

Hölderlin: The Poetics of Being by Adrian Del Caro; Friedrich Hölderlin by David Constantine; The Problem of Christ in the Work of Friedrich Hölderlin by Mark Ogden

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Although she exhibited at the Dresden Academy four times between 1802 and 1814, and her work enjoyed a brief revival during the Third Reich (because of its association with "Großdeutschlands Freiheitskampf") with two exhibitions in Berlin (1936 and 1940), Stock's paintings are little known to art historians because the majority are divided among various historical museums, including the Schiller, Goethe, and Körner houses.

It is unfortunate that this book was published by a press notorious for the poor quality of its offset reproductions and for its conspicuous lack of a copy editor. The text contains an unacceptable number of misspellings and lapses of grammar, and is priced in anticipation of minimal demand. This manuscript contains material of great interest to the field of women's studies, as well as to *Germanistik* and to art history, and is deserving of more dignified treatment.

University of Wisconsin–Madison

–Jane Campbell Hutchison

### **Hölderlin: The Poetics of Being.**

By Adrian Del Caro. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991. 145 pages. \$24.95.

### **Friedrich Hölderlin.**

Von David Constantine. München: C.H. Beck, 1992. 113 Seiten. DM 16,80.

### **The Problem of Christ in the Work of Friedrich Hölderlin.**

By Mark Ogden. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1991. viii + 183 pages. £20.00.

Of the three books under review, two are introductions and the third is a dissertation. While subtopics occasionally overlap (Del Caro and Constantine, for example, both speak of seafaring imagery, and Ogden and Constantine discuss allusions to Christ in *Empedokles*), the books serve diverse purposes.

Del Caro's *Hölderlin* is accessible to the non-reader of German (all quotations are in English, including the poetry). Part one consists of seven meditations, some as brief as three pages, on a series of themes, each related to Hölderlin's view of the poet's work, for example, conviviality, mediation, and recollection. The dominant thread is intersubjectivity, the poet's relation to other persons, the larger community, and the gods. Part two includes two longer chapters on poetry and ontology and a comparison of Hölderlin and Nietzsche on Columbus and the voyage of discovery.

Del Caro attends to the great demands Hölderlin placed on the poet and the meaning of poetry, developing insights into Hölderlin's elevated themes, above all dialogue as it is manifest not only between persons but also between persons and the divine. The stress on intersubjectivity is important, as Hölderlin's elevation of subject-subject relations occurred in an age overwhelmingly focused on subject-object relations. The book is intelligent, refined, cerebral, a breath of fresh air in a discipline that does not often attend to the sublime. Fine, detailed insights include, for example, the distinction between patriotism and nationalism as it relates to Hölderlin's notion of the poet's preparation for the gods (53-63) and Hölderlin's appreciation of the ordinary and common vis-à-vis the Roman-

tics' tendency to disparage the same (70). Clearly original and insightful is the comparison and contrast of seafaring imagery in Hölderlin and Nietzsche (99-117).

As an introduction primarily for readers already interested in poetic self-reflection, however, the book is not as broadly accessible as some other volumes on the market, including Constantine's English introduction of 1988. By organizing his work according to topics, Del Caro cannot fully attend to the integrity of the individual poems, though he does not distort them as does Heidegger or claim that meaningful readings are not possible as would some poststructuralists. Nonetheless, one gets more a sense of Hölderlin's elevated themes than of his poetry, although in this sense the book succeeds in its intention of encouraging readers to turn to the poems themselves (20). Some readers may find the discussions of being somewhat elusive. Finally, the general comparison of Hölderlin and Nietzsche would have benefited from some of the insights of Geoffrey Waite's profound 1978 Princeton dissertation, which sees more complexities in the relationship between the writers than does Del Caro.

David Constantine has written an elegant, lucid, succinct, and most accessible introduction to Hölderlin in German, useful for students and educated lay persons. The chapters treat aspects of Hölderlin's life, his concept of poetry, and his two major works, *Hyperion* and *Empedokles*. The book evidences nuanced insight into Hölderlin and supports its insights by richly quoting from the letters and works. An overarching theme is the role of paradox in Hölderlin's life and writing, the tension between his sense of home and his travails as a wanderer, the dialectic of confidence and doubt in the poetic process, and the seeming contradiction of self-consciousness and self-denial in his later years. Particularly strong are: the discussion of Hölderlin's creation of a new mythology, including the influence of Pindar in this process (60-63); the impressively compact account of the paradoxes of the poetic mission and the poetic process (59-74); the claim that the common element in the private and social strains of *Empedokles* is resistance to sterility and the search for, and expression of, *das Lebendige* (79-86); and fine discussions of the exotic and unconventional aspects of the late poetry and the relative emptiness of Hölderlin's final verse (88-108).

A danger of Constantine's approach is the conflation of Hölderlin and the first-person voice in his works, as if the works were primarily a commentary on his life. To claim that the schism between *Sein* and *Sollen* should never be fully bridged (so as to ensure vitality) need not mean that one must seek failure; thus, Constantine's claim that *Hyperion* experiences a perverse "Wille zur Enttäuschung" in order to guarantee the vividness and otherness of the ideal seems to me a spurious reading of this dialectic (55-58). The most significant gap in this slim, but rich volume is the scant attention paid to the great poems, the odes, the elegies, the hymns; one gets the sense that a couple of chapters are missing. Though it would need to be supplemented by other studies, this is a sparkling and substantive general introduction to Hölderlin's life and work.

Ogden's well-researched dissertation on the problem of Christ is clearly the most rewarding of the three works for the Hölderlin expert. The problem of Christ arises from historical biblical criticism and the philosophical demand for autonomy, which render the traditional understanding of Christ problematic. Ogden's

overarching thesis is that this problem was central throughout Hölderlin's productive years and does not simply resurface in the late hymns.

The first chapter offers a differentiated account of the theology of the Tübingen seminary and the encounter with contemporary philosophy, especially Kant. Interesting are the connections drawn between theological *Versöhnung* and philosophical *Vereinigung* and the critique by the *Repetenten* Rapp and Conz of Kant and their affirmation of love as the mediation of nature and reason, of inclination and duty, a position Hölderlin develops in his early hymns.

Ogden's argument on *Hyperion*—quite sound to my view—is that the novel is not a rejection of Christianity and a celebration of pagan Greece; rather, it contains a latent Christology, including a rich pattern of allusions to the Gospel of John, in particular his account of the incarnation and the trinity. The claims will be too speculative for American Hölderlin critics who prefer to interpret the poet as if he were a forerunner of postmodernism, but the reading has great force and is well-grounded from philosophical and intellectual-historical perspectives. Weaknesses surface only in Ogden's accounts of Diotima and of suffering: attentive to a Christology of beauty but not pain, Ogden discusses Diotima's death in disappointingly superficial terms and does not address in any substantive way the novel's many moments of negativity.

In the next chapter, however, Ogden argues that the idea of sacrifice and its connection with the events of history—those aspects of Christology allegedly absent in *Hyperion*—form the core of *Empedokles*. Ogden grants Hegel's early writings on Christianity extraordinary importance for an understanding of the drama, and he claims that Hegel's and Hölderlin's discussions of Christianity were not as one-sidedly influenced by Hegel as some critics have proposed. Empedokles is a Christ figure in conflict with an age, not unlike Hölderlin's own, that elevates division, not unity, and Empedokles sacrifices himself for the failings of this age—imitating both Christ and the self-sacrificial love that is the defining quality of nature. According to Ogden, Hölderlin's vision is more reconciliatory than that embodied in Hegel's Frankfurt essays, for the play transcends tragedy and points to the possibility of universal reconciliation.

The final chapter attests to the development of Hölderlin's Christological concerns in the years 1800 and 1801 and their climax in "Friedensfeier." Especially interesting are Ogden's elevation of the importance of "Der Mutter Erde" in this development and his reflections on the sleeping Cerberus at the end of "Brod und Wein."

Though the readings are careful and precise, they are not always fully attentive to the literariness of the texts. Occasionally, not unlike Del Caro, Ogden speaks elliptically of "the end of history" (154, 157, 169, 170). Published in 1991, the book integrates secondary literature only through 1986. It has an overabundance of typos and concludes with an index so short as to be almost a jest. Nonetheless, it is an excellent work that should interest theologians and intellectual historians as well as literary critics.

Hölderlin is not only one of Germany's greatest poets. As these volumes attest, he is the poet of poets, who reflects deeply on the meaning of poetry, including the poet's receptiveness to divinity and poetry's role in the reawakening of community; a person who contained within himself the contradictions of his

age, leading a life rich in paradox, dissonance, and isolated moments of joy; and a philosopher-theologian, who had original insights into Christology and the interrelatedness of art, religion, and philosophy.

Ohio State University

—Mark W. Roche

**Die Krise der Aufklärung als Krise des Erzählens. Tiecks "William Lovell" und der europäische Briefroman.**

Von Markus Heilmann. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1992. 289 Seiten. DM 88,-.

Heilmann schließt sich in dieser Arbeit Fritz Brüggemann an (*Die Ironie als entwicklungsgeschichtliches Moment: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der deutschen Romantik*, Jena 1909), indem er—freilich unter moderneren kritischen und literarhistorischen Vorzeichen—*William Lovell* im Lichte der Tradition des "empfindsam-aufklärerischen" Briefromans "vom Typus Richardson" (i.e. *Pamela* und *Clarissa Harlowe*) untersucht. Und dies wiederum vor dem Hintergrund der Frage, ob "im Medium des Erzählens à la Richardson ein empfindsam-aufklärerisches Menschenbild zu entwerfen und zu behaupten" ist (4).

Die überaus umständlich angelegte Studie beginnt in Kapitel 1 mit einer ausführlichen Lektüre des ersten *Lovell*-Bandes, welche allmählich "den Einstieg in eine Untersuchung der geistesgeschichtlich-erzählerischen Tradition der Empfindsamkeit und des Briefromans" liefern soll (6). Kapitel 2 und 3 vollziehen dann die besagte Untersuchung, in der Schriften von Shaftesbury, Rousseau, Richardson, Gellert, Lessing, Goethe und Lenz Stationen bilden. Wie Heilmann selbst wiederholt zugibt, kommt man hier jedoch ganz und gar von *William Lovell* ab.

Erst in Kapitel 4—nach einem Hiatus von nahezu 150 Seiten—taucht der *Lovell* wieder auf. Nun erfolgt in Heilmanns Worten "eine Fortschreibung der zu Beginn vorgelegten Deutung" des Romans. Diese "Relektüre" des Textes ermöglicht ihrerseits den schon in der Einleitung gefaßten und somit bereits vorgegenommenen Schluß: im Hinblick auf den Briefroman "à la Richardson" stellt *Lovell* mit seiner verwickelten existentiellen Problematik sowohl eine Kontinuation des tradierten Erzählkonzepts dar, als auch eine grundlegende Verzweiflung daran, denn—ähnlich wie seine Vorgänger—"findet [er] keine Antwort auf die neuen Fragen, die er . . . heraufbeschwört." Zu jener Verzweiflung geselle sich in Tiecks Roman "letztes, radikales Ungenügen an den Möglichkeiten des Menschen und seiner Sprache" (11-12).

Daß Heilmanns Arbeit im Endeffekt auf eine Art Sprachskepsis hinausläuft, ist enttäuschend. Denn zu genau demselben Schluß kamen bereits die Artikel von Alan Corkhill ("Perspectives on Language in Ludwig Tieck's Epistolary Novel *William Lovell*," *German Quarterly* 1985) und Susanne Scharnowski ("Emphase und Skepsis: Ludwig Tiecks 'William Lovell' und Clemens Brentanos 'Godwi' als Briefromane," *Wirkendes Wort* 1990)—allerdings mit viel weniger Aufwand.

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—Dwight A. Klett