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### Review Of "The Course Of Remembrance And Other Essays On Hölderlin" By D. Henrich

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as any Greek *polis* ever did. If one then distinguishes between the Church as it ideally is, and its corrupt actuality, then this seems close to Plato's distinction at the end of the *Republic* between the ideal *polis*, to which we must owe allegiance, although it may never exist on Earth, and the degraded states which actually do exist. But such an ideal cannot function as a community — in the manner of the Aristotelian *polis* — here and now, and this is what Aristotle's, and Hauerwas and Pinches', communitarianism seems to require.

**Anthony Rudd**

University of Bristol

**Dieter Henrich**

*The Course of Remembrance and  
Other Essays on Hölderlin.*

Ed. and foreword by Eckart Förster. Trans.

Taylor Carman and Abraham Anderson.

Stanford: Stanford University Press 1997.

Pp. 302.

US\$45.00. ISBN 0-8047-2739-2.

*The Course of Remembrance* contains the bulk of Henrich's work on Hölderlin, apart from his 1992 *Der Grund im Bewußtsein: Untersuchungen zu Hölderlins Denken in Jena (1794/5)*. It consists of six essays on Hölderlin's philosophical thought plus the short 1986 book *Der Gang des Andenkens (The Course of Remembrance)*. The book and three of the essays date from the mid-1980s. One essay, 'Hölderlin in Jena', has been newly written for this volume, and one essay is Henrich's classic 'Hölderlin on Judgment and Being' (1966) that established the depth of Hölderlin's involvement with philosophy.

Fundamental to Hölderlin's project is his attempt to join a pantheist skepticism, inspired by Jacobi, with a commitment, inspired by Kant and Fichte, to the pursuit of freedom as an infinite ideal. Human beings live — as Hölderlin argued in 'Judgment and Being' — in the wake of a primordial separation from unconditioned being, itself effected by an original judgment (*Ur-teil*), or by the mysterious coming into existence of discursive consciousness out of mere natural life. They then cope with this separation by simultaneously seeking both reunion with a lost unconditioned reality, often through seeking merger with an object of love, and autonomy in the perfection and release of their powers of self-legislated judgment and action.

Henrich's readings focus less on conclusions than on the dynamics of formation of a body of thought, on arguments between contemporaries, and on motives that are not transparent to authors (14-16). In the case of Hölderlin himself, this means focusing on how Hölderlin as a student experienced the conflict at the Tübingen Stift between Enlightenment autonomism and traditional religious practices. It must be, as Hölderlin put it in a 1795 letter to Schiller, that 'subject and object [are] united in an absolute that cannot [contra Fichte] be appropriately called an "I"' (83). Yet we are also separated from this primordial unity and set upon the path of autonomy, but set in such a way that, contra Hegel, we can never claim full mastery of the conditions of expression of our subjectivity.

The key problem of Hölderlin's work then becomes how to combine love as abandonment of self and merger into a greater unity with autonomous selfhood. Hölderlin's sense of this problem motivates his famous *Wechseltonlehre* or theory of the continuous alternation of tones in poetry, according to which 'the highest beauty of poetry, at least, is based on an ordered *modulation* of acts in which each of the tendencies of life is momentarily released' (134). 'The tendencies of conscious life are mutually irreconcilable yet equally legitimate and indispensable' (222).

Henrich argues that this way of thinking about subjectivity's life is philosophically alive for us now. Successions of such modulated acts constitute a way of thinking that is *aptly* 'irreducible to any clear and distinct understanding' (146). In such acts, we can see subjects 'engaged in active remembering' (147) of the plights of subjectivity, rather than being thrown on the path of some Heideggerian impersonal destiny.

Once one sees subjectivity as informed by necessarily conflicting tendencies, then one will tend to see — as Henrich notes Hölderlin did come to see — 'poetry alone [as] the locus of genuine transcendental insight' (222). A reader animated by this thought, as Henrich is, will then trace closely a poet's choices of words and swerves of interest and perception, assuming that nothing else so fully expresses subjectivity's tendencies. This is exactly what Henrich does in his reading of Hölderlin's 'Andenken' ('Remembrance'). The title of Henrich's reading, 'The Course of Remembrance' thus invokes both the course of the poem itself in all its details and the course of *any* effort at remembering subjectivity's worldly situation, arguing that these two courses are deeply interrelated: Hölderlin's course in writing enacts the essence of situated subjectivity.

In carrying out this reading Henrich is explicitly taking issue with both Adorno's modernist interest in parataxes and ceasuras of form in Hölderlin and Heidegger's anti-modernist mythologizing of Hölderlin. Against Heidegger, Henrich holds that Hölderlin in 'Remembrance' depicts a movement of vision of the landscape from Bordeaux itself, rather than from Germany. On the basis of detailed archival work on the topography of late 18th century Bordeaux and its surrounding countryside, Henrich argues that 'the presence of the city ... dominates the poem throughout' (186). The kind of awareness that Hölderlin achieves is here intimately bound up with a specific place, just

as in the Wordsworthian notion of a *genius loci*: 'an ultimate insight [is bound to] the place where the insight emerges' (229). In sum, and in contrast with Heidegger's claim that the poet is claiming a future world-colonizing mission for German poetry, in 'Remembrance' the poet gains 'clarity at the place of departure farther out to sea [at the specific confluence of the Garonne and the Dordogne], and in a form of understanding that allows him to comprehend what it means to be a poet in renunciation of the ocean and of love. This — the moral, the theme, and the course of the poem, all in one — ... looks over [particular locations] in faithfulness and gratitude' (204).

Henrich has undoubtedly succeeded first in identifying in Hölderlin's poetry structures of attention to specific places and specific words that are fundamental to the intelligence at work in lyric poetry, and second in demonstrating the philosophical interest of this form of intelligence. After reading Hölderlin's lyrics expressing subjectivity's conflicting tendencies, any other writing can come to seem pale and flat. Henrich shows well how and why this is so. At times, however, Henrich seems to overstate an opposition between form and thought. He claims that 'Hölderlin's ideas ... have more to do with the poem's structure and movement than with what it says' (194). 'Our considerations have centered around an effort to give an account of the structural form of Hölderlin's poem' (242). In the grip of this thought, he does not follow up allusions to Homer and Socrates in 'Remembrance', nor does he unpack the reference to 'Bellarmine /And his companions'. While Henrich is surely right to emphasize the specificities of place in 'Remembrance', it is less clear that his reading is fully rules out the readings of either Heidegger or Adorno. It may well be that the relation between the town of Bordeaux and the Garonne island (the 'place of departure') is metaphorical for a relation between Germany and Bordeaux plus the Garonne Island, as though the poem's protagonist, in imagining departure from Bordeaux via the island were also imagining departure from Germany via Bordeaux, as Heidegger suggests. The unity of the moments of remembering that Henrich emphasizes is not obviously incompatible with the stuttering resistance to doctrinal paraphrase that Adorno suggests is central to Hölderlin's poetry. Henrich seems sometimes to focus so closely on the structure of remembering that he loses sight of the play of moods in the speaker. He notes, correctly, that there is a movement from loneliness and muted anguish to a tragic calm that is unsupported by any sense of deliverance or by any expectation of an end to the darkness of the age (244). But he does not say much about the possible causes of the initial loneliness and anguish, either in Hölderlin personally or, more importantly, in the social structures of modernity.

In the end, however, one will, after reading Hölderlin, often want to resist both any full-blooded social explanation of plights of mind and any imagined mythological solution to those plights. Here Henrich's continuing focus on Hölderlin's expression of situated subjectivity's conflicting tendencies is of the first importance philosophically. The appearance of these essays in English translation ought to have the effect of completely undoing the



simplifications of contemporary scientific philosophy of mind. It will probably not have this effect, since these simplifications are so well-entrenched. But there is no other work that develops a counterphilosophy of mind so powerfully.

**Richard Eldridge**  
Swarthmore College

**Robert A. Hillman**

*The Richness of Contract Law:  
An Analysis and Critique of Contemporary  
Theories of Contract Law.*

Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers 1996.

Pp. xiv + 279.

US\$115.00. ISBN 0-7923-4336-0.

In this book on contract theory, Hillman strives both to offer a comparative overview of a variety of theoretical perspectives and issues, and also to defend his own theory of pragmatic common sense, which emphasizes the 'richness and importance of contract law' and questions 'the utility of overly abstract theories' (xiii). His thesis is that the perspectives he describes are overly rigid and narrow and he asserts that it is possible, by selecting the valuable insights of each, to construct a *synthesizing* 'consensus or pluralist thesis' (267) which 'constitutes the most persuasive account of contract law's nature and functions' (267).

In its survey of theoretical perspectives the book is informative and descriptively insightful. It is written in a lively and engaging fashion, and brings together in an accessible format a wide variety of theoretical issues in contract law. It is an excellent introduction to the student or new comer in this area and offers new and original insights to the more advanced scholar. In its second goal, however, the book is notably less successful. In his closing chapter Hillman acknowledges that his position may be perceived as anti-theoretical and overly defensive of the status quo. If these criticisms continue to have force, as they do, it is because Hillman does not engage in the truly critical analysis of the theoretical positions and issues he describes that is required to sustain either his rejection of those positions or his own purported compromise. The theoretical assumptions of many of these positions are accepted uncritically and the comparative discussion fails to distinguish criticisms or weaknesses that fundamentally undermine a particular view from those that require only modification or qualification of a position. There is, in short, ultimately no delivery on the promise of a synthesizing new