During the battle between the English and Danish Navy in the roads of Copenhagen in 1801, when Lord Nelson was signalled by Admiral Parker to cease firing, he put his telescope in front of his blind eye and said “I see no signal”. Favrholdt, I believe, acts in a similar manner when he looks at the evidence for Høffding’s impact on Bohr. My claim is that by seeing what Bohr was taught in the manner of the philosophical vocabulary and problems as Høffding perceived them we may better understand Bohr’s ideas and their development.¹ But Favrholdt’s latest attacks on me continue to ignore evidence which contradicts his opposition to my interpretation.² The present note will show this with respect to three central contentions and point out evidence which shows that Favrholdt fails to put the facts he discusses in support of his denial of the Høffding connection into their proper historical context.

¹ One of Favrholdt’s objections is that we know that Bohr attended Høffding’s classes in propaedeutic philosophy but we do not know whether Bohr attended Høffding’s advanced seminars. My suggestion that he did is dismissed as pure speculation without any support of evidence whatsoever. But this is not the case. Let me just point out the following facts: (i) In his last interview, the day before he died, Bohr said, “I took a great interest in philosophy in the years after [high-school] student examination. I came especially in close connection with Høffding”.³ However, the propaedeutic philosophy course was taken during the first year in the University. (ii) Peter Skov – who passed the examination in propaedeutic philosophy several years before Bohr or most other members of the Ekliptika group were enrolled at the University – writes in his book about Ekliptika, “For several years I attended Høffding’s seminars. Here I met a group of friends who formed a small circle consisting of 12 members.”⁴ That was of course the Ekliptika Circle with Bohr. (iii) Moreover, I have shown that half of this group did not attend Høffding’s propaedeutic philosophy course.⁵ (iv) From letters to Høffding written by Rubin and Hatt, both members of Ekliptika, we know that they both attended Høffding’s seminar on Modern Philo-
sophy in the spring of 1905 in which the Ekliptika was set up.6 (v) In 1913, on \Høffding's seventieth birthday, another member of Ekliptika, Brøndal, sent a letter of greetings in which he remarks that he was "no longer a member of the group whose custom it was to meet to discuss philosophical questions with you".7 Such discussions took place only in \Høffding's seminars. These facts are evidence enough, it seems to me, to establish beyond any reasonable doubt that Bohr, as a member of Ekliptika, continued to attend some of \Høffding's seminars after he had taken his class on propaedeutic philosophy. Thus, I believe that reading \Høffding's books and attending his seminars exerted a considerable influence on the young student Bohr's philosophical outlook. But Favrholdt may still continue to hold that this belief rests on mere speculations and fictions. It does not fit with his picture of Bohr as one among the ten greatest philosophers ever.

2. A further objection put forward by Favrholdt is that there is very little evidence for any close connection between \Høffding and Bohr between 1903 and 1928, and that we do not have any evidence that Bohr and \Høffding had scientific discussions until 1928. Against these claims Bohr speaks for himself. In 1932 when Bohr welcomed the participants of the Tenth International Psychology Congress in Copenhagen, who were visiting Carlsberg, he spoke about his relationship and conversations with \Høffding. In the very beginning of an interesting, but partly unpolished and unfinished copy of the speech, he says:

I have had the privilege of being in close contact with \Høffding from my early youth as my father was an intimate friend of his, and I have at all stages of my life been able to benefit from the true scientific and philosophical spirit which you know from \Høffding's work, but which found special expressions by personal acquaintance.8

It would also be unusual why \Høffding in the beginning of 1924 calls Bohr "mon ami" in a letter to Emile Meyerson if they had not continued a friendship in the years after Bohr graduated in 1910, and therefore had begun to see each other again when Bohr came back from England in 1916 after having spent two years in Manchester. That they did see each other in the years to come is partly confirmed by opening remarks in \Høffding's letter on September 22, 1922, to Bohr, "As I mentioned to you in the summer I would like to put a question...".9 So, apparently, they visited one another during their holidays. In this connection the reader should also recall my discovery of Ellen Bohr's letter to \Høffding about his friendship with her son Niels.10