idea of organized media campaigns had been born during Press Freedom and demonstrated its vivacity now that Press Freedom proper was withering away. As opposed to the blitz-organized campaign of January 1772, this sermon campaign was well-organized and in good time. A “[m]ost gracefully planned Prayer-Day” was announced 8 November in *Adresseavisen*, which also listed, Friday 29 November, every single thanksgiving event the following Sunday. All in all, 55 meticulously articulated thanksgiving sermons were heard all over Copenhagen on 1 December 1773.



Map. 7: The Estate Exchange, 1773. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

Negotiations with Russia about bartering the Danish counties of Oldenburg-Delmenhorst in North-western Germany for the Gottorpien parts of Holstein was the guiding light for Danish foreign policy through the 1760s up to and including the Press Freedom Period. In August 1773, negotiations were finally concluded after many complications – including several inflicted by the Struensee period – and as of 1 December 1773, all of Holstein became a duchy under the Danish King. This was celebrated with major events in Copenhagen and a coordinated priestly campaign in the churches the same day, with an ensuing pamphlet publication campaign of sermons (vol. 2.21 in Luxdorph's Collection).

The map shows a simplified version of the complicated conditions on the ground in Holstein. The Duchy is marked by the black-yellow border. With blue are indicated the areas in which the Danish king ruled as a Duke, with the addition of the former counties of Rantzau and Pinneberg, also governed by the Danish administration. With red is indicated Gottorpien Holstein. The residence town of Gottorpien Holstein had been moved, in 1721 as the Gottorpien parts of Sleswick became Danish after the Great Northern War, from the Gottorp Castle to Kiel where the Gottorpien Duke Paul I of Russia now reigned over four large, dispersed enclaves plus a number of smaller areas. It was those

parts which were now integrated into the Danish Duchy of Holstein, without anyone asking the inhabitants. In addition, some areas had been condominium, ruled by the Danish and Gottorpian dukes in common, indicated by violet in the map. They were predominantly situated in Eastern Holstein, where nobility stood strong. Exempted from the Exchange was the Eastern Holstein enclave around the town of Eutin, the seat of the bishop principality of Lübeck which was, not long after the Exchange, fused with the bartered County of Oldenburg. The small insert map resumes the two territories bartered in the Estate Exchange.

Interestingly, the end of Press Freedom is indirectly and discreetly addressed by several of the grateful preachers. To take one example, we meet our old acquaintance Schønheyder in Trinitatis Church, and here we learn that God has tested us with hardship as deserved, but now He has hopes for our future, even if under certain conditions:

Banished from our thoughts and mouths be all unwise and unjust complaints, all self-reliant dreams; let us be careful not to be discouraged by malignancy and incredulity, when we speak about and demand what we select ourselves, that which we miss and complain about, to make happy our people and our times.⁷⁶⁵

We should stop complaining and give up self-invented dreams – that is, political projects. Here, a grumpy epitaph over Press Freedom is written without explicitly mentioning the deceased. But why was it so bad that such complaints and dreams had found expression? Schønheyder provides an answer later in his long sermon:

The reason and the cause of this deadly depravation of a nation is a disease in the body of the state when truth, naïve obedience to divine and human laws, faithfulness, righteousness, human-heartedness, the desire of one to serve another with the work to which he is called, cease to be civic virtues, while on the contrary softness, voluptuousness, lack of moderation, laziness, pride, greediness spread from the Great to the Small, and create all these vices where one town suppresses the other, one guild fights another, nobody knows his duties and the rights of other citizens, one citizen wrongs another, envies him and, with all those weapons wielded by tongue and hand, persecutes another [...].⁷⁶⁶

In short, depravation is the result, if citizens debate. The weapons of tongue and hand are parallel, there is little difference between a sharp word and a sharp weapon, just like law professor Kofod Ancher said three years earlier in his debate with Suhm (see Chapter 4). The Danish realm had now become geographically rounded and integrated, but it should also become socially integrated and without inner contradictions provoked by debate. This was an absolutism absolutely not guided by opinion.

765 J. C. Schønheyder, *Et Lands almindelige Lyksalighed. En Præken paa Taksigelsesfesten den 1. December 1773. holden til Høimesse i Trinitatis Kirke*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1773 (20 December 1773), 8.

766 J. C. Schønheyder, *Et Lands* 14.

Also, the new preacher in fashion, the well-spoken rhetorician of sermons, Christian Bastholm, recently returned from Ottoman Smyrna, gives a discreet good-bye wink to Press Freedom in his speech in the Citadel Church the same day, in the very same building in which Struensee had been incarcerated:

When a country shall founder, no external enemy is needed; only that the seed of disagreement is sown among the higher estates close to the rudder of the state, or between higher and lower estates, for then judgment is passed: such a realm (Luc. 11.17) disagreeing with itself becomes barren, one house falls after the other, thus is the teaching of Jesus; and isn't this teaching the voice of experience and reason? When one estate is the enemy of the other, when one citizen despises the other, when one subject despises the best ideas of the other out of jealousy or selfishness, when one works against the other and all against the state; when everybody seeks but his own and no-one seeks the common [...]

– then the demise of the state is certain.⁷⁶⁷

Disagreement is fatal to the state – that is, when one citizen criticizes the proposal of another. To the preachers, disagreement and free debate is simply a disease in an organic conception of absolutism, an inner enemy in the body of the state. Common values can be reached only when there is unity among estates and citizens which is, in turn, possible only when all limbs of the state are connected and do not criticize each other. With discreet means, Press Freedom is silenced in this holist version of absolutism which the government spread through the clergy. Little trace of opinion-guided or even enlightened absolutism remains. Again, the priests were obliged to spread the new regime's political ideas to congregations and to the market in a pamphlet campaign, and again, everything points to the fact that they successfully fulfilled their duty.

One theme unites the whole intricate closing-down process, over almost two years, from the arrest of Struensee in early 1772 to the final demise of Press Freedom in late 1773 – discretion. Few dramatic proclamations accompanied the slow smothering of Press Freedom through this period. Small steps were taken, as political lab experiments they were observed, tested and judged, all while publication activity was monitored and select cases were used to send signs to stakeholders, authors, printers, bookdealers, editors. The program of this difficult process of closing down a liberty once given proceeded step-by-step, slowly, anxiously, with caution, not by any pre-conceived master plan. No little discussion, initiative, and thought were spent on it, but all kept inside the secrecy of the new government, not at all in public debates. It was a program never written – an experience never summed up. After the first anxious years of 1772 to 1773, Ove Guldberg finally, through 1774, assumed full control over the new government as new Cabinet secretary and stabilized its vacillating reintroduction of absolutism classic. The daunting task of closing down the new

⁷⁶⁷ C. Bastholm, *Eine wahre und ungeheuchelte Gottesfurcht als das sicherste Mittel ein Reich aufrecht zu halten, Vorgestellet in einer Rede am verordneten allgemeinen Danksagungs- und Gebets-feste auf den 1. December 1773*, Copenhagen: F. C. Godiche, 1773 (24 December 1773), 29–30.

public without provoking it, a political task only rarely attempted before, was solved with surprising success. In one sense logically, in another sense paradoxically, the noise of Press Freedom withered away in silence. To return to the initial question of this chapter: How does Press Freedom die? According to the Danish case of 1772 to 1773, Press Freedom dies step by small step, by fear, and in silence.

15 Perspectives

Press Freedom as an Experiment

Nobody could know what would happen after 14 September 1770. The Press Freedom act, as mentioned, looked ahead to a period of liberty in seeking truth and revealing prejudice. And many writings did indeed emerge with such intentions. But not only would it soon be evident that truths of many different kinds were pursued, and there was little agreement over what counted as prejudice and what counted as truths, it also appeared that many pamphlets, writings, and books were published with rather different purposes. A new market was developing, and many actors wished to profit from it in a wide variety of different ways: one could win money, honor, influence, and power, and one could print not only serious philosophical, political, and economic writings, but also entertainment, criticism, satire, rude debate, attacks on religion, pornography, not to speak about libel, fake news, and threats.

It was not implied by the Press Freedom Ordinance of September 1770, but in practice most Press Freedom Writings proved to be anonymous or pseudonymous. At the time, this was not in itself strange: articles and comments in newspapers and magazines had, as a rule, been anonymous before Press Freedom. An argument was often sounded that anonymity granted that discussions remained on a principled level because the estate, title, power, and egoist interests of writers were kept out of the public sphere so that focus would remain on arguments themselves. But such contributions before Press Freedom had not only been subject to state censorship but also passed through the hands of a responsible editor. Neither was any longer the case for the majority of Press Freedom Writings, and this implied that anonymity now radically changed status. Now, it could be used as a cover giving space to personal attacks, libel, and threats, just as it made it possible to express viewpoints for which the author did not assume any personal responsibility and which might differ completely from his or her personal viewpoints. Anonymity now gave rise to a widespread culture of guessing, which becomes clear when you read the short reviews in *Fortegnelsen*. Here guesses were made about who hid behind the guise of anonymity, maybe based on hearsay, personal information, or stylistic or thematic recognition from earlier writings. We have ample reason to assume that the new networks of writing, printing, and reading actors were awash with hypotheses, rumors, and lies about who was who behind the many pamphlets and pseudonyms. Book-printers were perhaps not always able to keep secret authors' identities if they sensed an economic motive for letting it be known. This also gave rise to a characteristic vacillation among writers themselves: if I remain anonymous, I shall harvest lit-

tle honor for my efforts, but if I stand forward under my own name, on the other hand, I shall risk threats and persecution.⁷⁶⁸

On top of this came the fact that while the September 1770 law did introduce Press Freedom by abolishing existing pre-print censorship, it did not make explicit what would now happen to the existing legal regulations pertaining to material freedom of expression. That is, to what extent would the different articles of the Danish Law of 1683 still be valid with its many post-publication limitations to expressions pertaining to blasphemy, deviant religion, divination, witchcraft, lese-majesty, libel, and pasquils? Many seemed to have assumed that the new law had simply invalidated such paragraphs, but nothing was explicit until the restrictions of 7 October 1771 which emphasized the libel paragraph in particular but also the continuing validity of Danish Law more generally.

As described, a widespread consensus quickly developed, among writers, printers and officials alike, that Press Freedom Writings made possible by the new law were clearly distinguishable from the ordinary publication market continuing its activities after 14 September. Especially in 1771, there was an intense atmosphere of experiment among many writers greedily investigating the many possibilities of the new market. These are the main outcomes:

- It proved possible to profit from the new market. In particular, five small printshops exploited this possibility: Thiele, Stein, Höecke, Svare, and Hallager, just like speed-writing authors like Bie, Brun, and Bynch who hardly wrote for reasons of ideal or honor alone, but simply to make money.
- It proved possible to conduct swift debates at a wholly new tempo with print, answer, rejoinder all published within a matter of weeks or even days.
- It proved possible to address a completely new public, beyond the established writing culture and its focus on church, administration, and academia; this new audience, however, was far from unified. The enormous variation in theme, style and quality of pamphlets bore witness to endeavors by the new writers to address or create very different segments among new readerships. The Press Freedom public was characterized by the medialization of strong emotional and local components and was susceptible to frenzied reactions to a series of extraordinary events in the period. The practice of Press Freedom was an on-going and constantly fickle process. Furthermore, the new pamphlet culture continuously mixed with existing papers, magazines and periodicals, thus creating a new media landscape. Many debates beginning in one place jumped to others, back and forth, continuously changing the center of gravity, and electrifying the public sphere of Copenhagen in an entirely new way.
- It proved possible to change the public spaces of the city where the book stalls at Børsen, the premises of the *Adresseavisen* at the central Amagertorv, and the

768 On anonymity and its changed role through the eighteenth century, see Horstbøll 2010.

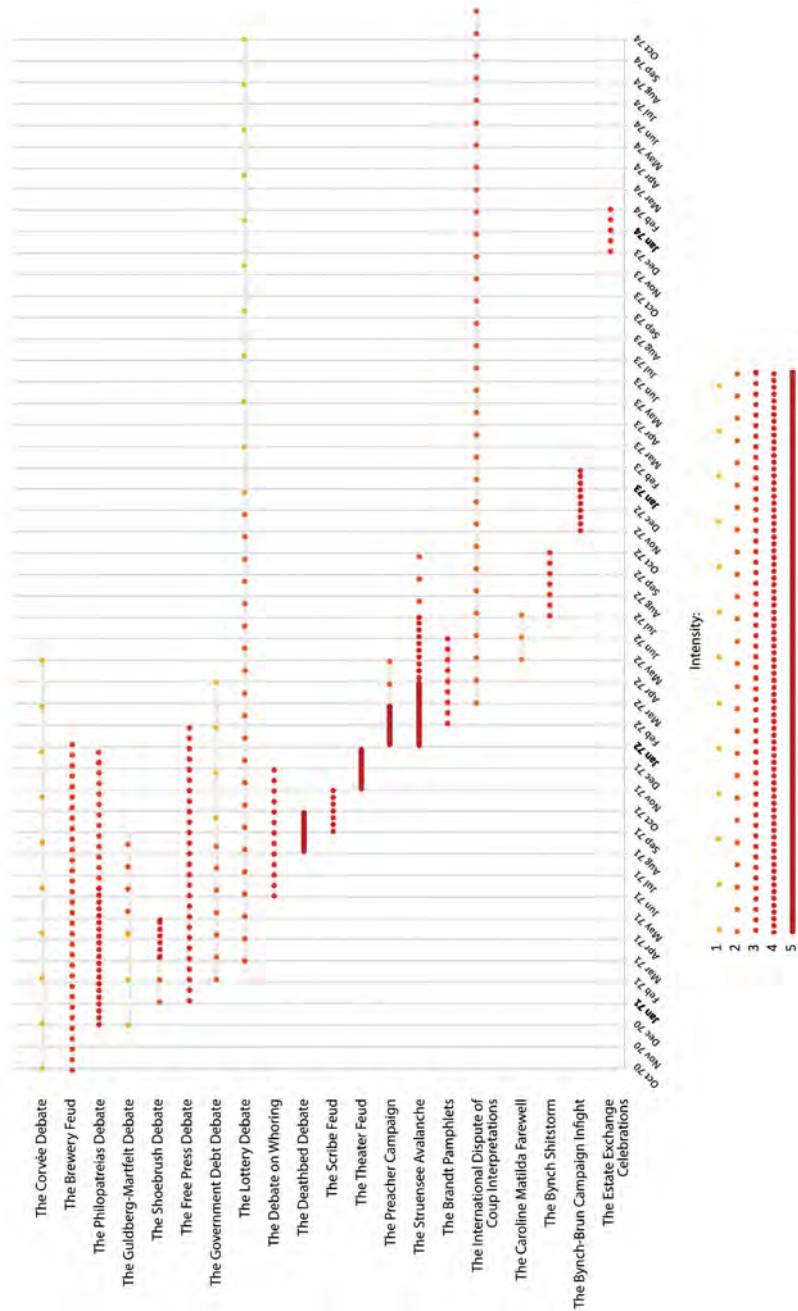
newly opened King's Garden became practical fora for the new public connected to Press Freedom Writings.

- It proved possible to actually influence public opinion, not only in ideal Habermasian terms (like those in which the Shoe Brush debate is easy to interpret), but also in terms of what we would now call fake news, as when changing opinions about Struensee saw him ascribed with the intention to undertake a bloody revolution which was accepted as truth all the way to the top of the political elite. Whether it also proved possible to further ignite such shifts of opinion by means of deliberate dissemination of false rumors is contested. But it did, on the other hand, prove possible to launch large, serious debates, about clergy salaries, about the lottery, about economic tensions between different variants of mercantilism, cameralism and free-trade liberalism, on the ruling church and religion, and on Press Freedom itself and its limits. In this sense, there were indeed features of the more ideal, debating political public which the concise articulations of the law called for – but it was in no way a privilege for a learned elite.

A special feature of the new public sphere was its geographical differentiation. Formally, the 14 September law pertained to the Danish-Norwegian kingdom as a whole, including dependencies and colonies, and secondarily the Duchies of Sleswick-Holstein and the Counties of Oldenburg-Delmenhorst. But by far the most extensive exploitation of the new liberties took place in the small, tightly packed capital within its rampart fortifications. There are also Press Freedom Writings from Norway – Bergen, Trondhjem, Christiania; – from the Danish provinces – Aalborg, Odense, Sorø, Viborg; from the Duchies – Altona, Sleswick Town, Flensburg. But regarding the sheer amount of writing published, Copenhagen dominated.⁷⁶⁹ One could say that in practice, Press Freedom primarily manifested itself in Copenhagen, secondarily in the larger provincial towns of Denmark-Norway and the Duchies, and tertiarily or not at all for the large majority – around 80 percent – of the population which was living in the countryside. This implies a social bias whereby the peasantry did not play any marked role in Press Freedom, other than as a subject of discussion. Formally, peasants had the same access to reading and writing booklets as everybody else, and even materially, not a small part of the peasantry was able to read. But the wide expansion of reading audiences from the traditional writerly elite went, in reality, more in the direction of officials, civil servants, eternal students, craftsmen, traders, workers, sailors, soldiers, servants, housemaids of cities, than in the direction of the large body of peasants.

⁷⁶⁹ It should be added, however, that Press Freedom in Norway and in Sleswick-Holstein is an issue calling for further exploration than has been possible in this book.

Debates during the Press Freedom



Graph 3: The Feuds of Press Freedom. An overview of the most important feuds, debates, fights, and campaigns of Press Freedom. The duration of the single event is represented approximately by the extension of the line; its intensity by the tightness of line dots. © Karoline Stjernfelt.

Press Freedom Then and Now

If one takes as a point of departure a modern, ideal-typical democratic public sphere, characterized by constitutional press freedom, typically delimited by the prohibition of threats, libel and false marketing, in some countries also against blasphemy and hate speech, with stable private and to some extent public media – then the public sphere of Press Freedom between 1770 and 1773 differed on several important counts.⁷⁷⁰

Anonymity is now most often seen as a rare exception which, in edited media, is admitted only for writers who are being threatened, while the general norm is to publish under one's own name – to have access to discussing, if necessary, the writer's potential conflict of interests. Then, however, anonymity was the rule – interestingly with the related argument that this permitted a discussion with participants appearing as equals across estate, rank, and positions. Similarly, the vast lack of editing actors in Press Freedom is alien to modern press, publishing-houses, radio, TV, etc. where little content is published without having been subject to an editorial process. Here, Press Freedom lies closer to the Internet, both as regards anonymity and the lack of editors – with a similar result: the unedited mixture of all levels from high seriousness to very low quality, sometimes bordering on the criminal.

Norms and limits to the public sphere are typically subject to continuing debate in the very same public sphere, but still there is far more stability in the modern ideal type where stable legislation, tradition, legal precedent and a meticulous, public processing of changes in the legislative bases of publishing all come together to grant a large degree of stability and predictability to the public sphere. The Press Freedom of 1770, by contrast, was like being suddenly thrown into a completely raw, untested terrain where norms were continuously developing and renegotiated, and where writers transgressing those norms would expect harsh criticism, sometimes threats and, in the second half of the Press Freedom period, political persecution. The number of stable institutions (state, court, church, city, guilds) were fewer but, on the other hand, they were much more powerful and arbitrary, if not entirely unpredictable in their exercise of power. Everybody seems to have sensed the radically new, experimental character of Press Freedom, and simultaneously the danger that it could be challenged, changed, or even canceled at any time.

⁷⁷⁰ Such an ideal type is visible many places. One can cite the following sentence from the European Court of Human Rights: “Freedom of expression constitutes one of the essential foundations of [a democratic] society, one of the basic conditions for its progress and for the development of every man. [I]t is applicable not only to ‘information’ or ‘ideas’ that are favorably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population. Such are the demands of that pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no ‘democratic society’”. (Handyside v. the United Kingdom judgment of 7 December 1976, § 49; [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":\["001-57499"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{)).

Such lack of stability was also evident in the insecurity about whether the articles of Danish Law of 1683 were still valid. Many writers discussed whether and how long this new, surprising liberty might last; as against the modern ideal-type, Press Freedom showed an acute awareness that this new freedom was a strange, unexpected whim which might, at any time, be taken back again by absolutist rule. It was also evident that the brief period of Press Freedom was punctuated by radical political change: the stream of new legislations, the restriction of 7 October 1771, the coup of 17 January 1772, and the ensuing, dribs-and-drabs restrictions in the shape of controls and punishments of writers all the way to the large cases and new legislations seen in 1773.

Another decisive difference pertains to information freedom. What happened in state, chancelleries, ministries, court and cabinet remained, in principle, beyond public access. The State Council was named “Gehejmekonseil”, that is, the Secret Council, and the state was not even obliged to publish new legislation and decisions even if one printer – N. C. Høppfner – enjoyed the privilege of publishing such information. There was no sort of public access to state records, documents, and decisions, unlike in the Swedish Press Freedom of 1766, and the many discussions of political matters in the new public sphere was, to a large extent, left to hearsay, conjecture, and guessing – a condition which would prevail until the Danish Constitution of 1849.

Press Freedom, however, also displayed a number of similarities with ideal-typical modern public spheres. Most spectacular, of course, was the swift growth of debates with rapid exchange of viewpoints where new interventions could be articulated and disseminated within a short time span. To these similarities one can also add the continuous advertising of new publications, particularly in the book column of *Adresseavisen*, as well as the ongoing review of new publications in the *Fortegnelsen* and the *Magazine* as well as in other, already existing papers and periodicals. The possibility of debates to rapidly influence political initiatives is also reminiscent of more modern conditions, just like the constant mixture of principal and personal criticism and the inevitable meta-debate about how to distinguish between those levels. As in ‘standard’ modern public spheres, the Press Freedom Period is also characterized by its strong influence on urban culture – and vice versa – in the shape of bookstores, book-stalls, and other forms of marketing of writings, news-stands, pubs, the King’s Garden, etc. – this again stands in contradistinction to the internet which instead influences urban culture in a negative way by drawing participation in the public away from urban spaces and to digital screens in privacy outside or on the margins of those spaces.

Similarly, Press Freedom shows a number of decisive differences to the absolutist public sphere before 1770. Here, the public was in principle governed by the prince and the church, determining its narrow borders by means of pre-print censorship, privilege, support of certain publications, and control of book imports. Simultaneously, certain limited well-monitored exemptions had recently allowed the cre-

ation of free zones: Scientific free zones like the Sorø Academy and the Academy of Sciences and Letters; political free zones like *Danmark-Norges Oeconomiske Magazin*; personal free zones like the exemption from censorship of selected, acknowledged writers – all of these had the character of closely supervised exceptions. In contrast, Press Freedom constituted a deliberate, extensive loss of control on the part of state, church, university, and police. The limits of classic absolutist public had ensured, to a large extent, that public actors had been learned, recognized members of the elite, often protected as clients of individual power holders in the government, court, or nobility.

Against this, Press Freedom allowed for the sudden access of unschooled and unprotected writers, just as the low prices of the small booklets gave new access to a large contingent of new and unschooled types of readers. Pre-print censorship had also, to a certain extent, functioned as a sort of editing or education process for writers based on the principle that “censorship precludes punishment”: if one’s writing had, maybe after several deletions, changes, and improvements, been accepted by censorship, you would not face subsequent legal prosecution (a principle, however, which had not been consequently adopted, as shown in the prosecution of Bie in 1765). Now, writers were unprotected, particularly after the restrictions of 7 October 1771, and as demonstrated by the Christian Thura example. He was banished for life for utterances which would have been rejected or published in a strongly edited version if he had submitted them to censorship. Of course, this also implied that authors aware of the inadmissible character of their writings might earlier have attempted to circumvent censorship by publishing without imprimatur, perhaps in small circulations not for sale or hand-written copies, as with the flora of “clandestine” writings in the early Enlightenment. The quantity of such writings shrinks due to Press Freedom but they do not – as we have seen – disappear completely. The pre-1770 public sphere had been strongly dominated by the Lutheran state church, because the institution in charge of censorship – the Academic Council of the University of Copenhagen – was spearheaded by theology professors. Press Freedom implied an important weakening of church control over the public sphere, and when control began sneaking back in 1772 to 1773, it was now being governed by the police rather than the church.

Most of what we have said here, pertains in particular to the “Golden Year” of Press Freedom, 1771. The Press Freedom Period de facto began in October 1770, and the largest amount of writings only from December 1770. So “The Golden Age of the Press” really only lasted ten months, up to the October 1771 restrictions. The period after the January coup showed the single most intensive month of publications – February 1772 – but also a host of new phenomena: a growing fear among prominent authors, a rapidly emerging self-censorship where writers struggled to reposition themselves on the side of the new regime out of fear of persecution, with radical shifts in published viewpoints as a result – conditions which have more similarities to pre-1770 conditions or to modern authoritarian states. It also displays, however, a

new phenomenon well-known from the modern ideal-type: organized, well-planned spin campaigns like the coordinated sermon-and-pamphlet effort in the sermon campaign of January to February 1772 which was repeated in December 1773. State-governed subjects of sermons on specific Sundays were not news, but it was new to use sermons in actual politics and simultaneously organize their publication through the new mass media of cheap pamphlets. It was a deliberate, planned media strategy. One could object that such a strategy would also be possible in a strictly controlled public sphere like the one that existed before 1770. But in such cases, its legitimacy would shrink because everybody would know that nothing appeared without explicit acceptance of the government. In a free public sphere, by contrast, such a campaign would gain legitimacy because pamphlets could appear as the initiative of a single priest and the position he represents and would thus be less visible as propaganda. Whether different political forces and factions in the Press Freedom Period utilized salaried writers as agents of influence spreading propaganda is a possibility which was rumored throughout the period, but there is no documentation showing to what degree it actually took place.

A phenomenon which should also be mentioned even if it is not relevant for all modern public spheres, is the start of the battle against corruption and nepotism in government and public administration. This was a field in which many pamphlets and the Struensee government agreed, as evidenced by the Shoe Brush debate and the Lackey Act of early 1771. Subsequently, a recurrent target in many Press Freedom debates was “Stikpenge” – bribes. Press Freedom also allowed widespread attacks on “rangsyge” – “rank disease”, the struggle for advancement ongoing within the absolutist rank system – and on the bestowing of undeserving honorary titles. Such meritocratic positions were shared both by Struensee and some of his most ardent opponents like Suhm or Guldberg. According to the investigations by the Danish historian Mette Frisk Jensen into the history of corruption in Denmark, a sort of “Big Bang” already took place during the late absolutism of the first half of the nineteenth century, combining new structural incitements with increasing punishment for fraud in the administration, and resulting in a significant decrease in public corruption and nepotism before the introduction of democracy by the 1849 constitution.⁷⁷¹ As a part of the relevant reforms of the period, she points to public criticism of administrative fraud in the new, elected Danish estate institutions of the 1830s, but also refers to the Press Freedom Period as a premise. Internationally, there is an increased focus on the difficult issue of how to realize a state bureaucracy free of corruption and nepotism, a discussion that sometimes takes place under the headline of “how to get to Denmark”, based on the frequent top position of Denmark in international anti-corruption indexes.⁷⁷² Our investigation supports Frisk Jensen’s hypothesis: the 1770 to 1773 Press Freedom Writings already display an extensive, criti-

⁷⁷¹ Frisk Jensen 2013, 265 on.

⁷⁷² E. g. Fukuyama 2004.

cal discussion of lackeyism, nepotism, abuse of public positions, bribes, etc. The birth of critical opinion through Press Freedom is thus probably an important prerequisite to Danish progress on issues of corruption in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Several times, we have mentioned in passing the similarities between Press Freedom and the internet – as against the classic-modern ideal-type public sphere. Those observations can be systematized. Both share the characteristic that a completely new media space is opened up, in the first case using political means, in the second by technological means. In both cases, an implication is the access of a new audience of both writers and readers to actively participate in public. In both cases, they include unschooled participants, not only in the sense of people not used to articulating their viewpoints but also in the sense of unschooled as far as any set of norms of public behavior is concerned. In both cases, moreover, most activity takes place without intermediate editorial processes, so that the new, developing norms for general behavior in public is not monitored by any institution. In both cases, this has the result of an enormous heterogeneity in what is published, ranging from the most to the least serious, but also to libelous, threatening, and potentially criminal utterances. Thus, in Press Freedom we find parallels to internet practices like “doxing”, the use of personal information about debaters involving more or less concealed threats of violence (I know your name, what you look like, and where you live). Such freedom unconstrained by common behavior norms is, in both cases, supported by widespread anonymity: one feels free to go further if one is not identifiable and thus cannot be made personally responsible. In both cases, new meta-debates appear, as part of attempts to develop new norms for how to behave – without, however, reaching common agreement.

In both cases, the new media space offers a vastly increased speed. In Press Freedom this is in terms of weeks and days, while on the internet it is minutes and seconds. But in both cases it facilitates the swift emergence of long debate threads. Both media situations also provide space for hitherto unseen possibilities for the spreading of fake news, the quick development and dissemination of rumors, “shitstorms”, planned spin campaigns – all far from the ideals of rational debate. Simultaneously, there is no doubt that both Press Freedom and the internet have given rise to a wide extension of access to debate, information, and enlightenment for many people who did not earlier enjoy such possibilities. The comparison between Press Freedom and the internet thus not only pertains to accidental details, but structural features of the two media situations.

The restriction of 7 October 1771 can be structurally compared to the many actual attempts to delimit or regulate the harmful effects of the power of tech giants through forced self-censorship, state control, antitrust cases, etc. In this way the Danish 1771 restriction should not be understood simply in terms of the thin-skinned Struensee trying to protect himself against the rudeness of pamphlets emerging as a result of the monster he himself had created. Such restrictions may take a very differ-

ent character, and range from elementary ruling out of libel, threats, and harassment to more all-encompassing initiatives like the reopening of the whole catalogue of publication punishments of the Danish 1683 codex, or censorship whether performed by states or tech giants. In both cases an imminent danger appears of marginalizing or criminalizing whole sets of political viewpoints.⁷⁷³ Probably, related effects can be found in media history every time a new media field opens up – the yellow press in the nineteenth century, radio in the 1920s, TV in the 1950s: a new audience is created, and the increased activity in the public sphere has positive as well as negative effects. But these modern mass media can be characterized as one-way, in the sense that the passive recipient has no or only limited possibilities for active participation and thus are different from the double character of anonymous, active participation as both sender and receiver which characterizes both Press Freedom and the internet.

Pamphlet Storms of the High Enlightenment

Another comparison may address related surges of pamphlet publications. The Danish Press Freedom Period of 1770 to 1773 is not the only early modern example of changed media conditions giving rise to pamphlet storms. During the Reformation, after printing presses spread in Europe in the decades around 1500, a stream of Protestant leaflets and pamphlets played a seminal role in disseminating Lutheran and Calvinist ideas; Luther is said to have published a piece every two weeks on average through his adult life.⁷⁷⁴ Catholic counter-pamphlets quickly entered the game, until stricter regulation of the press was reinstated in the emergent Protestant states – this happened in Lutheran Denmark-Norway with the institution of pre-print censorship in 1537, the year after the Reformation had prevailed in Copenhagen.

An early example is the English pamphlet storm of the beginning of the 1640s that gave rise to the expression of “Grub Street” literature after the London alley where many printshops for pamphlets were located. This explosion was prompted by the “Long Parliament” abolishing, between 1640 and 1641, the infamous “Star Chamber” court controlling the press. Parliament had been enraged by the harsh treatment of religious dissenters like William Prynne and John Lilburne by the court,⁷⁷⁵ and although punishments for unlicensed and seditious pamphlets never

⁷⁷³ On Free Speech and the internet, see Lauritzen and Stjernfelt 2019.

⁷⁷⁴ Luther’s use of the pamphlet medium, see Holborn 1942. In his first three active years, 1517 to 1520, Luther published, in addition to theological and political treatises, 30 pamphlets which already by 1520 had reached around 370 editions, probably with an average circulation of 1,000 copies (Holborn 1942, 129). From 1518 to 1524 the number of German publications rose from 150 to 990, the vast majority of them by or about Luther (133).

⁷⁷⁵ “Freeborn John” Lilburne was flogged, pilloried, gagged, and imprisoned for printing unlicensed books, among those publications by Will Prynne who was convicted – for attacking theaters

completely ceased, the decision came close to a de facto termination of state censorship. For a couple of years, a large number of unlicensed pamphlets poured out, of many different kinds, radical, Puritan, hostile, exploring a variety of cunning strategies including false pamphlets such as a fake letter from the Queen. State control was tightened again with the 1643 Licensing Act with state monitoring of printer privileges, while full press control was really only reestablished after the interregnum of 1649 to 1660.⁷⁷⁶ This famous English case was closely tied to what was in a certain sense a post-Reformation struggle among Catholics, Anglicans, and active groups of different Protestant dissenters and was not motivated by any principled political ideas of Press Freedom – even if such ideas were actually being developed at the time among radical Levellers.

Examples much closer to the Danish case both in time, motivation, and structure include the Austrian liberalization of censorship under Joseph II in 1781 and, of course, the abandonment of censorship in France in 1788 to 1789 and the ensuing explicit embrace of Press Freedom expressed in the Declaration of Human Rights of 26 August 1789. In both these cases, the abolition of censorship was motivated by Enlightenment ideals and immediately led to a surge of publication in pamphlets and periodicals which had been precluded before. The two cases took place in larger cities: Vienna with around 250,000 inhabitants in 1780, and Paris with around 525,000 in 1790. Those cities, in turn, were the centers of larger political entities – Habsburg Austria with more than 20 million in 1780, and France with more than 25 million in 1790 – as against the 80,000 of Copenhagen and the two million of Denmark-Norway plus the Duchies in 1770. Related size differences are reflected in the number of pamphlets, in the Danish case around a thousand over three years, in Austria around 2,000 to 3,000 prints over ten years, and in France some 10,000 during the five years before the Terror of 1793–1794.⁷⁷⁷ Still, there is a number of notable parallels as well as differences between the three cases. Common to all three cases is that the character of the pamphlet explosion considerably surprised the Enlighteners responsible for liberalization, and the relatively short-lived phases of widespread or full liberty, even if the reasons for the end of the pamphlet surges differ significantly: namely, a counter coup, policy changes, and the Terror.

To take the Austrian example first, pre-print censorship in the vast lands ruled from Vienna had, during the reign of Maria Theresia, been undertaken by a network of local institutions over the realm, not granting much consistency.⁷⁷⁸ Joseph II, soon after his full ascension to the throne in late 1780, presented a reform program centered around the secularization of state matters, and censorship would thus now

and the court for decadence – to lifetime imprisonment, a large fine, and amputation of both his ears.

⁷⁷⁶ On Grub Street and the 1640 to 1641 period, see Mendle 1995.

⁷⁷⁷ Out of a total of 6,300 publications of the period 1781 to 1795; Bachleitner 2017, 71; On the French number, De Baecque 1989; see below.

⁷⁷⁸ The section on Austria is informed by Jakob 2001, Morrison 2005, and Bachleitner 2017.

be centralized from Vienna. Censorship on the importing of foreign books had been particularly restrictive, so that when on 8 June 1781 he presented his new legislation on publications, it included the opening up to importation of decades, if not centuries, of works long since discussed in the overall European republic of letters. Simultaneously, the list of prohibited works was drastically reduced, although not abolished completely. The motivation of Joseph's initiative was clothed in Enlightenment rhetoric, even if pedantically expressed: "Criticism, if only there be no libelous writings, aiming at whomever it may be, from princes and to the lowest persons, should, particularly when the author lets his name be printed with it and thereby accepts to grant the truth of the matter, not be prohibited, as it must be a joy to every lover of truth when such is permitted to him in this way".⁷⁷⁹ It was no full press freedom, however. A new censor institution staffed by intellectuals took the monitoring of the press out of the hands the church, with the explicit print permission of Protestant writings and the abolition of a special censor for churchly texts. Catholics found that all their clerical publications would now be censored by a state censor not controlled by the church, and top clergy vehemently protested the new conditions. The new censors proved to have a special eye on Hungarian publications, immoral writings, but also on extreme attacks on the church. Still, the change was radical and widely perceived as opening completely new opportunities for publication.

The result was the *Broschürenflut*, the torrent of pamphlets, and it was only strengthened by the fusion, in April 1782, of the censorship institution with a Commission of Study whose overarching goal was the education of the population. This commission became populated by moderate Enlighteners (*Aufklärer*), many of them Freemasons or part of the Illuminati, and moreover the number of censors was rationalized so that in 1784 a mere nine were left, and in 1788 only six. Their extrovert duties were undertaken by a deputy, a *Revisor* who monitored bookdealers and gave them lists of forbidden literature – consequently, most controversies played out around these deputies rather than the censors themselves. The lack of clear legislation guidelines left wide scope for judgment to the individual censors, and, combined with Joseph's frequent personal interference in censorship cases, this made the standards for what could be printed fuzzy and pretty unpredictable – that is, open to being tested by enterprising authors, publishers, and printers. Within the first 18 months, a total of some 1,772 publications appeared, and the number of new newspapers or journals rose from three in 1780 to 22 and 28 between 1781 and 1782.⁷⁸⁰ Pamphlets initiated extended debate, and topics ranged from serious political issues to entertainment and insults. Joseph famously even accepted criticism of himself and his own rule, unlike his otherwise press freedom-friendly German colleague Frederick the Great. Joseph hired state writers to present counter-arguments to critical pamphlets rather than censoring them. The *Wiener Zeitung* reviewed new

⁷⁷⁹ Translated from Bachleitner 2017, 26.

⁷⁸⁰ Morrison 2005, 66.

pamphlets and periodicals, and the formation of a debating public was a reality in Vienna within months of Joseph's decision, spreading through the city's wide stock of coffee-houses. More serious discussion of publications took place in the *Realzeitung*, around which a new close-knit network of Freemasons and self-declared Enlighteners gathered, focused upon the improvement of individuals, morality, and the state. These Enlighteners included Aloys Blumauer, J. B. von Alxinger, K. L. Reinhold, Johan Pezzl, supported by older learned Enlighteners like Joseph von Sonnenfels and Ignaz von Born (the inspiration for Mozart's and Schikaneder's Sarrastro character in "The Magic Flute"). One of the most famous and widespread pamphlets was J. V. von Eybel's anonymous 1782 diatribe against the church entitled "Was ist der Pabst?" – What is the Pope? – on the occasion of the Vienna visit of Pius VI in the same year, giving rise to a large pamphlet feud. Inevitably, the *Aufklärer* were simultaneously looking down on the chaos of the many new "Ten Kreuzer Authors" producing "Makulatur" of less ambitious, if not harmful character, but with broader popular appeal, including figures such as Joseph Richter, Johann Rautenstrauch and J. J. Fetzer. Like the Danish case, pamphlets were printed in octavo and basically looked very much alike yet covered an enormous range of different functions, genres, and levels of quality, oftentimes in new combinations. The pamphlet storm proved a main fountainhead of commercial entertainment literature, almanacs, novels, often with local-colored content, and spread throughout the German-speaking area at large.⁷⁸¹

The peak pamphlet explosion lasted not much more than four years and began to wane with Joseph's crackdown on Freemasonry in 1785, while the second half of the 1780s – and of Joseph's reign – proved a period of backtracking on his original liberalizing reforms. The enthusiastic *Aufklärer* became disappointed with their lack of popular and political success, as pamphlet intensity receded, and intellectuals retreated, to a large degree, to private sociability. Joseph had already expressed regret at the pamphlets resulting from his decision in 1781, and by mid-decade access to printing became increasingly hampered by administrative practices such as licensing applications rather than censorship. Joseph's successor, his brother Leopold II, continued a tolerant attitude, during his short reign from 1790 to 1792, to publications on subjects such as peasant liberation and satire of the nobility, but in 1790 he increased the censorship of newspapers whose dissemination was also now kept in check by means of taxation of every single copy (half a Kreuzer) as well as pamphlets and comedies (one Kreuzer) from 1789. Leopold again augmented the list of prohibited books, just as he also turned over the monitoring of censorship to a new office of the Vienna police. His successor, Francis II, in turn came to spearhead the foundation of the Austrian *Kaiserreich* and the continent-wide reaction of the Vienna Congress after the Napoleonic era. But already in his early years, animated by the

⁷⁸¹ Jakob 2001, 245.

threatening ghost of the French Revolution, he is credited with the final closing down of the Viennese liberties of the Josephinian era.

The French case, of course, concerns a special dimension of that extremely complicated web of events which constitutes the French Revolution.⁷⁸² French censorship in the eighteenth century, with its alternating waves of strictness and laxity, its radical actions and inconsistencies with secret permissions changing back and forth under renowned chief censor Malesherbes, was finally abolished in practice on 5 July 1788, when Louis XVI called on educated subjects to express their views on the upcoming convention of the Estates, followed by a legal confirmation of that principle in December of the same year.⁷⁸³ The Declaration of Human Rights of 26 August 1789 famously stated in Article 11 that “The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of the most precious of human rights: every citizen can thus freely speak, write, print, except being responsible for the abuse of this liberty in cases determined by law”.⁷⁸⁴

The whole system of preprint censorship and corporate privilege of the Old Regime, in short, was swept away in one stroke, a fact further emphasized by the abolition between 4 and 11 August of feudalism and all privileges, including those of printers, publishers, and authors. These new conditions, however, included little about how the situation on the market for publications would now be structured. Again, an enormous surge in pamphlets and periodicals was the immediate result, with no less than 10,000 produced through the early years of the Revolution alone. In the French case, printers, publishers, and booksellers of the Old Regime formed a strong and heterogeneous guild, and their problems with the new situation, charted in detail by Carla Hesse,⁷⁸⁵ proved more central than in the Danish and Austrian cases. For decades they had been protected by royal privileges on a long series of classic books dating back from the seventeenth century and up to current High Enlightenment bestsellers. All of a sudden, these privileges fell away, such texts now being open for everyone to print. But nobody did. Instead, the surge of new, small printshops focused on incendiary political pamphlets and periodicals, commercial entertainment, satire, libel, and so on – a very broad spectrum not unlike what had been seen in Copenhagen and Vienna. Many of the established printers now faced bankruptcy, others survived by political compromise with the new figures in power in the National Assembly, such as A.-F. Momoro who became one of the principal printers of the revolutionary Commune. The National Assembly gradually realized that Press Freedom did not result in the expected widespread publication of Enlightenment ideas, so such publications would now be in need of state subvention. Print-

782 The section on Paris is informed by Hesse 1991 on the development of publishing conditions, and Israel 2014 on the content and effects of publications.

783 Hesse 1991, 20.

784 Translated from <https://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/le-bloc-de-constitutionnalite/declaration-des-droits-de-l-homme-et-du-citoyen-de-1789>.

785 In Hesse 1991.

ers, publishers, and authors simultaneously realized that the abandonment of privileges not only gave them new possibilities but also exposed them to freewheeling literary piracy, necessitating legislation that attempted to protect the “right of genius”, which the National Assembly discussed at length, before finally passing legislation in 1793.⁷⁸⁶ Here, two Enlightenment arguments clashed: one inspired by Diderot, insisting that authors’ rights are inalienable and as good an inheritable property as any, versus one informed by Condorcet, claiming that the products of authors really belong to their nation, effectively undermining authors’ rights and their livelihood. In the Assembly, Condorcet and Sieyès went for a compromise, and the final legislation of the “Declaration of the Rights of Genius” of 19 July 1793, balanced these two views, granting lifelong author’s rights but truncating the rights of heirs to ten years after the death of the author.

Such problems notwithstanding, the surge in pamphlets and periodicals became the lifeblood of the Revolution through its early, tempestuous period from 1788 to 1793, and the many changing factions in and outside the National Assembly defined themselves to a large degree through their intense publication activity, charted in detail by Jonathan Israel.⁷⁸⁷ One of the leaders of the strong Girondist or Brissotian faction – Warville de Brissot himself – supported the principle that insurrection against absolutist governments was possible only by the continuous enlightenment of the population, which, in turn, was not feasible by means of voluminous learned books but through short pieces and newspapers. Pamphlets had already begun to proliferate in 1787 when 217 appeared, followed by 819 in 1788 and peaking with no less than 3,305 in the revolutionary year of 1789. An extraordinary level was kept in the following years with 3,121, 1,923, and 1,286 between 1790 and 1792, only to dip to 663 and 601 in the years of the Terror in 1793 and 1794 before stabilizing around 200 in the last years of the 1790s.⁷⁸⁸

Arguably the single most important publication of the Revolution was a pamphlet from 1789 – Abbé Sieyès’s “Qu’est-ce que le Tiers Etat?” – What is the Third Estate? – making the grand claim that the third estate was nothing, but that it should now become everything. Much points to the fact that the revolution’s first and decisive phase was really the pamphlet surge of 1788 up to the inception of the Estates meeting in April 1789. The press campaign for the doubling of Third Estate representation, accepted by the King in December 1788, was succeeded by the spreading of revolutionary ideas far and wide so as to influence the election of radical representatives, particularly in the cities. Cérutti’s “Mémoire pour le peuple français” of 1788, La Harpe’s 1790 call for the liberty of theaters, Olympe de Gouges’

786 The Estates General Meeting of April 1789 constituted itself as National Assembly by June 1789; as of September 1791, it became the Legislative Assembly and by September 1792 the National Convention. Here, we use “National Assembly” indiscriminately for these three assemblies.

787 See Israel 2014, Chapter 2.

788 Israel 2014, 32; A De Baecque 1989, 165–166.

1791 Declaration of the Rights of Women, The Feuillants' July 1791 pamphlet splitting from the Jacobins, the French version of Tom Paine's "Right of Man" 1792, Condorcet's posthumous 1794 "Esquisse" on the progress of humanity – there is no lack of central writings that continued to play into the intense chain of events.

Oftentimes, brochures concentrated on spectacular contemporary events and prominent characters in the emerging revolutionary public sphere. Again, they display a stunning variety of styles, genres, functions, purposes, and quality – from serious treatises on finance to proposals for new government systems and scholarly reflections, news, satire, and comments on current affairs, and porn, political attacks, eulogies, social protest, and much more, again sprouting debate threads, both short and long. The radical fringe seems to have been larger and ran deeper than in the Danish and Austrian cases with many examples combining porn, venereal disease, cuckolding, aggression, and slander in attacks on royalty, nobility, and revolutionaries alike.⁷⁸⁹ Such extremes made the National Assembly quarrel over the limits of Press Freedom in the shape of libel, sedition, counterrevolution, etc.

The number of periodicals increased later than pamphlets due to the fact that newspaper censorship continued to function into 1789. Early important pro-revolutionary periodicals include Mirabeau's *Courrier de Provence* and Brissot's *Patriote français*. But soon journals were blooming, and more than 515 new papers appeared in Paris between May 1789 and October 1792, many of them short-lived. Papers soon stretched across the quickly widening continuum of post-absolutist political positions, from royalist papers of different stripes such as Rivarol's *Actes des Apôtres*, Mallet du Pan's *La sentinelle*, Royou's *Ami du Roi*, to Brissotin publications like Bonneville's *Bouche de Fer*, Prudhomme's *Révolutions de Paris*, Condorcet's *Chronique de Paris*, and populist and authoritarian papers such as Desmoulins's *Le vieux Cordélier*, Hébert's *Le Père Duchesne*, Marat's *Ami du Peuple*, Babeuf's *Tribun du Peuple*, and many more. They served to interpret events, develop policies and attack, ridicule, or threaten competing views of the Revolution, thus negotiating distinctions between the manifold of shifting, struggling political factions and networks in and outside the National Assembly, while also attempting to rally support and call for action among various strata of the population. The enormous surge of short-format publications almost ground to a halt during the spring of 1793 when followers of Robespierre began to cleanse out competing revolutionaries and crack down on pamphlets and publications both to the left and right of themselves. By the post-Terror Thermidorian period of the Directory between 1795 and 1799, the unique publication craze was all but ebbing out.

These three Enlightenment experiments with Press Freedom – Copenhagen 1770, Vienna 1781, and Paris 1789 – share some common morphologies. The sudden ascension of characters with Enlightenment ideals to political power is, in all three cases, the precondition for the introduction of radically changed conditions for the

789 De Baecque 1989, 167–169.

printed word: partial or unlimited Press Freedom. Publication activity, after such liberalization, steeply rises to a maximum, from which it recedes at a slower pace over a number of years, yet interspersed with abrupt peaks and lows triggered by sudden political events or turnarounds. In all three cases, a disappointment with the results of Press Freedom initiatives is palpable in the enthusiastic Enlighteners, be it Struensee, Joseph II, or the central Gironde or Brissotin faction of the National Assembly. Press Freedom did not turn out to exclusively lead to the expected search for truth, attacks on prejudice, the spread of Enlightenment thought, a higher morality, or the education of the populace – but resulting also in the publication of vast amounts of ephemera focusing upon amusement, fiction, satire and, worse, cunning, false, incendiary, reactionary, ultrarevolutionary, libelous, obscene, seditious, violent writings – even some of them turning against the very originators of Press Freedom themselves, in Paris leading to sharp discussions in the Assembly. A widespread stratification of the character of pamphlets, of social groups consuming such different pamphlet types, and of the amount of public strife emerging between pamphleteers also seems to have surprised Enlighteners expecting a more moral, united, organic, and indeed enlightened readership to take shape.

Faced with such disappointments, different political strategies appear. Adding certain legal restrictions to Press Freedom without abolishing it, such as compulsory indication of author and/or printer, or the criminalization of specific issues such as pirate versions, libel, sedition is one possibility; the substitution of post-print for pre-print censorship another. Further possibilities include the suppression of institutions housing radical pamphleteers; or threatening authors, printers, publishers, and booksellers by sending signals such as public prosecutions of selected ugly or radical examples in types of show trial. Control of publication may also be sought by other means, such as privileges, licensing, or taxation; influencing the general direction of the market of prints and the public by salaried hack writers or police spies; or political programs for state subvention of selected higher quality publications. Finally, of course, the most radical step is the more or less total withdrawal and dismantling of Press Freedom itself. In all three cases, different mixtures of such steps were undertaken after a booming and anarchic first phase. It is a common feature of the three that censorship institutions or practices where the church had maintained some or even a high degree of influence were abandoned with Press Freedom but did not reappear with its subsequent containment or restriction. Here, state and police institutions typically enter the picture as new actors responsible for monitoring the public sphere – involving a tendency that the center of gravity of censored content is shifted from the religious field in the direction of the political sphere.

There are certainly also differences. The French experience revealed much more about the crucial issues of copyright in a free public sphere than the earlier two events – even if we also find indications in Danish Press Freedom that established printers felt threatened by the new market of cheap pamphlets while benevolent

characters tried to raise support for serious publications.⁷⁹⁰ The French case decisively opened the issue of democracy, making clear the competitive, even fiendish partisan character of liberalized debate as to political issues in particular. There were also aggressive political debates in Copenhagen and Vienna, but not the wide Parisian panoply of detailed, explicit political factions engaging in infighting. The Austrian case was a less radical liberalization, also with a less radical ending avoiding executions, causing fewer public reverberations across the continent than the two other cases, while displaying a strong opposition between Freemasonry and the established state and church, something absent from the Danish and French cases. The Danish case took place in a Protestant country with a state church, unlike the two Catholic cases where pamphleteers had to negotiate tensions with the two independent powers of state and church – this made it easier for Danish state actors, both pro and con Press Freedom, to neutralize and utilize the church, respectively. The Danish case remained steeped in battling versions of enlightened absolutism, albeit with more radical political perspectives than the Austrian case, also because of the weakness of the King, the abolition of State Council rule, and the stirring of proto-democratic ideas. So, on a scale of radicalism, the Copenhagen case falls somewhere between Vienna and Paris.

But still, similarities outweigh the differences. In this light, the Danish experience with Press Freedom was a first, important test case and harbinger for what was to come, both in High Enlightenment experiments with Press Freedom, but also in the later, more lasting conditions of modern publics with competitive debate arising out of constitutions involving Press Freedom articles through the nineteenth century. Emperor King Joseph and his court in Vienna and the French revolutionaries in the Tennis Court and the National Assembly in Paris, in short, would have been wise to regard more closely their concentrated Copenhagen precedent where a long series of typical features of a freely debating public, as if in a laboratory flask, had already been manifested and tested.

The Legacy of Press Freedom

In Denmark, the short but intensive parenthesis of Press Freedom was never forgotten. The restrictions of the new regime of 1772 to 1773 never took the final step to

790 An ordinance had been introduced in Denmark-Norway in 1741 to protect authors from piracy and protect existing books from being copied; see Horstbøll 1999, 150. For a classic study on eighteenth-century copyright using primarily German sources, see Woodmansee 1984. In the Danish case support for the threatened species of serious publication was attempted by a “*Typografisk Selskab*” (Typographical Society) founded immediately after the fall of Struensee in 1772 by a handful of Copenhagen luminaries including Suhm, Guldberg, Oeder, Schönheyder, Holck, etc., with the aim of “spreading the reading of good writings in all provinces of Denmark and Norway” in a sort of philanthropic book-sales club.

reintroduce pre-print censorship, so, in a formal sense, Press Freedom persisted through continued Cabinet rule until the 1784 coup, ousting Guldberg and placing the now 16-year old Crown Prince Frederik in power surrounded by a clique of liberal noblemen. But already during the Guldberg years, a new group of writers had acquired a taste for free discussion, and immediately after the smothering of Press Freedom, the golden era of Copenhagen club life found its beginning. Free debate, no longer possible in published writings, moved indoors in the Norwegian Society (1772), the Neergaard Club (1774), Drejer's Club (1775), and many more. Provocative writers and editors of the 1780 and 1790s like Niels Ditlev Riegels, P. A. Heiberg, Knud Lyne Rahbek, and C. H. Pram had their formative years as kids and teenagers through Press Freedom, and after the coup against the Guldberg regime in 1784, a new age of press freedom found its beginning, not because of new legislation, but because the Crown Prince and his group of liberal official advisors relaxed the enforcement of regulations. The liberality of Crown Prince Frederik, however, did not survive the French Revolution, and with a new law of 1790, new limits to press freedom were drawn with reference back to the Press Freedom Period, such as the 1771 restrictions, which were once again emphasized. Writers celebrated the fact that the new law required court decisions and thus abolished the right of the police to make arbitrary decisions on press freedom cases by imposing fines, but simultaneously, the more severe catalogue of restrictions of the 1683 Danish Law was again brought into play.

Conditions soured through 1790s, as evidenced by three lifetime banishments in connection to the Michael Brabrandt case, in which a Copenhagen tea dealer was arrested and later punished, primarily for his protests during his arrest, and the long struggle of the government in challenging writers like P. A. Heiberg and Malthe Conrad Bruun peaking in a large new Press Freedom Ordinance of 1799, which was swiftly put to use to banish both of them retroactively in 1800.⁷⁹¹ They emigrated to Paris to enjoy successful careers there and never returned to Denmark. But even the 1799 "Press Freedom Ordinance", the detailed new legislation complex of 28 articles making it a crime to "brood bitterly" about the government, boasted an introduction celebrating the King's gift of press freedom to his people. The regent was seen to favor "Press Freedom in particular, because He regards it as the most effective means to spread enlightenment and knowledge of public utility among all classes of citizens".⁷⁹² So even if restricting freedom further, the 1799 ordinance made ample use of the good name of Press Freedom. One generation later, when rumor had it that the now ageing Frederik VI would further restrict Press Freedom provoked by a new wave of liberal opinion, a large group of Danish officials, professors, theologians, and others founded the *Press Freedom Society* of 1835 with a wink back to the Press Freedom Period. It was also often hinted at through the press struggles of the final

⁷⁹¹ On Brabrand etc. see Langen 2012.

⁷⁹² Quoted from Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2016, 231.

decade of Danish absolutism, for example in the satirical periodical *Corsaren* of the 1840s. The Freedom of Expression article in the Danish 1849 Constitution was penned on the basis of the French Declaration of Human Rights of 1789 and the Belgian 1830 Constitution, but the debates of the Danish Founding Fathers of 1848–1849 displayed an acute awareness of their precursors in the Press Freedom Period, as when the influential theologian N. F. S. Grundtvig referred back to the 1799 law and its embrace of the introduction of Press Freedom.⁷⁹³ In his famous lectures of 1871, the critic Georg Brandes would, on the centennial of Press Freedom, again emphasize the importance of freedom of thought.

Even if the Danish Constitution of 1849 gave rise to the freedom of expression article which still remains, with minor modifications, as §77, the dilemma made evident by the Press Freedom Period also remains actual to this day. If pre-print censorship is abolished, thereby introducing what the legal philosopher Alf Ross calls “formal freedom of expression”, then how much should remain of “material freedom of expression”, that is, which types of utterances may still be legally prosecuted after they have been freely uttered? The government of the first year of the Press Freedom Period had thought: none at all – in the conclusive years of the period, a new government increasingly found that at least libel, political, and religious criticism should be censored, soon also criminalizing city gossip, pornography, and economic criticism. Both of these positions, more or less radical, have survived in Danish and indeed in the international democratic tradition ever since the Press Freedom Period. This is why this brief but intense period forms a unique resource for continuing reflection on these evergreen issues of Enlightenment policies.

793 Cf. Mchangama and Stjernfelt 2016, 386.

Cast of Main Characters of the Press Freedom Period

- Abildgaard, Peter Christian** (1740–1801), physician, founder of the veterinary school of Copenhagen. Appeared as a satirical pamphleteer under the pseudonym “Rosentorne” (Thorns of Roses), wittily polemizing against Rosenlund and Bynch.
- Aboe, Thøger** (1747–1806), Norwegian naval officer in Struensee’s circle. As a commandant, he received and stopped the “march of sailors” at Hirschholm in September 1771; arrested after the coup and banished from the realm for three years.
- Agjætmaal, Dasilag Drape**, see Søren Rosenlund
- Anti-Philopatris**, (Anti-Lover of the Fatherland), see J. C. Bie
- Argus, Den danske** (The Danish Argus), see C. G. Biering
- Baden, Jacob** (1735–1804), philologist and critic, brother of Torkel B., employee at the Latin School of Elsinore, from 1771 rector; editor and author of *Kritisk Journal*, wrote pamphlets on university policy, later professor of rhetorics at the University of Copenhagen.
- Baden, Torkel** (1734–1805), author on agricultural and economic issues, pamphleteer, brother of Jacob B.
- Bagge, Christian** (1734–1792), brewer, initiated the first feud of Press Freedom in October 1770 against the Brewers’ Guild and its alderman Storp. Convicted in 1773 and 1775 for libel in these pamphlets.
- Balle, Nicolai Edinger** (1744–1816), orthodox theologian with some rationalist sympathies, vicar in the North of Jutland 1771, a friend of publisher Søren Gyldendal. A thanksgiving pamphlet for the coup in 1772 took him to the capital as theological university professor, later bishop of Zealand.
- Balling, Emanuel** (1733–1795), author, bookprinter, journalist, and editor, particularly known as the editor of and contributor to *Aften-Posten* (the Evening Post) from 1792. Wrote several Press Freedom pamphlets, introduced Swedenborg in Denmark.
- Bardewijck, Hermann Ludolph** (?–?), traveling German book salesman and book leaser. In 1773 charged for selling and leasing dangerous writings on Struensee and Caroline Matilda in Elsinore; as a result banished to Oldenburg.
- Bastholm, Christian** (1740–1819), theologian, priest in Smyrna in the Ottoman Empire 1768 to 1771, from 1772 priest at the Citadel Church of Copenhagen. Claimed a Stoics-flavored theological rationalism and developed a rhetorics of preaching. Favorably reviewed by Bynch in his *Homiletic Journal*. Participated in the pamphlet campaign of the government in December 1773.
- Berger, Christian Johan** (1724–1789), Danish-German physician, the architect behind Struensee’s medical reforms, after Struensee’s fall incarcerated and banished to Aalborg.
- Beringskiold, Magnus Bering von** (1721–1804), Danish tradesman and litigator, ennobled 1758 by the German emperor, 1763 general commissioner of war. Rumored to be unruly and unreliable. In 1769 he bought the crown estate Marienborg on the island of Møn, but proved unable to pay, and the Struensee government refused to write off his debt. Began, in the summer-fall period of 1772, to conspire with Rantzau against Struensee and became the main organizer of the coupmaker group. He was quickly squeezed out, however, after the coup by the new regime, against which he now turned to conspire until he was incarcerated for life in 1783.
- Berling Brothers (Brødrene Berling)** – **Johann Christian** (1733–1771) and **Georg Christopher** (1737–1778), sons of E. Berling and owners of the Berlingske Printshop, from 1765 located in Pilestræde 93, publishing the privileged newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*. They also published around twenty Press Freedom Writings.

- Bernstorff, Andreas Peter** (1735–97), count, official, and politician, a nephew of J. H. E. Bernstorff, Danish foreign minister 1773 to 1780 and 1784 to 1797. Was marginalized during the Struensee period; participated in the 1784 coup against Guldberg.
- Bernstorff, Johan Hartvig Ernst** (1712–1772), count, official, and politician. Member of the State Council 1751 to 1771, foreign minister, prime minister. Negotiated the Estate Exchange with Russia through the 1760s and approached Denmark to Russia, away from France. Incarnated the old State Council rule from the days of Frederik V. Was sacked by Struensee 15 September 1770, the day after Press Freedom.
- Bie, Jacob Christian** (ca. 1738–1798), Norwegian author living in Copenhagen. Was sentenced in a censorship case before Press Freedom. Triggered the Philopatris debate with his pamphlet of that name December 1770 and published many writings, most of them pseudonymous. Was sentenced to six years' imprisonment in 1771 for an immoral sermon, later increased to penitentiary for life for forging the King's signature. Continued publishing while in jail. After many applications, his penalty was converted to banishment to the Danish colonies in India 1777.
- Bie, Mette Margrethe** (1732–1790), married to Jacob B., published his prison writings.
- Biehl, Charlotte Dorothea** (1731–1788), playwright and author, among other things to *Historiske Breve* (Historical Letters) depicting court life and events during Press Freedom. Participated in the debate over the corvée.
- Biering, Christian Gormsen** (1731–1776), bookprinter, editor and author. Worked at the Address Office in Copenhagen until 1771 when he moved to Odense, founding an Address Office there, publishing the periodical *Den Danske Argus*. His *Overkiolernes forunderlige Hændelser* (The Wondrous Events of Overcoats) was one of the first Press Freedom pamphlets.
- Bornemann, Vilhelm** (1731–1801), official, military advocate, from 1771 Struensee's chief of police in Copenhagen, replaced by Fædder May 1772.
- Borup, Thomas Larsen** (1726–1770), bookprinter and producer of graphical illustrations. Set up printshop at Helliggejststræde 150 in 1756. His widow Rebecca Buck continued printing and merged with J. R. Thiele's printshop when they married in 1771.
- Braem, Gotthard Albrecht** (1710–1788), official, for example in the Copenhagen city council in the Struensee period. In 1771, he wrote a couple of letters to Brandt encouraging him to plot against Struensee, later published as pamphlets. Probably these letters contributed to making him new lord mayor of Copenhagen after the coup.
- Brandt, Enevold** (1738–1772), legal scholar, courtier, top Struensee ally, responsible for court entertainments in the Struensee period. Jailed 17 January 1772, prosecuted and executed along with Struensee 28 April 1772 for having bitten the King during a brawl.
- Bredal, Niels Krog** (1732–1778), Norwegian playwright and pamphleteer. Received harsh criticism in the new *Dramatic Journal* for his play *Tronfølgen i Sidon* ("The Succession in Sidon") and replied with an additional *Afterpiece* to the play. Thereby he initiated the Theater Feud of November 1771 in which officers backed him against critical students.
- Brun, Frederikke** (1765–1832), Balthasar Münter's daughter, informed about the coup as a kid 1772, later she became an author and source to the period.
- Brun, Martin** (1741–1774), student of philosophy, the most productive Press Freedom writer with more than 60 pamphlets. Particularly known for role pamphlets presenting characters such as "Ole the Smith" or "Jeppe the Watchman". His moral narratives from the fall of 1770 in *Den danske Democrit-Heraclit* ("The Danish Democritus-Heraclitus") were among the first Press Freedom Writings. Was hyperactive with a current of very different pamphlets about the coup in January–March 1772. Ended his career in a theological confrontation against Bynch at the turn of the year 1772 to 1773.
- Bülow, Anne Sophie von** (1745–1787), with Mrs. Gähler and Mrs. Holstein "the Three Graces" at court under Struensee, a daughter of count Laurvig, married to Frederik B., had many admirers

at court. She is claimed to have found the letter revealing the coup plot under the “Reconciliation Ox” in September 1771.

Bülow, Frederik Ludvig Ernst von (1736–1811), count, married to Anne Sophie B., general adjutant and equerry of the King under Struensee, banished without a sentence to Holstein 1772; part of the conspiracy to reinstate Caroline Matilda to the throne 1774 to 1775.

Bülow, Johan (1751–1828), officer, active during the Christmas Eve Feud, chamberlain for crown prince Frederik. Active in the 1784 coup against Guldberg, then court marshal. A close friend of Biehl whose *Historical Letters* are addressed to him.

Bynch, Josias Leopold (1747–1779), student of theology, the secondmost productive pamphleteer, particularly known for *Evaes Natklokke* (“Eve’s Nightgown”) and his attack on Suhm’s *Til Kongen* (“To the King”). His rude *Et Par Ord til Danmark* (“A Couple of Words to Denmark”) probably contributed to the restriction of Press Freedom October 1771. Became publicly associated with the fallen Struensee and was jailed for 14 days for his periodical *Statsmanden* (“The Statesman”). Ended his author career in the fall of 1772 by criticizing sermons in his *Homiletic Journal*, which was harshly attacked by Brun and ended by triggering a new piece of legislation against such reviews.

Caroline Matilda (1751–1775), English Princess, younger sister of George III, the Queen of Christian VII from 1766, often called “Queen Matilda”. She became the lover of Struensee from early 1770. After the fall of Struensee, she was forced to divorce the King, incarcerated at Kronborg, Elsinore. She had to leave behind her two kids, crown prince Frederik and Louise Augusta when she was deported to Celle in British Hanover early June 1772. International publications took, after her deportation, her side against the new Danish government. Conspiracies for reinstating her on the throne in 1774 to 1775 were prevented by her premature death by scarlet fever in 1775, which triggered rumors of poisoning.

Camerer, Johann Friedrich (1720–1792), German legal scholar, archaeologist and author of a book-length pamphlet on the Struensee case, reprinting as appendix a selection of Struensee’s youthful essays.

Carl of Hessen (or **Charles of Hesse**, 1744–1836), prince of Hessen-Kassel, Christian VII’s brother-in-law (married to his sister Louise), in periods close to the King. From 1769 stadtholder in the Sleswick-Holstein Duchies and living in the city of Sleswick. From 1772 commander-in-chief of Norway. Conspired against the Guldberg government.

Carl, Johann Samuel (1677–1757), German radical pietist and physician. Hired by Christian VI as his physician but sacked and banished in 1742 in a censorship case. Struensee’s maternal grandfather and inspirator.

Christian VII (1749–1808), crowned Danish King as 16-year old 1766. Married the same year to the 15-year old English Caroline Matilda. Hit the honky-tonks of Copenhagen with prostitute mistress Støvlet-Katrine (Boots-Catherine) 1767. Appeared as talented but became increasingly mentally ill from late 1760s. Attached himself to his physician Struensee from 1768, thereby facilitating his grasp of power with Rantzau and Gähler during the summer of 1770. Remained in his position as king until his death in 1808 but had to leave power, in practice, to the coup-plotters of 1772 and later to his son, crown prince Frederik, from 1784.

Comphilopatris (The fellow-lover of the fatherland), see Laurits Jæger.

Comphilopatris Minor (The smaller fellow-lover of the fatherland), see Laurits Jæger.

Danneskiold-Laurvig, Christian Conrad (1723–1783), count, naval officer, from 1767 member of the leadership of army and navy, dismissed September 16 1770. He abducted, in 1765, the young actress Mette Marie Rose from the theatre which made Bie defend him in a fable which led, in turn, to Bie’s banishment.

- Dippel, Johan Konrad** (1673–1734), German radical pietist and alchemist, banished in 1719 from Altona to Bornholm in the Baltic Sea for libel and blasphemy in a censorship case. After his release in 1726, he joined Struensee's grandfather J. S. Carl in publication projects in Berleburg.
- Drakenberg, Christian** (1626(?)–1772), Danish-Norwegian sailor whose claim about his extreme age triggered several Press Freedom Writings.
- Dyssel, Johan Arndt** (1726–1796), priest and author of fiction as well as treatises on economy – his Press Freedom pamphlets address the latter.
- Eickstedt, Hans Henrik von** (1715–1801), general, in 1771 called to Copenhagen by Struensee to give military support during the “Fermentation” period. He teamed up, however, with the coup-plotters and provided the military support for the coup along with Köller. Received many high posts after the coup but was sacked from army leadership the year after.
- Ewald, Johannes** (1743–1781), author and poet, posthumously celebrated and a central figure in the Danish literary canon. Published one of the first Press Freedom pamphlets, *Philet* (1770), complaining over the sacking of Bernstorff, proposed in a semi-satirical pamphlet the taxation of bachelors (1771), satirized the officer side in the theater feud in the play *De brutale Klappere* (“The brutal Clappers”, 1771) and commented Press Freedom and the Great Clean-Up Party in the comedy *Harlequin Patriot* (1772).
- F***g**, se F. A. Pflueg.
- Fædder, Christian** (1712–1793), councilor, mayor, head of police in Copenhagen 1772 to 1788. As head of police active in the control and dismantling of Press Freedom. Rumored to be a “Shoe-brush”, i. e. an official owing his position to former lackey service.
- Falkenskiold, Seneca Otto von** (1738–1820), officer in several European armies, called back to Denmark by Struensee in 1770 to serve many different offices in the fields of military and foreign policy. Opponent of the plans against Russia. After the coup 1772, he received the hardest penalty (after the two executed Counts) with banishment to the islet Munkholm at Trondhjem; released in 1776.
- Filosof, Mikhail** (1732–1811), Russian general major and diplomat, stayed in Copenhagen 1766 to 1768 with Saldern, putting pressure on the Danish government to approach Russia and cleanse anti-Russian characters from court.
- Frederik, Hereditary Prince** (1753–1805), son of Frederik V and Juliana Maria. Stood after Crown Prince Frederik in the succession. Was ignored at court during the Struensee period and teamed up with the coup-plotters against him. After the coup, he became the formal leader of the reconstituted State Council and thus the next in the state after the King. Saw a special interest in the dismantling of Press Freedom.
- Frederik, Crown Prince** (1768–1839), Christian VII's son with Caroline Matilda, from 1784 regent, in 1808 crowned as Frederik VI. Struensee's tough, “natural” education program for young Frederik gave rise to debate during Press Freedom.
- Frederick the Great** (1712–1786), from 1740 Frederick II of Prussia, a central exponent for enlightened absolutism and a friend of enlightenment philosophers such as La Mettrie, Voltaire, and Maupertuis. His Cabinet rule inspired the anti-Bernstorff faction of Saint-Germain, Rantzau, Gähler, and Struensee. Several press freedom pamphlets are translations of essays by Frederick.
- Friberg, Nicolaus** (1741–1779), physician, naturalist author. As “A Patriot”, he wrote a piece against the lottery which was confiscated by the police briefly after the law of 20 October 1773.
- Gabel, Johann Jacob** (1730–1805), immigrant innkeeper from Alsace. Organized serving and gambling in the newly opened King's Garden in the summer of 1771. He had his hotel plans in the recently acquired Schulin mansion in Østergade spoiled when the house was ravaged during the Great Clean-Up Party 17 January 1772. Banished from Copenhagen after the coup, became a customs officer in Glückstadt by the Elbe.

- Gähler, Christine Sophie von** (1745–1792), married to Peter G., along with Mrs. Bülow and Mrs. Holstein “the Three Graces” with many admirers at court in the Struensee period, arrested with her husband after the coup.
- Gähler, Peter Elias von** (1718–1783), Danish general, married to Christine G. From 1760 he held different top positions in the Danish army, collaborated closely with Saint-Germain during his army reforms from 1762. Politically agreeing with Saint-Germain and Rantzau on Cabinet rule and the emancipation of peasants, as against Bernstorff. Survived as Saint-Germain fell from grace for the second time in 1767. Became a leading official for Struensee, arrested through four months after the coup. Surprisingly, as Struensee’s wing man, he escaped serious penalty, the Inquisition Commission merely banished him with his wife to Holstein.
- Gellert, Christian Fürchtegott** (1715–1769), German author whose Christian narrations and fables were famous in the period.
- George III** (1738–1820), King of Great Britain, the brother of Caroline Matilda. Pushed through her exile in the Hanoverian town of Celle by means of war threats against the Danish coup government.
- Giennemlæsende, Den**, see J. C. Schönheyder.
- Godiche, Andreas Hartvig** (1714–1769), printer in Skindergade 9, one of the technically most accomplished Copenhagen printshops. After his death, printing was continued by his widow.
- Godiche, Anna Magdalene** (?–1780), continued her late husband’s printshop as A. H. Godiches Efterleverske, which moved to Gammeltorv 14 in 1771. She printed a number of Press Freedom pieces, including the bestselling verdicts of Struensee and Brandt.
- Goeze, Johann Melchior** (1717–1786), Lutheran priest and persecutor of heretics in Hamburg, famous as the opponent of Lessing. Active in the prosecution of Georg Schade 1761 and in the closing down of Struensee’s periodical in 1763–64.
- Grave, Immanuel Christian** (1739–1820), Norwegian theologian, during his stay in Press Freedom Copenhagen, he published writings defending Norway and attacking the “Ladies’ Offices”. Is claimed to have published a piece under the pen name of “Philopatris Junior” (not to be confused with “Junior Philopatris”) and probably edited the *Critisk Journal* about writings after the coup.
- Gude, Henrik** (1702–1782), officer, under Struensee the commandant of Copenhagen, involved in the Christmas Eve Feud against the mutiny of the Guard, arrested after the coup but exonerated for participation in coup plans against the King.
- Guldberg, Ove** (1731–1808), theologian, author, statesman. Disciple of the theological rationalism of Rosenstand-Goiske, became a house teacher for Hereditary Prince Frederik and observed, from this position, developments at court. Published as “Philodanus” several influential writings in the Philopatris debate and anonymously the novel *Azan* in the state debt debate. Participated in the 1772 coup in a central role and supposedly decisive for attracting Juliana Maria and the Hereditary Prince to the coup group. Exploited the pamphlet medium in several organized preachers’ campaigns after the coup. Supported classic 1660 absolutism and fought with his more liberal friend Suhm over the latter’s political novel *Euphron*. Rose during the years after the coup to Cabinet Secretary, in reality dictator of the realm; ennobled as Høegh-Guldberg in 1777, toppled by the coup of 1784.
- Gunnerus, Johan Ernst** (1718–1773), Norwegian rationalist bishop and natural historian. Called to Copenhagen 1771 by Struensee with the aim of a university reform, resulting in several pamphlets by and about him.
- Gyldendal, Søren** (1742–1808), book dealer and publisher. Continued Kanneworff’s book shop in Silkegade from 1771. His first autonomous publications came out in 1772, for example, the third volume of *Fortegnelsen* beginning in September 1772. Contributed anonymous reviews to

- Fortegnelsen*. His publishing house “Gyldendal” remains one of the leading Danish publishing companies to this day.
- Hallager, Morten** (1740–1803), author, school principal, set up his own print shop in Rosengaarden 115 in 1771 and received recognition as the “second university printer”; also published 64 pamphlets during Press Freedom. Triggered a debate about the guilds with a pamphlet against *Den danske Argus*.
- Halle, Karoline** (1755–1826), actress, indirectly portrayed in the erotic pamphlet *Morpionade*, against which she initiated proceedings in 1774. As Karoline Walter she was later a celebrated prima donna in Sweden.
- Hammer, Morten** (1739–1809), priest, a stepson of C. P. Rothe and a stepbrother of Tyge Rothe, published a pamphlet of psalms about the Struensee-Brandt cases.
- Harboe, Ludvig** (1709–1783), theologian, historian, book collector, Bishop of Zealand from 1757. Collaborated on Danish history with Langebek. Confirmed, married, and anointed Christian VII; royal confessor from 1766. Participated in Guldberg’s pamphlet campaign of January to February 1772.
- Hee, Jørgen** (1714–1788), theologian, Dean at Holmens Church from 1764, gave the first thanksgiving sermon only two days after the coup, and the sermon text appeared as the first in the pamphlet campaign of the new regime. Rumored to have housed meetings of the coup-plotters at his home in Holmens Kanal. The confessor of Brandt during his imprisonment, published a booklet about Brandt’s conversion that became an international bestseller.
- Hellfried, Johan Carl Frederik von** (1739–1810), official, diplomat. From 1771 principal administrator in the College of Finances, participating in Struensee’s reforms. Later had an illustrious diplomatic career. Participated in Press Freedom with pieces against the “traveling Russian” and with controversial translations of Suhm.
- Helvétius, Claude-Adrien** (1715–1777), French philosopher, particularly known for his *De l’esprit* (1758), which was prohibited and burnt in Paris. His sensualism, emphasis on education, and his support to press freedom made him the favorite philosopher of Struensee.
- Hesselberg, Hans Jacob Henning** (1734–1809), leading officer under Struensee, active in the Christmas Eve Feud, under which he antagonized Köller. Arrested after the coup, released May 18 and banished to the Duchies.
- Høecke, Paul Herman** (?–1800), printer in Løvstræde 63 (1765–71) and Helliggeiststræde 141 (1772–1800). One of the active Press Freedom printshops with 86 prints.
- Holck, Hans** (1726–1783), journalist, author, philanthropist. Spearheaded the Copenhagen Address Office from 1759, which became the center for his many activities, beginning with the paper *Adresseavisen* the same year. With four weekly issues, it soon became Denmark’s leading paper with several thousand subscribers. Added, from 1767, the insert *Kritisk Journal* featuring book reviews, from 1769 an annual Copenhagen city guide, from 1772 the weekly *Aften-Posten* with the aim of producing serious news about the coup. Many Press Freedom pamphlets were debated in his media. Took many initiatives in the direction of practical enlightenment. He had signs with cadastral numbers put up on Copenhagen buildings, founded several free schools and Denmark’s first newsstand at Amagertorv in central Copenhagen.
- Holm, Peder** (1706–1777), theology professor at the University of Copenhagen. An orthodox Lutheran, he was against more recent theological currents like pietism and rationalism. Had refuted Dippel in his doctoral dissertation.
- Holstein, Amalie Sophie von** (1748–1823), married to Ulrik H., with Mrs. Bülow and Mrs. Gähler “The Three Graces” with many admirers at court under Struensee; the mistress of Brandt.
- Holstein, Ulrik Adolph von** (1731–1789), married to Amalie H., a Holsatian officer and Saint-Germain supporter, governor of Tønder in Sleswick. In 1771 Lord Mayor of Copenhagen under Struensee,

- organized the large reform of Copenhagen city rule from April 1771. Escaped penalties after the coup but was sent back to Tønder in July 1772 and shortly thereafter dismissed.
- Holzberg, Johan P.** (1712–1782), printer in Aalborg, published some ten Press Freedom pieces, among those one of the very first, triggering the debate about the *corvée*.
- Hume, David** (1711–1776), Scottish enlightenment philosopher; first Danish translation of Hume was in a Press Freedom Writing.
- Høpfner, Nicolai Christian** (1721–1782), printer in Skindergade 35, with privilege on *Kjøbenhavns Post-Rytter* (“The Copenhagen Mail Rider”) with the right to publish state regulations and decisions.
- Janson, Hector Friedrich** (1737–1805), German court preacher in Copenhagen from 1765, conservative and orthodox in his theology. Participated in Guldberg’s pamphlet campaign in January–February 1772.
- Jeremias**, see Christian Thura.
- Juliana Maria** (1729–1796), the second Queen of Frederik V, from 1766 Queen Dowager. The mother of Hereditary Prince Frederik whom she hoped to see on the throne instead of Crown Prince Frederik. Participated in the 1772 coup and was celebrated in many Press Freedom Writings as selected for this task by God. Claimed to be the mastermind behind the coup by many foreign writings.
- Junior Philopatris** (The Younger Lover of the Fatherland), see Søren Rosenlund.
- Jæger, Laurids** (1717–1773), priest in Vallensbæk, pamphleteer under the guises of “Philodaneias”, “Comphilopatris” and “Comphilopatris Minor”.
- Kanneworff, Andreas Jesper** (1722–1771) book trader with address in Silkegade 66. Published the biweekly *Fortegnelsen*, registering and reviewing Press Freedom Writings from 1771 to 1773. After Kanneworff’s death, Søren Gyldendal came into a sort of Mastery with his widow and published the third volume of *Fortegnelsen* from 1772 to 1773.
- Keith, Robert Murray** (1730–1795), British envoy in Copenhagen from 1771 to 1772, forced through the extradition of Caroline Matilda to Celle by threatening the Danish government with the British Navy. Excerpts of his memoirs about the time appeared 1849.
- Klopstock, Gottlieb Friedrich** (1724–1803), German poet, favored by Danish top politicians as J. H. E. Bernstorff and A. G. Moltke, living in Copenhagen from 1751 to 1766 with a Danish pension. Reference in many Press Freedom Writings.
- Koës, Georg Detlef Friedrich** (1731–1804), German banker. Founded, with the permission of Struensee, Danish lotteries in 1771 with drawings in Copenhagen, Altona, and later Wandsbek.
- Kofod Ancher, Peder** (1719–1788), law professor at the University of Copenhagen. Founded Danish legal history. Argued against his friend Suhm’s celebration of Free Speech in one piece, argued against J. Schumacher’s proposal of ignoring state debt in another.
- Köller, Georg Ludwig von** (1728–1811), German top officer in the Danish army. The main force on the officer side of the Theater Feud in November 1771, parodied as “Bürgerschreck” in Ewald’s *The Brutal Clappers*. As one of his officers was officially sanctioned after the Christmas Eve Feud 1771, Köller was embittered, put his regiment on the side of the Queen Dowager and became one of the coup-plotters. After the coup ennobled as Köller-Banner and entered the direction of the theater but fell from grace in November 1772 and sent to Rendsburg as a commandant.
- Krabbe, Frederik** (1725–1796), naval officer, in the circle around the 1772 coup, on whose behalf he asked Suhm on January 15 to write the draft of a constitution.
- Krohne, Johann Wilhelm Franz von** (1738–1787), German nobleman, official and adventurer. Held shifting positions at various small courts, met Caroline Matilda in Celle. In 1773, he criticized the court cases against Struensee and Brandt and foretold the Queen’s return to the throne. In

- 1778 banished to Christiansø in the Baltic Sea because of a Danish marital feud but escaped from the realm in early 1780s.
- Langebek, Jakob** (1710–1775), historian, state archivist. Began publishing sources and criticism in his *Danske Magazin*. 60 years of age, he threw himself into anonymous, satirical poetry in pamphlets like *Nye Prøve af Skrive-Frihed* and *Frimodige Tanker* (“New Example of Freedom to Write”; “Frank Thoughts”), increasing radicalization of the critique of court, King, and Struensee.
- Linnaeus, Carl von** (1707–1778), Swedish botanist. During Press Freedom, an economic writing by him was translated; he followed Danish debates and commented upon Suhm’s letter to the King.
- Lütken, Frederik** (1698–1784), officer and economic author. Claimed that the amount of people and of work was the source to the wealth of a nation. Between 1755 and 1761 published his *Oeconomiske Tanker* (“Economic Thoughts”), of which several chapters were censored. The brother of Otto L.
- Lütken, Otto Diderik** (1713–1788), priest and economic author, brother to Frederik L. Published in 1760 the classic *Undersøgninger angaaende Statens almindelige Økonomi* (“Investigations on the General Economy of the State”) and participated in the debates on the lotteries and the corvée during Press Freedom.
- Luxdorph, Bolle Willum** (1716–1788), official with a long career in the Danish Chancellery, book collector and scholar. In the period often spelled “Lüxdorph” and pronounced with a *y*. Organized 1770–75 the collection of Press Freedom Writings for his private library. Participated in 1772 to 1773 in the attempts of the Chancellery to restrict Press Freedom legislation.
- Mallet, Paul-Henri** (1730–1807), Genevan academic, from 1752 literature professor at the University of Copenhagen, with influential international publications on Scandinavian and Danish history and politics, supporting Danish absolutism.
- Martfelt, Christian** (1728–1790), national economist and 1769 a leading member of the Landhusholdningsselskabet – the Agricultural Society. Participated under the pen name of “Philocosmus” in the Philopatrias debate with planned-economy arguments against Guldberg’s “Philodanus”. Recognized the Struensee government and may have defended Caroline Matilda in a piece; such rumors may have influenced the prohibition of his large 1774 book on the grain trade of Denmark-Norway.
- la Mettrie, Julien Offray de** (1709–1751), French philosopher, famous for the materialism of his *l’Homme Machine* (1748), mentioned in several pamphlets, for example in Scheffer and Brun. According to rumors, Struensee was strongly influenced by him but he himself maintained that his materialism came out of his own medical observations.
- Misalazoneias** (The Hater of Falsity), see J. C. Bie.
- Møller, Nicolaus** (1733–1806), printer. In the 1770s, his printshop in Frederiksberggade 230 was seen as the most prestigious in Copenhagen, but he also published 17 Press Freedom pieces
- Moltke, Adam Gottlob von** (1710–1792), count, leading Danish official under Frederik V., fell from grace briefly after Christian VII’s ascension to the throne 1766.
- Montesquieu, Charles-Louis de Secondat** (1689–1755), French Baronet and philosopher, inspired many with his ideas about the tripartition of powers, as well as his distinction between despotism and monarchy, in his *De l’esprit des loix* (1748), Danish version 1770 to 1771. A selection of his *Lettres persanes* appeared as a Press Freedom Writing.
- Myhre, Hans** (1734–1781), chaplain at the Trinitatis Church. Received a wicked review in Bynch’s *Homiletic Journal*, probably leading to the prohibition of the journal.
- Münter, Balthasar** (1735–1793), rationalist theologian and pastor at the German St. Petri Church. Informed about the coup and central participant in Guldberg’s pamphlet campaign January to

February 1772. Struensee's confessor in prison; published a book on Struensee's conversion that became a Europe-wide bestseller.

- Nissen, Hans Nicolai** (1732–1771), councilor and mayor in Copenhagen. Died 10 February 1771, reportedly after having read the pamphlet *En saare mærkværdig Tildragelse* (“A very peculiar Event”), that satirically portrayed him as a “Shoe Brush”, an official who had received his position only on his background as a lackey.
- Nimsen, Frederik** (1737–1802), Colonel and commander of the “Flying Guard” protecting the court during its stay at Hirschholm; simultaneously opponent to Struensee and involved in the coup plans against him.
- Nyerup, Rasmus** (1759–1829), historian of literature, librarian in Suhm's private library, published many important writings and documents pertaining to Press Freedom such as *Luxdorphiana* (1791, primarily on Press Freedom cases), *Langebekiana* (1794) and *Suhmiana* (1799).
- Oeder, Georg Christian** (1728–1791), German botanist and economist with career as an official in Copenhagen where he planned the prestigious book work *Flora Danica* on Danish plants. Worked for the emancipation of peasants, both in his authorship and in Struensee's College of Finance and the Agricultural Commission. Participated in the debate about the corvée, after the coup banished to Oldenburg.
- Østrup, Jørgen Jensen** (1725–1780), lower chaplain at St. Nikolaj Church. Participated in Guldberg's pamphlet campaign January–February 1772.
- Ohm, Martin Peter** (ca. 1739–1802), priest, published as M. P. O. a couple of pieces against deism and rationalism during Press Freedom; in 1772 the periodical *Borgeren i Guds Rige* 1–24 (“The Citizen in the Realm of God”), later a priest in the Danish West Indies.
- Osten, Adolph Siegfried von der** (1726–97), diplomat and statesman, foreign minister in the Struensee period and until 1773. Member of the reconstructed State Council February 1772, banished to Aalborg as a governor in March 1773.
- Paaseende Bias, Den**, see J. L. Bynch
- Panning, David** (?–?). Struensee's friend from youth, with whom he published in Altona the journal *Zum Nutzen und Vergnügen* (“To Use and Pleasure”). In 1771, called to Copenhagen as the Cabinet Secretary of Struensee, jailed after the coup.
- Pflug, Frederik Andreas** (1726–1812), officer, manufacturer for the army, economic and dramatic author. Connected to the faction of Saint-Germain, participated in Struensee's agricultural commission, published a small handful of Press Freedom Writings.
- Philibert, Claude** (1709–1784), Swiss book dealer and printer, established himself in 1755 on the corner of Kongens Nytorv and Lille Kongensgade, which he made a center of French literature and high-quality book printing in Copenhagen. Campaigned for public libraries in Copenhagen, published during Press Freedom the francophone periodical *Choix* and a few pamphlets by Hellfried.
- Philaethes** (The Lover of Truth), see Jacob Baden
- Philander** (The Lover of Humans), see J. A. Dyssel.
- Philet** (The Lover), see Johannes Ewald.
- Philocosmus** (The Lover of the World), see Christian Martfelt.
- Philodaneias** (The Lover of Denmark), see Laurits Jæger.
- Philodanus** (The Lover of Denmark), see Ove Guldberg
- Philokalus** (The Lover of Beauty), see Benjamin Sporon.
- Philomathes** (The Lover of Knowledge), unknown writer.
- Philopatreias** (The Lover of the Fatherland), see J. C. Bie.
- Philopatreias Junior** (The Lover of the Fatherland, the Younger), see I. C. Grave.
- Philopatris**, English form of Philopatreias.
- Philoplebis** (The Lover of the People), unknown writer

- Prahl, Niels** (1724–1792), student, author, journalist, editor, accountant. Employed at the Address Office with Hans Holck. Published the periodical *Kjøbenhavn's Allehaande* (“Copenhagen All-spice”) between 1772 and 1773. Wrote one of the few serious pieces on the Struensee case in the spring of 1772. Got into problems because of a pamphlet on the case against Christian Thura in 1773: it was confiscated and prohibited, and Prahl the eternal student was rebuked by the Academic Council of the University.
- Pram, Christen Henriksen** (1756–1821), Danish-Norwegian poet, official, editor of the periodical *Minerva*. Perhaps he debuted with the anonymous softporn pamphlet *Morpionade*, which triggered a Press Freedom case in 1774.
- Priebst, Christian Michael** (1724–1774), priest at the Citadel Church, participated in the preacher campaign in January to February 1772.
- Proft, Christian Georg** (1736–1793), publisher and book dealer at the Bourse in Copenhagen. Was prosecuted in 1773 for selling illegal writings through his colporteur Bardewijk and was sentenced to a large fine.
- Rahbek, Knud Lyne** (1760–1830), literary scholar, professor, editor of *Minerva*. Staged the first productions of Ewald’s *Harlequin Patriot*. Published in the 1820s *Erindringer af mit Liv* (“Memoirs of My Life”) with childhood reminiscences from the Press Freedom Period.
- Rantzau-Ascheberg, Schack Carl von** (1717–1789), Holsatian Count and top officer, often just called Rantzau. Allied himself during the 1760s with Saint-Germain and Gähler in the top of the army in a faction against Bernstorff, supporting emancipation of peasants, the full sovereignty of the king, Cabinet rule, as well as skepticism against Russia and the Danish Estate Exchange policy. Knew Struensee and Brandt from Altona and appeared in 1770 at the center of the new government. Was alienated by Struensee through 1771 as he refused to follow Rantzau in aggression plans against Russia and would not exempt him from a new law about debt collection. Became, with Beringskiold, a motor in the coup plans against Struensee and personally undertook the arrest of the Queen during the coup. After only half a year, however, he was screened out by the new in power.
- Reimarus, Johann Albert Heinrich** (1729–1814), German physician, son of the secret enlightenment philosopher Samuel Reimarus in Hamburg, old friend of Struensee, published an economic pamphlet on grain trade.
- Reventlow, Ditlev** (1712–1783), Holsatian landowner, top official, member of the State Council until Struensee dismissed him in 1770. Was the tough teacher of Christian VII as a kid from 1755.
- Reverdil, Elie-Salomon-François** (1732–1808), French-Swiss teacher of the young Christian VII, later Cabinet secretary. Was an early supporter of peasant emancipation in the 1760’s but was swiftly banished from court in 1767, maybe because of Saldern. Returned to the court in 1771 but again banished after the coup. His memoirs are an important source to the Danish court. Cousin of Roger.
- Riegels, Niels Ditlev** (1755–1802), historian and freethinker, protected by Suhm, studied theology during Press Freedom, became anti-orthodox and embarked on a long feud with bishop Balle. In the 1780s, he became a provocative pamphleteer.
- Rømeling, Hans Henrik** (1707–1775), Admiral, 1772 member of the new State Council.
- Roger, André**, (1721–1759), Swiss diplomat and author, private secretary of J. H. E. Bernstorff as of 1752. Published in 1757 *Lettres sur le Danemark* celebrating the Danish absolutist government. Cousin of Reverdil.
- Rose, Christoffer Pauli** (1723–1784), leading actor at the Royal Theater. In 1765 he complained about the abduction by Count Danneskiold-Laurvig of his daughter Mette Marie Rose, which led Bie to defend the Count in a fable leading, in turn, to Bie’s banishing sentence. In 1771, Rose played an active role in the Theater Feud, defending theater chief Bredal.

- Rose, Mette Marie** (1745–1819), actress, daughter of Christoffer R., in 1765 abducted by count Daneskiold-Laurvig, whom Bie defended. The case had as a result that the talented Rose gave up her acting career.
- Rosenlund, Søren** (1737[?]-1775), author, was in the Danish West Indies in the 1760's and attempted to live from his many pamphlets during early Press Freedom, in particular under the pen name of "Junior Philopatris" in and after the Philopatris debate, on economical, West Indian and other subjects, among them extreme antisemitism. Was an eyewitness and perhaps participant in the Great Clean-Up Party 17 January 1772 and one of the best sources to its extension.
- Rosenstand-Goiske, Peder** (1704–1769), theology professor at the University of Copenhagen, introduced theological rationalism ("neology") influenced by Christian Wolff in Denmark; many younger priests were influenced by him. Became involved in a censorship case ending in the banishment of Georg Schade to Christiansø in 1761. Father of Peder R.-G.
- Rosenstand-Goiske, Peder** (1752–1803), son of the above, dramatist and journalist, founded and wrote from 1771, anonymously, the first Danish theater periodical *Den dramatiske Journal*, which triggered the Theater Feud November 1771.
- Rosentorne** (Thorns of Roses), see P. C. Abildgaard.
- Rothe, Casper Peter** (1724–1784), landowner and historian, authored a number of biographies. During Press Freedom, he published the first pamphlet in the Shoebrush debate which would trigger the Lackey Law of February 1771. Half-brother of Tyge R.
- Rothe, Tyge** (1731–1795), author and historian, half-brother of Casper R. Was conducive to the introduction of "patriotism" in Denmark with his *Kiærlighed til Fædrelandet* ("Love of the Fatherland", 1759) and enjoyed, with his knotty, forbidding style the status of a sage. A top official under Struensee, he mocked his benefactor in a pamphlet immediately after the coup.
- Roths, C. A.** non-existent official, given as the author of a counter-pamphlet against the official Danish version of the Struensee case, featuring the Queen Dowager as major villain. Not to be confused with the eponymous father of C. P. Rothe.
- Saint-Germain, Claude-Louis** (1707–1778), French Count, intellectual and General, with experience from more than 50 battles. Was called, in 1760, to lead and reform the Danish army which gave him tough opponents and devoted supporters alike. Among the latter were Rantzau and Gähler who turned against the State Council government of noblemen and preferred Cabinet rule inspired by Prussia. Banished from Denmark several times (1766, 1767) but continued being salaried and exerting influence, most lately during the Struensee period. Finally banished by the coup government in May 1772.
- Saldern, Caspar von** (1710–1786), Gottorpien-Russian count, Russian envoy in Denmark in the latter half of the 1760s. Collaborated with Filosofof in using the Estate Exchange negotiations aggressively as leverage to demand the removal of sceptics against Russia from political power in Denmark, e. g. Saint-Germain, Rantzau, Reventlow, and many others.
- Sames, Carl Wilhelm** (1724–1789), German-Danish officer with top positions in the army from 1761. Favored by Struensee with whom he fell out, whereafter he supported Rantzau and was sent to Glückstadt as a commandant when the latter was banished in 1772. Here, he might have supported the coup plans for Caroline Matilda in 1774 to 1775.
- Sandsigeren** (the Truth-Teller), see Christian Thura.
- Sarti, Giuseppe** (1729–1802), Italian composer and music teacher, royal music director in Copenhagen 1756, from 1770 leader of the Royal Theater where he wrote, among much else, the music to Bredal's *Tronfølgen i Sidon* ("The Succession in Sidon") which triggered the Theater Feud in 1771.
- Shack-Rathlou, Joachim Otto** (1728–1800), Count, official. After many high financial posts in the 1760s he was dismissed under Struensee but returned to the State Council after the coup as

- prime minister. He appeared as the de facto leader of the post-coup government in its early years where he proved a strong force in rolling back many of Struensee's reforms.
- Schade, Georg** (1712–1795), deist philosopher of nature and an old friend of Struensee in Altona from where he was banished to Christiansø in 1761 for publishing a blasphemous treatise on reincarnation. Released in 1772 on Struensee's initiative.
- Scheffer, Frederik Christian** (1737–1776), theologian, author. Industrious participant in Press Freedom with satirical as well as serious pamphlets, defending the clergy in the Philopatris debate, but also publishing one of the first writings alleging a relation between Struensee and the Queen. From 1772 priest in Fredensborg.
- Scheibe, Johan Adolf** (1708–1776), German composer and musical author with a long and diverse career in Copenhagen and the provinces. Made his living as a translator in Copenhagen and contributed to Press Freedom with writings under the pen name of a traveling Russian criticizing conditions in Denmark.
- Schimmelmann, Ernst H. von** (1747–1831), son of Heinrich S., Danish-German Count and politician. In 1774 active in the conspiracy attempting to reinstate Caroline Matilda on the throne. Participated in the movement for stopping the slave trade which he considered uneconomical.
- Schimmelmann, Heinrich C. von** (1724–1782), Danish-German Count, tradesman, tycoon, and politician. Father of Ernst s. Owner of plantations in the West Indies and sugar refineries in Copenhagen. From 1767 in the Commerce College, in long period in practice minister of finance, survived the Struensee period. Economically a mercantilist and a supporter of state companies.
- Schmettau, Woldemar Friederich von** (1749–1794), son of Woldemar H. S., author and diplomat, was given the task in 1772 as a Danish envoy to confiscate German writings on the Struensee affair in Leipzig.
- Schmettau, Woldemar Hermann von** (1719–1785), Holsatian Count and General in the Danish-Norwegian army, sacked in 1767 after a controversy with Saint-Germain. Published several free-thinking pamphlets, e. g. in 1771 the periodical *Blätter, aus Liebe zur Wahrheit geschrieben*, (Leaves written out of the Love of Truth) which triggered, due to the action of Adam Struensee, prohibition and a long-drawn court case against him. The case, however, was given up without a sentence in 1773.
- Schmidt, Christen** (1727–1804) priest at Juliana Maria's Fredensborg court from 1769, informed about the coup, later bishop in Norway.
- Schønheyder, Johan Christian** (1742–1803), rationalist theologian, from 1769 court preacher at Christiansborg, 1771 parish priest at Trinitatis Church. Participated in Guldberg's pamphlet campaign for the coup January–February 1772, as well as in the thanksgiving campaign of December 1773. Probably behind the pen name of "Den Giennemlæsende" (The Examiner) attacking and threatening J. L. Bynch.
- Schou, Jacob Henric** (1745–1840), theologian, law scholar. Among the anonymous reviewers in *Fortegnelsen*. Published the collection of ordinances *Schous Forordninger* (1777–1825); was a source to the conspiracy against Struensee.
- Schumacher, Andreas** (1726–1790), official, Cabinet secretary 1768–71 and again 1772. Authored the precise text of many of Struensee's early Cabinet orders, including the Press Freedom Ordinance. Banished by Hereditary Prince Frederik to a peripheral governor post 24 December 1772.
- Schumacher, Jens Reimert** (1742–1774), government official, published a pamphlet asking whether a regent is obliged to pay the debts of his predecessor, triggering an important debate. From July 1773 governor in the Danish West Indies.
- Sneedorff, Jens Schelderup** (1724–1764), author, official, professor at the Academy of Sorø, inspired by Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Mirabeau. Published, among other things, *Om den borg-*

- erlige Regiering* (On Civil Government, 1757) and the periodical *Den patriotiske Tilskuer* (“The Patriotic Observer”, 1761–1763), a central spokesman for enlightened, “patriotic” absolutism.
- Spinoza, Baruch** (1632–1777), Dutch-Jewish philosopher. Infamous for his pantheism or atheism and his defense of Press Freedom. A reference in several Press Freedom pamphlets, for example in Martin Brun.
- Sporon, Benjamin Georg** (1741–1796), author, occupied with linguistic correctness, participated as “Philokalus” in the Philopatrias debate and defended Suhm against Kofod Ancher regarding freedom to write. Feuded with Jacob Baden whom he later befriended.
- Stampe, Henrik** (1713–1789), law scholar, attorney general from 1753 and member of the Danish Chancellery. Hesitated in restricting Press Freedom 1772, yet assumedly collaborated on the 20 October 1773 legislation which finally dismantled Press Freedom.
- Statsmanden** (The Statesman), see J. L. Bynch.
- Stein, August Friederich** (ca. 1728–1778), printer, active from 1765 in Skidenstræde 171, published no less than 108 Press Freedom Writings, for example by learned figures such as Suhm and Langebek.
- “Støvlet-Katrine”** (Boots-Catherine). alias **Anna Cathrine Benthagen** (1745–1805), prostitute and the lover of Christian VII in 1767. Banished to Holstein January 1768 by the King after pressure from ministers who threatened the King with popular uprisings enraged by their relationship.
- Storp, Andreas** (ca. 1712–1797), aldermand in the Brewers’ Guild and councilor in the Copenhagen city council; attacked by Christian Bagge in the brewers’ feud.
- Struensee, Adam** (1708–1791), theologian and the father of J. F. Struensee. Priest in Halle, Prussia, and a proponent of the Hallensian “state pietism” of A. Francke. Came to Altona in 1757 as a Dean; in 1759, he became *Generalsuperintendent* (Archbishop) of Sleswick-Holstein in Rendsburg, while his son remained in Altona. A moralizing piece of his youth was translated during Press Freedom, just like more or less fictive correspondence with his imprisoned son.
- Struensee, Carl August** (1735–1804), son of Adam S., elder brother of J. F. Struensee who called him to Denmark as the leader of the new College of Finance in 1771. Imprisoned and banished after the coup, later with a political career in Prussia.
- Struensee, Johann Friedrich** (1737–1772), German doctor from Altona; from 1768 Christian VII’s physician and from September 1770 in practice dictator of Denmark where he introduced Press Freedom and a stream of other pieces of legislation with inspiration in radical enlightenment. His ambition, his carelessness and his relationship to the Queen contributed to a growing pamphlet storm against him over the summer of 1771, finally culminating in his fall January 17 1772, after which he was imprisoned, prosecuted, and executed April 28 along with his friend Enevold Brandt.
- Sturz, Helferich Peter** (1736–1779), German official and author, for example to a couple of Press Freedom Writings. Protected by J. H. E. Bernstorff and after his death by Struensee, after whose fall he was dismissed and arrested for four months.
- Suhm, Peter Frederik** (1728–1798), historian, book collector and independent intellectual. Lived 15 years in Trondhjem, Norway, co-founded the Norwegian Academy of Sciences and continued supporting Norway in the double monarchy. Wrote large historical works, participated in Press Freedom with several radical pamphlets, particularly his famous *To the King* after the 1772 coup, and in 1774 the political novel *Euphron*, a private version of which contains 42 “rules of government”, an early declaration of human rights. Outlined a proto-democratic constitution sketch in January 1772. His Friend Guldberg, now dictator, censored him, and he stopped interfering in politics by 1775. His *Secret Informations* is a source to court life of the period.
- Svare, Lars Nielsen** (1720–1777), printer, established printshop 1757 in Skindergade 76, published some 75 Press Freedom pieces.

- Sverdrup, Bernt** (1735–1809), Norwegian priest, from 1770 at the pietist Vajsenhus Church in Nytorv. Published a pamphlet against Struensee’s plans to change the Vajsenhus to a high school.
- Swedenborg, Emmanuel** (1688–1772), Swedish naturalist and mystic, originally a disciple of Dippel. An introduction by E. Balling and translated originals appeared during Press Freedom.
- Thiele, Johan Rudolph** (1736–1815), printer, set up his shop in Peder Huitfeldtstræde 36 in March 1770, later Helliggeiststræde. An important printshop for many radical pamphleteers, published 133 Press Freedom Writings and many woodcuts and coppers.
- Thott, Otto** (1703–1785), official, book collector, prime minister. Thott’s mercantilism dominated Danish economic policy in mid-eighteenth century. He was sacked by Struensee in 1770. Member of the new State Council from 1772. Collected one of the largest libraries of Europe in his mansion at Kongens Nytorv.
- Thura, Christian** (1730–1787), theologian, author. Contributed with furious pamphlets based on a harsh interpretation of orthodox Lutheranism, turned against Philopatris and immorality. They contributed to triggering the debate on whoring through the summer of 1771. His book-length publication *Den patriotiske Sandsiger* (“The Patriotic Truth-Teller”) published after the coup gave rise to prosecution against him. In the spring of 1773, he was sentenced for lese-majesty and banished to the islet of Munkholm outside Trondhjem. The penalty was mildened to banishment to Bornholm in the Baltic Sea in 1779.
- Uldall, Peter** (1743–1798), lawyer, from 1783 attorney general, book collector. Defense lawyer in the cases against Struensee and Caroline Matilda.
- Unzer, Johann August** (1727–1799), physician and editor of the medical periodical *Der Arzt* (“The Doctor”) in Altona. Struensee’s satires against him led to the 1764 censoring of Struensee’s periodical *Zum Nutzen und Vergnügen*.
- Ussing, Henrik** (1743–1820), a priest, involved in a manifold of disputes and court cases. Had his debut during Press Freedom with a large pamphlet in the debate over the eternity of Hell.
- Veldømmende, Den** (the Well-Judging), a pseudonym used by J. L. Bynch, later by Martin Brun.
- Voltaire, François de** (1694–1778), French author, satirist and philosopher. Sent, in January 1771, a long celebrating poem to Christian VII on the occasion of Press Freedom. It was published in Copenhagen in both a French and a Danish pamphlet version.
- Wivet, Frederik Wilhelm** (1728–1790), lawyer, attorney general as of 1763, prosecutor in the cases against Struensee and Thura.
- Wolff, Christian** (1679–1754), German rationalist philosopher, disciple of Leibniz, had a strong influence in Denmark in the eighteenth century, particularly in the rationalist, “neologist” current of theology.
- Zadeck, Martin** (?–1769), an old Swiss peasant whose prophecies were published after his death, also in Danish as a Press Freedom Writing.

Archive Material, Papers, and Periodicals

Royal Library, Copenhagen/ Det Kongelige Bibliotek

Danmarks Saga udi Kong Christian den Syvendes Tiid fra hans Födsel Ao 1749 til 1772, NKS, 1120 k, upagineret (Søren Rosenlund)

Uldals Fortegnelse over Skrifter udkomne efter Trykkefriheden 1771–75, NKS, 1216 g, 4

J. C. Bie, Originale Moralske Fabler i bunden Stil (afskrift), NKS 1042, 8 og NKS 205 k, 8

J. C. Bie, Prædiken i Hvidovre Kirke d. 6. juli 1769, Thott 410, 4

Copenhagen City Archives/ Københavns Stadsarkiv

The Magistrate/ Magistraten

Dokumenter i anledning af Magistratens afsættelse og restitution

Struensees kabinetsordrer m. v. 1770–72

North Zealand Museum/ Museum Nordsjælland

Struensee-samlingen på Hørsholm Egns Museum (maskinskreven bogfortegnelse)

N. F. Thorsens Samling af Litteratur vedrørende Struensee, Brandt og Caroline Mathilde (maskinskreven fortegnelse fra Rosenkilde og Bagger)

National Archives/ Rigsarkivet

Danish Chancellery/ Danske kancelli

1. departement: Kancelliets brevbøger, 1771–1773

1. departement: Kancelliets breve, 1771–1773

Indlæg til Sjællandske Tegnelser 1773

Royal and City Court/ Hof- og stadsretten:

Domprotokol til sager ved 1. instans 1772–74

Pådomte sager 1772–73

Voteringsprotokol i sager ved 1. instans 1772–73

Supreme Court/ Højesteret:

Voteringsprotokol 1775

Cabinet Secretariat/ Kabinetssekretariatet:

Kongelige ordrer til kabinetssekretariatet 1766–1771

Materiale fra Struensees kabinetsarkiv 1771–1772

Schumachers koncepter til kgl. Kabinetsordrer 1772–1773

Copenhagen Police/ Københavns politi:

Politimesterens korrespondanceprotokol 1766–1774

Manuscript Collection/ Håndskriftsamlingen:

IV. Danmark-Norges almindelige historie

Newspapers, Periodica and Yearbooks/ Aviser, periodika og årbøger

(not included here are periodica categorized as Press Freedom Writings and part of the Luxdorff Collection)

Auserlesene Bibliothek der neuesten deutschen Litteratur 1772

Bibliothek for nyttige Skrifter, 1772

Choix de nouveaux Opuscules sur toutes Sortes de Sujets, 1771–72

De til Forsendelse med Posten allene privilegerede Kiøbenhavnske Tidender (Berlingske Tidende), 1765–75

Den anden Argus, 1771

Den danske Argus, 1771–72

Den danske Mercurius, 1770

Den Dramatiske Journal, 1771–72

Den medicinske Tilskuer, 1771

Fortegnelse paa alle de Skrifter, som siden Trykfriheden ere udkomne, 1771–73⁷⁹⁴

Fruentimmer-Tidenden, 1767–70.

Gazette de Leyde, 1770–1772

Kiøbenhavns kongelig allene privilegerede Adresse- Contoirs med Posten forsendende Efterretninger (Adresseavisen), 1765–75

Kiøbenhavns Kongelig privilegerede Adresse-Contoirs Kritiske Journal, 1770–77

Kiøbenhavns Aften-Post, 1772–75

Kiøbenhavns Allehaande, 1773

Kiøbenhavns Lærde Efterretninger, 1770–1773

Kiøbenhavns politiske Veyviser, 1770–80

Kjøbenhavns Post Rytter, 1770–72

Magazin for patriotiske Skribentere, hvor i politiske, moralske og historiske Materier uden Bekostning indføres, begyndt med Skrivefriheden, 1771

Reichs Post-Reuter, 1773

Staats-und Gelehrte Zeitung des Hamburgischen unpartheyischen Correspondenten, 1772

Zum Nutzen und Vergnügen, 1763–64

794 Including variations of the title: *Fortsættelse af Fortegnelsen paa de Skrifter, Trykfriheden har givet Anledning til; Fortegnelsen over alle udkomne Skrifter siden Trykfriheden; and Kritisk Fortegnelse over alle de Skrifter, som siden Trykfriheden ere udkomne.*

The Luxdorph Collection with addenda

This list contains pamphlets, periodicals, books, prints, etc. from the Luxdorph Collection of Press Freedom Writings which are quoted, referred, or mentioned in this book, as well as additional Press Freedom Writings located in other sources. A complete register of the Collection plus additional writings can be found in Horstbøll, Langen and Stjernfelt *Grov Konfækt. Tre vilde år med trykkefrihed 1770–73*, Copenhagen 2020, and a catalogue of the Luxdorph Collection can also be found in the digitized version of the Collection at the Royal Library website <https://tekster.kb.dk/tfs>.

Below, the pamphlets are organized with anonymous pamphlets first, in which authors have not been identified, alphabetized according to titles. Under single authors, pamphlets with author indication on the title page – e. g., “Brun, Martin” – are listed before anonymous or pseudonymous pamphlets of which the author has been identified, indicated by square brackets – e. g., “[Brun, Martin]”. Identifications are undertaken with reference to Chr. Bruun’s *Bibliotheca Danica*, Ehrencron-Müller’s author lexicon, or the authors’ own research. Pseudonymous pamphlets without author identification are listed relative to pseudonyms.

Publication dates are given (in brackets) after the first advertising date in *Adresseavisen* or *Berlingske Tidende*. When only publication year (and month) is stated, this indicates that no advertising of the pamphlet has been found.

Press Freedom Writings

- [anonymous], *Adspredte Tanker samlede ved Søe-Kanten af Cronborg Fæstning opskrevne ved Dronning Caroline Matildas Bortreyse*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1772 (5 June 1772).
- [anonymous], *Afskeeds-Tale til Dronningen. ifra det Danske Publico*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (5 June 1772).
- [anonymous], *Aftens Promenader eller Samtale mellem Prudentius og Simplicius om Forbud at brænde Brændeviin af Rug og Byg i de 2de Aar, som et sikkert Raad imod høye Korn-Priser; samt om Korn-Brændeviins og Sukker-Brændeviins forskellige Dyder og Qualitæter*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (17 July 1771).
- [anonymous], *Aften-Tanker, i anledning af den for nogle bedrøvelige; men for begge Riger glædelige Syttende Januarii 1772. af den som Altid bær sit Aag*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, (24 February 1772).
- [anonymous], *Aller-underdanigst Taksigelse til Den vor Største og viiseste Monark [...] for de Aller-høystpriselige og viiseste Indretninger udi i Staden Kiøbenhavn i Aaret 1771, allerunderdanigst insinueret af Samtlige Stadens Borgere den 15 April 1771*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1771 (22 April 1771).
- [anonymous], *Almuens Øine opklarede i Anledning af den Daarlighed at vove sine Penge*, Copenhagen: N. Møller, 1771 (21 May 1771).
- [anonymous], *Ausführliche Nachricht von der geheimen Verschwörung welche in Kopenhagen in der Nacht von 16ten auf den 17ten Januar dieses 1772sten Jahres glücklich entdeckt, [...] nach dem Dänischen Original*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772.

- [anonymous], *Bønder-Pigernes og Karlens Fryde-Sang, over Deres Haab i en Frydefuld Sommer, under den oplivede, haabefulde og naadige Kong Christian den Syvende. Under den bekiendte Bonde-Melodie: Hop! hop! hey! Min søde Siel! Jeg her leve skal din Træl etc. Opsat paa alle Deres Vegne af Skoleholderen i Brøndbye*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772.
- [anonymous], *Børsternes Endeligt 1771. Beskrevet af Jens Gaardskarl*, no place or printer, 20 February 1771.
- [anonymous], *Brev om nogle af de siden Trykke-Friheden udkomne Skrifter*, Copenhagen 1771, no printer indicated.
- [anonymous], *Critique de la lettre de Mr. Suhm*, Copenhagen: [A. F. Stein?], 1772.
- [anonymous], *De danske Skriverses Skiebne ved Skrivefrihedens Indskrænkelse, skreven af Philomathes den 10 October 1771*, Copenhagen: J.R. Thiele, 1771 (29 October 1771).
- [anonymous], *De Danske Skriverses ulyksalige Skiæbne, som en Følge af hemmelige Lands-Forræderes Intriguer, oplyst for KONGEN til forventende allernaadigst Forandring*, no place or printer, 1771 (6 September 1771).
- [anonymous], *De nu forladte og forhadte Nat-Nymfers Svane-Sang*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (4 February 1772).
- [anonymous], *De troe Israeliters Glæde over deres Befrielse fra Hamans Kløer. Tilkiendegivet i Anledning af Dagen den 29. Januarij 1772*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.
- [anonymous], *Den Danske Frue Veneris Klage-Sang. I Anledning af den Forstyrrelse, som skeede Natten imellem den 17de og 18de Jan. 1772. paa Hendes Tempel paa Østergade, samt og de andre Smaae-Capeller*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (7 February 1772).
- [anonymous], *Den Danske gamle Nordmand Christian Jacobsen Drackenbergs adskillige Syner og underlige Hændelser*, Copenhagen: Borups Efterl. 1771 (18 February 1771).
- [anonymous], *Den forvandlede Gedebuk*, The Hague (?), no printer indicated, 1771 (3 April 1771).
- [anonymous], *Den i kort Tid ophøvede men ligesaa hastig nedstødte store Nordiske Tyv eller Struensees rette og sande Caracteer. Forfattet af en Jammerlig Skribent*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (3 February 1772).
- [anonymous], *Den lille C***s Glæde over at hun slap frie fra at blive forført fra *B*s Voldsomheder samt hendes Taksigelse til Forsynet som ved en ny Tildragelse hialp hende til at bevare sin Kyskhed og Ære*, Copenhagen: L. A. Svare, 1772 (13 March 1772).
- [anonymous], *Den lære om Helvedes Evighed prøvet, og dens skræksomme Følger viste af en Selvtænkende. Betænkning over den Lære om Arvesynden*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (6 September 1771).
- [anonymous], *Den paa sin egen Regning flyttende Trops bedrøvelige Udtog af de smukke Huse Natten imellem den 17 og 18 Januarii*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (13 March 1772).
- [anonymous], *Der erste Besuch des geistlichen Docter M**. bey den als Staats-Verbrecher inhaftierten Gr***, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (20 March 1772).
- [anonymous], *Det Gevaudanske Dyr*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (19 March 1771).
- [anonymous], *Discours imellem en fremmet Reisende, en Officer og en Borger ved Navn den Tænkende. Handlende 1. Om de høie Priser paa Brød og Fødevahre, 2. Om det Fattiges Væsen, 3. Om Skifter, 4. Om Procuratores Antal for Underretterne, 5. Om Gade Løgter, 6. Om Gade Vægterne*, no place or printer indicated, 1771 (29 April 1771).
- [anonymous], *Draaber imod Qvalm og Sorg for de skadelidende Brødre og Søstre, som den 17 og 18 Januarii bleve ruinerede. Distilleret af en gammel Søster, som med et oprigtig Hierte tager Deel i deres tilføjede Skade. H...K...*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (15 July 1772).
- [anonymous], *Dronningens Eftermæle for den 17de Januarii 1772*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (27 January 1772).

- [anonymous], *En betydelig Samtale imellem en Pige og en gammel Kiærling, virkelig holdet paa Amager-Torv, om disse senere Tider og Skrifter og sandfærdig berettet af en Tilhørende*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (24 February 1772).
- [anonymous], *En brødløs Lakeys begrædelige Skrivelse til sin Farbroder vel bekendt Kornpuger i Jylland angaaende Rugens faldne Priis og den ædle Skoebørstes Forhaanelse i Danmark til Trykken befordret af Rasmus Ligefrem*, no place or printer, 1771 (8 March 1771).
- [anonymous], *En deilig Nye Viise om hvorlunde de store Grenaderer finge Erter og Flesk, paa Slottet Christiansborg udi Struenses og Brandts Tid, samt hvorlunde Danner-Kongen ved sine stolte Riddere lode dennem lægge i Bolt og Jern. udi Begyndelsen meget lystig; men siden meget ynkelig at læse og siunge som Holger Danskes og Buurmands Vise*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772 (13 March 1772).
- [anonymous], *En Elske-Digt af Kong Harald. Samt et lidet Anhang forestillende Rosenborg-Hauge oplukt*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (2 August 1771).
- [anonymous], *En fornemme dames Bebreidelsesbrev og Torden-Vers til Grev Struensee i sit Fængsel*, Copenhagen: P. H. Höecke, 1772 (20 March 1772).
- [anonymous], *En liden Paqve funden paa Veien fra Slottet til Rosenborg-Hauge af følgende Indhold: Sandheds Ord af en sand Patriot, til Trods for den danske Regierings Fiender. Samt et aldeles umærkværdig Svar paa et Brev fra en Søster til sin Broder*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (19 August 1771).
- [anonymous], *En norsk Matroses Tanker over den Vanskelighed, at faae Kongen i Tale, skreven til Trøst for sine Brødre*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele 1771 (29 September 1771).
- [anonymous], *En nye Forordning fra Samvittigheden, til Straf for de ukydske Ægtemænd og til Trøst for de fornærmede Ægtefæller*, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, 1771 (bound with *Tanker og Fornemmelser*, 30 July 1771).
- [anonymous], *En patriotisk Samtale imellem en reisende Engelskmand og en Kiøbenhavnsk Borger. Holdt paa det Engelske Caffe-Huus paa Christianshavn*, Copenhagen: Johan Gottlob Rothe i No. 8 På Børsen, 1771 (4 March 1771).
- [anonymous], *En saare mærkværdig Spaadom om Grev Struensees formastelige Forbrydelse, og den derpaa fulgte almindelige Forstyrrelse, som skede Natten imellem d. 17de og 18de Januarii 1772. nu funden i en af Sparbondes Dragkisteskuffer og siden til Trykken befordret af en Nat-Pikkeneer*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1772.
- [anonymous], *En saare mærkværdig Tildragelse som er skeet i den Stad Antwerpen med et forhexet Drengbarn der var en Nisse men omskabte sig til en Skoebørste med mere som Historien fortæller. Først skrevet i Hollandsk ved Heer de Calmuysen og i det Danske oversat ved Claus Lille, for dum Sogne-Degn, og nu til Trykken befordret ved Casper Ebletoft samt hosføiet en Lovtale over Skoebørsterne*, no place or printer, 1771 (30 January 1771).
- [anonymous], *En Samtale imellem Democritum og Heraclitum om vore Tidens Contrast eller stridige Ting tilligemed en nye Opdagelse ved Natbordet alt sammen samlet ved Professor Babe. den 6. te Junii imodtaget*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (29 October 1771).
- [anonymous], *En Satyrisk Fortegnelse paa en Deel Pretiosa, Guld, Sølv, Tin, Kobber, Messing og Jernfang, Trævahre, Linnet, som er funden paa Gaden Fredagen den 17 Januarii, og som ved offentlig Auction skal bortslges den 32. Januarii*, Copenhagen: P. H. Hoecke, 1771 (24 January 1772).
- [anonymous], *En Snuppet til visse Skribentere*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772 (18 February 1772).
- [anonymous], *En Supplique fra de Kiøbenhavnske Jomfrue-Huuse, som skulde have været overleveret til Greve J. F. Struensee*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1772 (24 February 1772).
- [anonymous], *En tilførladelig Efterretning over de største og fornemste Ponche-Mænds Eftermæle, samt deres Fortrydelse over det Antal af de endnu tilbageblevne og paa Sahlene siddende Nymphes*, Copenhagen 1771 (14 February 1772).

- [anonymous], *En ubetydelig Samtale imellem en Skribent og en Forlægger, i Anledning af den i Aviserne fremsadte Snik-Snak om Skrive-Friheden, under Artiklen fra Kiøbenhavn og Stokholm*, Copenhagen, no printer indicated, 1771 (6 September 1771).
- [anonymous], *En Vise af en af Stadens Nymfer, som beklager sin og hendes Søstres Nød over Greve Johan Friderich Struenses hastige og nedrige Fald [...] Tilligemed hendes Levnets-Beskrivelse til Dato*, Copenhagen: L. N. Svare, 1772.
- [anonymous], *Erfaringer i Rosenborg-Hauge den Dag de opsatte Forfrisknings-Telter, meddeelte af en agtsom Tilhører*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (16 July 1771).
- [anonymous], *Et aabent Brev, fundet ved Indgangen til Kongens Have*, Copenhagen: Borups Enke, August 1772.
- [anonymous], *Et forunderligt Syn som blev seet en Nat i W*lb** Skole der forestillede en Liigbegængelse med Skoebørster samt en Liig-Tale som blev hørt af underjordiske Folk. Optegnet og til Trykken befordret ved Mogens Skolemester*, no place or printer, 1771 (18 March 1771).
- [anonymous], *Et Himmel-Skrift nedfalden på Veien fra Kiøbenhavn til Emdrup*, Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1771 (23 October 1771).
- [anonymous], *Et nyt Brev fra Jfr. Rebecca Abeltoft til sin Broder som haver læst hans Betænkninger over dem, som uden Ægteskab og videre Straf avle Børn sammen*, Copenhagen: P. H. Høecke, 1771 (16 August 1771).
- [anonymous], *Et Par ord til Frakken og Anti-Frakken, i Anledning af den udkomne Pjece Jeg ligger for Døden, kom og beret mig, hvoraf den ene letsindig har attaqveret Geistligheden, og den anden begrædelig forsvaret dem*, no place and printer indicated, 1771 (18 September 1771).
- [anonymous], *Et Syn i en Drøm om store forestaaende. Tildragelser af Himmelens Tegn*, place and printer not indicated, 1771 (23 August 1771).
- [anonymous], *Fandens Svar paa Emdrups Himmel-Skrift. Optagen af Lars Jenssøn Huus-Mand, og af hannem til Trykken befordret*, Copenhagen: Morten Hallager, 1771 (1 November 1771).
- [anonymous], *Fastelavnsløberne, eller de gale Mennesker, som et Portrait af de den 17. de Januarii 1772 i Citadellet arresterede Personer*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (4 March 1772).
- [anonymous], *Fortsættelse af Græv Struenses Liv og Levnets Historie i sær om det Politiske; tilligemed et offentlig Forsonings-Brev til det i høiste Maade forurettede danske og norske Folk*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1772 (10 March 1772).
- [anonymous], *Frie og grundede Tanker om Boelieriet. Samt Religionens Brev til Verdens, i sær Kiøbenhavns dydige Indvaanere*, Copenhagen: J. R. Thiele, 1771 (23 August 1771).
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Broadsheets

Broadsheet sales exploded in Copenhagen through the spring of 1772. The Luxdorph Collection included a volume with a selection of popular broadsheet prints in folio, quarto, and octavo, most of them addressing the events during and after the 17 January coup, in a combination of text with woodcuts or coppers. This list only comprises broadsheets reproduced in this book (including a few prior to 1772). A more thorough registrant can be found in Horstbøll, Langen, Stjernfelt 2020, vol. II. Text authors are anonymous; in some cases the engraver and/or the printshop are known.

- [anonymous], *Afbildning paa det vilde og grumme Rovdyr, Hyæne kaldet, der i Egnen omkring Gevaudan i Provinsen Languedok*, (*Depiction of the Wild and Cruel Predator called a Hyena who has, in the Area around Gevaudan in the Province of Languedok in France, most Atrociously torn apart many Human Beings*), colored woodcut, Copenhagen: Thiele 1771.
- [anonymous], *Afbildning paa Henrettelsen af de Tvende Grever Struensee og Brandt, d. 28 Apr. 1772*, (*Depiction of the Execution of the Twain Counts Struensee and Brandt, 28 April 1772*), colored woodcut, Copenhagen 1772.
- [anonymous], *ALAMODISK SORGE-SÆT*, (*Alamodic Mourning Dress*), copper, Copenhagen 1772
- [anonymous], *Bogtrykkeren og Bogbinderen* (*The Bookprinter and the Bookbinder*), colored broadsheet, colored woodcut by Thomas Larsen Borup. Copenhagen: Thiele 1766.
- [anonymous], *Den Almægtiges Varetægt over Dannemark*, (*The Protection of the Almighty over Denmark*), woodcut, Copenhagen: Thiele 1772.
- [anonymous], *Den knusede Ponce-Bolle*, (*The Smashed Punch Bowl*), Copenhagen 1772.
- [anonymous], *Den Stormægtigste Dronning Caroline Mathilde til Hæst*, (*The very Great Queen Caroline Matilda on Horseback*), colored woodcut, Copenhagen n. d.

- [anonymous], *Den ulykkelige Lotto-Spiller/ Le malheureux Joyeur de Lotto, (The Miserable Lotto Player)*, copper, Copenhagen n. d.
- [anonymous], *Diævelens Magt i Verden, (The Power of the Devil in the World)*, anonymous woodcut, Copenhagen: n. d.
- [anonymous], *En nöyagtig Forestilling af Executionen, som skeede uden for Kiöbenhavn paa Stadens Östre-Fællad paa Græverne, Struensee og Brandt, den 28. April. Ao 1772, (A Precise Representation of the Execution ...)*, copper, Copenhagen 1772
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- [anonymous], *Forestilling af den i Citadellet Friderichshavn den 17de Januarii 1772 indbragte Stats-Fange, Forræder Johann Friderich Struense, (Representation of the Imprisoned in the Citadel ...)*, woodcut, Copenhagen: Thiele 1772.
- [anonymous], *Forestilling hvorledes Græf Struensee blev arresteret, (Representation of how Count Struensee was Arrested)*, copper, Copenhagen 1772
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- [anonymous], *Graf von St. Germain General eines Corps von Dänischer Troupen (Count von St. Germain, the General of a Corps of Danish Troops)*, copper by J. M. Probst, Copenhagen 1765.
- [anonymous], *Skam=Minde af den 17 Januarii, (Shame-Memorial about 17 January)*, woodcut, Copenhagen: Hallager 1772.

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