

## Language and Form: Hölderlin's Errancy

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Considerations of language, of form, and of errancy lie at the center of Hölderlin's most sustained poetological reflection, the fragment posthumously entitled "Über die Verfahrungsweise des poetischen Geistes" ("On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit"). The fragment's appendix, entitled "Wink für die Darstellung und Sprache" ("Indication for Presentation and Language"), opens with four questions that offer a concise formulation of the text's concerns:

### Wink für die Darstellung und Sprache

[1] Ist die Sprache nicht, wie die Erkenntnis von der die Rede war, und von der gesagt wurde daß in ihr, als Einheit das Einige enthalten sei, und umgekehrt? und daß sie dreifacher Art sei p.p.

[2] Muß nicht für das eine, wie für das andere der schönste Moment da liegen, wo der eigentliche Ausdruck, die geistigste Sprache das lebendigste Bewußtseyn, wo der Übergang von einer bestimmten Unendlichkeit zur allgemeineren liegt?

[3] Liegt nicht eben hierin der feste Punkt, wodurch der Folge der Zeichnung ihre Verhältnisart, und den Lokalfarben wie der Beleuchtung ihr Charakter und Grad bestimmt wird?

[4] Wird nicht alle Beurtheilung der Sprache sich darauf reduciren, daß man nach *den sichersten und möglich untrüglichsten Kennzeichen* sie prüft, ob sie die Sprache einer ächten schön beschriebenen Empfindung sei? <sup>1</sup> [End Page 537]

### Indication for Presentation and Language

[1] Is not language like the knowledge discussed above, of which was said that unity is contained in it as oneness and vice versa? and that it is of threefold manner etc.

[2] For the one as well as for the other, must not the most beautiful moment lie where there is actual expression, the most spiritual language and the most alive consciousness, where the transition from a determined infinity to a more general one is?

[3] Does not the fixed point lie precisely in that transition by which the mode of relation is determined for the sequence of the inscription and the character and degree are determined for the local colors and for the illumination?

[4] Will not all judgment of language reduce itself to testing it according to *the surest and most non-deceiving signs* whether it be the language of a true, beautifully

described sensation? <sup>2</sup>

The reading of Hölderlin's fragment that follows will focus on a particular tension between the second and third questions. The second question presents the "most beautiful moment" as a place of excess and transition, the place of what is most spiritual and what is most alive. The most beautiful moment is a transition beyond determination into a more general or universal infinity. The third question presents a point that is fixed or stable "within" the most beautiful moment; the fixed point is the source of determination. There is a moment of excess--"der schönste Moment"--and a point of stability--"der veste Punct." The latter is "in" the former. Their intersection is the crux of Hölderlin's text: the moment in which determination and an excess beyond determination meet.

For Hölderlin, the intersection of determination and what is undetermined is necessary and permanent, and this juxtaposition creates a singular dilemma for the conceptualization of appearance and of language. In Hölderlin's poetic operation, there is no determination without the undetermined, no form without formlessness. My inquiry takes as its object this continual coincidence and how its inclusion within the poetic operation demands an elaboration of the movement of errancy within Hölderlin's text. But errancy in "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit" can only be understood after **[End Page 538]** a presentation of the interpenetration of determination and what exceeds determination in Hölderlin's text.

The relation between determination and what is undetermined within Hölderlin's poetic operation can be read as part of what Jean-François Lyotard identifies as a shift within aesthetics at the end of the eighteenth century:

Despite the efforts of speculative thought and Romanticism, at the end of the 18th century, confidence in natural forms was shaken, and beyond forms or in their very depth, thought was made liable, *empfänglich*, for something that did not speak to it in good and due form. <sup>3</sup>

The receptivity for formlessness transforms aesthetics into a confrontation with what Lyotard calls a differend between the absolute and the order of presentation. He describes the necessary sacrifice of the beautiful in this change in aesthetics:

Its stakes can be formulated simply: is it possible, and how would it be possible, to testify to the absolute by means of artistic and literary presentations, which are always dependent on forms? Whatever the case may be, the beautiful ceases to be their "object," or else the meaning of the word is indeed subverted. <sup>4</sup>

These questions raised by Lyotard's reading of the sublime are all addressed by "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit." It could be said that, for Hölderlin, the poet must be a master of the form of the Kantian beautiful and of the formlessness of the Kantian sublime, but both the beautiful and the sublime cease to be what they are for Kant. The word "schön" in Hölderlin's text bears the tension of occupying its Kantian position and, at the same time, a role that transforms the beautiful into something else. Hölderlin's text presents form in the vocabulary of his "alternation of tones," "der Wechsel der Töne." Hölderlin retains the term "beautiful" for the progression of forms at the same time that he gives it another meaning. More than the beautiful is required for Hölderlin's "most beautiful." Every reading of Hölderlin's fragment must consider the contradictions of this "most beautiful moment" which is both beyond and within determinate forms; every reading of Hölderlin's fragment must transform the hesitation of Lyotard's phrase "beyond forms or in their very depth." For Hölderlin, the absolute is

beyond forms *and* **[End Page 539]** in their very depth. Formlessness cannot and must be present in forms. In "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit," the poetic spirit must both move beyond form and change form itself.

In "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit," the progression or alternation of tones is a formal progression. Totality or formlessness appears in terms of "das Ganze," the whole, which is understood not as the totality of a certain thing, but as totality in general, "überhaupt" (307). I will present Hölderlin's text as an investigation of the nature and limits of the opposition of form and formlessness. Several paradoxical or excessive figures will emerge from this original opposition; they all belong to Hölderlin's consideration of the pair form/formlessness. Each section of this essay offers a different approach to the same question posed by Hölderlin's text: how are we to understand the crucial moment when form and formlessness meet?

## I. Hyperbole

The initial sentence of Hölderlin's fragment presents the poetic operation in terms of spiritual conflict and, then, in terms of material conflict. The ultimate goal is the encounter of these two different conflicts or progressions in a third, poetic progression.

The third progression begins with the opposition of the poetic spirit and a certain "Stoff" or material. This convergence yields an impression that must be presented as a totality. The most beautiful moment appears here as "der Beschluss," the resolution or conclusion. Both the sensation's form and formlessness must be exhibited in order for the "total impression" of the sensation to be sustained:

wenn der Eindruck den [der Stoff] auf den Dichter gemacht, das erste Wohlgefallen, das auch zufällig seyn könnte, untersucht, und als receptiv für die Behandlung des Geistes und wirksam, angemessen gefunden worden ist, für den Zweck, daß der Geist sich in sich selber und in anderen reproducire, wenn er nach dieser Untersuchung wieder empfunden, und in allen seinen Theilen wieder hervorgerufen, und in einer noch unausgesprochenen gefühlten Wirkung begriffen ist. Und diese Wirkung ist eigentlich die Identität des Stoffs, weil in ihr sich alle Teile concentriren. Aber sie ist unbestimmt gelassen, der Stoff ist noch unentwickelt. Er muß in allen seinen Theilen deutlich ausgesprochen, und eben hiedurch in der Lebhaftigkeit seines Totaleindrucks geschwächt werden. [...] Der Stoff muß also vertheilt, der Totaleindruck muß aufgehoben, und die Identität ein Fortstreben von einem Punkte zum andern werden, wo denn der Totaleindruck sich wohl also findet, daß der Anfangspunct und Mittelpunct **[End Page 540]** und Endpunct in der innigsten Beziehung stehen, so daß beim Beschlusse der Endpunct auf den Anfangspunct und dieser auf den Mittelpunct zurückkehrt. (304)

if the impression that [the material] makes on the poet, the first pleasure, which could also be accidental, has been investigated and found to be receptive for the spirit's treatment and efficacious and has been found to be appropriate for the spirit's goal to reproduce itself in itself and in others; if, after this investigation, it is sensed again and is called forth in all its parts, and grasped in an effect which is as yet inarticulate and felt. And this effect is actually the identity of the material, because all the parts are concentrated in it. The material must be articulated in all its parts, and precisely thereby weakened in the vivacity of its total impression. [...] The material must thus be distributed, the total impression must be sustained, and identity must become a striving forth from one point to the next, so then the total impression is found such that the beginning point and the middle point and the endpoint stand in the most intensive/intimate relation, so that at the resolution the endpoint returns to the beginning point and the former returns to the middle point. (63)

In this passage, the poetic operation appears in terms of articulation and in terms of pleasure and impressions. The first impression or effect on the poetic spirit is an aesthetic one which must be "spoken out" or "articulated," "ausgesprochen." This articulation of the impression must forfeit its claim to totality. The loss of vivacity in the "clearly spoken" progression must be compensated for by a moment of resolution, in which the totality of the impression can exist simultaneously with its articulated individual points or parts.

The demands made upon the poetic spirit in the passage are contradictory: "Der Stoff muß also vertheilt, der Totaleindruck muß aufgehalten . . . werden" ("The material must thus be distributed, the total impression must be sustained"). Articulation disperses the total impression; the total impression must be sustained in the articulation. How can the poet articulate and thereby disperse the impression and at the same time maintain the unpronounced totality of the impression?

One answer lies in the continuation of the sentence. Identity becomes a "striving forward" that belongs to articulation--but only when that striving has a conclusion,

wo denn der Totaleindruck sich wohl also findet, daß der Anfangspunct und Mittelpunct und Endpunct in der innigsten Beziehung stehen, so daß beim Beschlusse der Endpunct auf den Anfangspunct und dieser auf den Mittelpunct zurückkehrt. (304) **[End Page 541]**

so then the total impression is found such that the beginning point and the middle point and the endpoint stand in the most intensive/intimate relation, so that at the resolution the endpoint returns to the beginning point and the former returns to the middle point. (63)

The total impression is only in the conclusion, which is distinguished from the endpoint. The poetic operation must proceed to the conclusion--not the endpoint--if it is to succeed in fulfilling the demands for articulation and totality.

Another complementary answer emerges from the place of articulation in the poetic operation. Articulation does not appear merely as weakening. The total effect of the material is also tied to the structures of articulation; it is from the very beginning an effect "that has not yet been articulated," "eine noch unausgesprochene Wirkung." Articulation both weakens the impression and, at the same time, is present within the impression as its capacity to be articulated. Articulation--or articulability--creates the relation between the total effect and the articulation.

Most commentators of "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit" emphasize the division of the text into stages or levels, but every reading of Hölderlin's poetic operation as a succession of stages must also take account of what paralyzes and exceeds the progression.<sup>5</sup> The structure of articulation and articulability is prior to any succession. The most intimate relation--"die innigste Beziehung"--is **[End Page 542]** not a progression but the "return" that comes at the conclusion. The most intimate relation is within the progression at every point but cannot be reduced to a punctual presentation of the poetic operation in stages. Every moment is both within the progression and outside of it, because every moment must be understood by at least two different modes of consideration, according to the progression and to the other, most intimate relation. Every moment is a point and not a point.

The doubleness of the poetic operation is already marked within the progression. The punctual progression bears the traces of what exceeds it. From the very beginning, the

poetic operation goes beyond itself. The progression is called a "hyperbolic operation," "ein hyperbolisches Verfahren" (307). The spirit (or the spiritual conflict) is conceived of as capable of another condition, "eines andern Zustandes fähig," that must be thought of as an "extremely" other condition, "eines Äußersten" (307):

Das idealische in dieser Gestalt ist der subjective Grund des Gedichts, von dem aus, auf den zurückgegangen wird, und . . . das innere idealische Leben kann in verschiedenen Stimmungen aufgefaßt, als Leben überhaupt, als ein verallgemeinbares, als ein vestsezbares, als ein trennbares betrachtet werden. (307, word order altered)

The ideal in this form is the subjective ground of the poem, from which and to which is returned, and . . . inner, ideal life can be grasped in different moods, can be considered as life in general, as generalizable, as fixable, as separable. (67)

Both of these sentences reveal the original tie between the inner, ideal life and its outside. In the second sentence of the passage, this can be read in the suffix "-bar, "-able," that reveals the potentiality of the spirit that can only be actualized outside of itself.<sup>6</sup> The inner ideal life is always "generalizable," "fixable," "separable," always incomplete, always directed towards something else. The movement to and from the subjective ground of the poem presented in the cited passage's first sentence reveals even more strikingly the excessive structure of the poetic operation; the verb "zurückgehen" describes both the movement away from the subjective and the movement towards it. The exit from the subjective ground is also a return; the subject never **[End Page 543]** leaves itself for the first time but only ever "comes back." There is no original site or motion, because the movement of the poetic operation is always a return.

"And thus the subjective ground demands, determines, and prepares an objective one" (67). Every moment of the poetic operation is the preparation of another, the demand for another that exceeds not only the point where it emerges but the punctual structure that governs it. The poetic operation is hyperbolic, because it always throws beyond itself--the Greek "hyperballein" means "throwing beyond" and "excess"--such that the strictly punctual understanding of the poetic operation must always succumb to the hyperbole and excess that threatens to paralyze the poetic operation's progression and punctuality.

## II. Unity

It is the "vocation" of the poetic spirit to proceed towards the moment of conclusion, in which there is a sensation that is "everything at once," "alles zugleich." The sensation of the unity of opposition within articulation is necessary not only because it gives the feeling of totality, but also because it allows for the opposed parts to be related at all. The poetic operation requires a sensation of totality in which opposition and unification can be felt together. The sensation of totality is the place where this unification can occur.

This moment of totality instantiates Hölderlin's concept of the oneness of unity, "der Begriff der Einheit des Einigen," which is neither "oneness," "Einheit," nor unity, "Einigkeit." Oneness cannot take account of the threatening alterity of the moment of totality. Unity is the unity of opposites in the formal progression. Oneness and unity are exceeded in the moment of totality by the "concept of the oneness of unity." With this term, Hölderlin presents a kind of unity that includes the totality that oneness and unity would exclude. The concept of the oneness of unity requires, on the one hand, the opposition that the uniformity of oneness would erase and, on the other hand, the binding together that would be unattainable in the generality of the mere unity of

opposition within the alternation of tones. In a commentary on another poetological text by Hölderlin, Jean-François Courtine distinguishes succinctly between the simple uniformity of "Einheit" and the unity of differentiation and unity of "Einigkeit": **[End Page 544]**

The unity with everything that lives must be understood here as the uni-ty ("Einigkeit") of all that lives, of all that is, as in the dramatic, tragic version of the *hen panta*, and not at all as the pure and simple synonym of "Einheit" [one-ness]--the unity of that which is merely one in its identity and its particularity, the unity of that which is precisely "vereinzelt," isolated, individuated, portioned off for itself and to itself. Uni-ty . . . is that which reunites everything that lives by creating unity, that which holds together, contains, and reconciles everything with everything. . . . Insofar as it is "Einigkeit"--reconciliation, mediation, mediatedness--uni-ty is precisely the fact, or better, the work of spirit. <sup>7</sup>

In Courtine's vocabulary, the path of the poetic operation is the movement from oneness to un-ity. Hölderlin understands this final un-ity as "the concept of the oneness of unity," in which the two terms "Einheit" and "Einigkeit" are thought together and become "uni-ty."

A unity close to oneness exists in the moment of the poetic operation in which there is no opposition. Hölderlin compares this moment where opposition is not yet possible to childhood. Articulation requires opposition for Hölderlin, and opposition is the guiding principle of Hölderlin's alternation of tones. The most frequent example in Hölderlin's texts of the articulation necessary for presentation is that between Achilles and the *Iliad*. The calm naturalness of the *Iliad's* naive tone or mood is only the background for the articulation of Achilles' heroic tone and his "energy, movement and life" (369). Thus, the epic's basic tone appears to be naive but is, in fact, heroic. <sup>8</sup> Articulation is the opposition of the actual tone of the epic and its opposed character, but this articulation is only the movement towards something else.

Articulation requires a "mode of consideration," "Betrachtungsweise," by which the poetic spirit judges undifferentiated childlike life as capable of being related to another opposed state or condition. Articulation allows for the undifferentiated mood or tone ("Stimmung") of the poet to appear by opposing it to the tone determined within Hölderlin's tone system as the opposed tone. This is the **[End Page 545]** beginning of the progression of tones and of opposition necessary for formal articulation.

A conclusion of the progression must be reached if unification is to occur. A conclusion is necessary, Hölderlin continues,

wenn [das Einige] nicht in einem Wechsel von Gegensätzen . . . seine Identität verlieren, also nichts Ganzes und Einiges mehr seyn, sondern in eine Unendlichkeit isolirter Momente (gleichsam eine Atomreihe) zerfallen soll. (311)

if [the unified] is not to lose its identity in an alternation of opposites, and thus no longer be a whole and unified, but, rather, dissolve into an infinity of isolated moments (just like a row of atoms). (70)

Opposition threatens to make the relation between elements into the non-relation of a "row of atoms" not held together in any whole or unity. The unity of "Einigkeit" is dominant in the progression, in which the opposed tones are unified only as opposed. But the concept of the oneness of unity is only achieved if these different, opposed elements can be felt to belong to a whole. For Hölderlin, a mode of consideration must be found that views the series as united by the concept of the oneness of unity. The aim

is to move beyond the understanding of the progression of tones as the merely formal connection of disparate elements that share only the membership in a chain of unrelated members which are otherwise, in their specific character, isolated from each other. The alternation has to be seen

nicht nur als das, was als verbindendes bloß formales Leben überhaupt, und als besonderes und materielles nicht verbindend, nur entgegensehend und trennend, ist. (309)

not only as combining merely formal life in general and not combining specific and material life, [that is, not as] merely opposing and dividing. (69)

The specific character of each of the members of the series remains isolated in articulation. This is not enough to allow for the instantiation of the whole, because the elements are not part of a feeling of wholeness. There must be a change in the conception of form; form is not only "formale Entgegensezung," formal opposition, but also "formale Verbindung," formal combination (309). The original, most intimate relation discussed above that joins the elements must be felt.

Progression must be viewed not merely as progression through opposition but also as the unification of the members of the series [End Page 546] even where they cannot be made one, "unvereinbar," even where the specific and material resist unification. This is only possible in a moment of totality within the alternation of tones.

### III. The double demand

The resistance of what cannot be made one is necessary for the feeling of the whole; it is demanded of the poetic operation. This demand on the poetic spirit for "felt totality" must be presented before Hölderlin's understanding of totality can be described. The first sentence of "On the Mode of Operation" presents the poetic operation as the response to two demands, as

ein notwendiger Widerstreit . . . zwischen der ursprünglichsten Forderung des Geistes, die auf Gemeinschaft und einiges Zuggleichseyn aller Teile geht, und zwischen der anderen Forderung, welche ihm gebietet, aus sich heraus zu gehen, und in einem schönen Fortschritt und Wechsel sich in sich selbst und in anderen zu reproduciren. (303)

a necessary conflict between the most original demand of the spirit for community and unified simultaneity of all parts, and between the other demand, which commands it to exit from itself and to reproduce itself in itself and in others in a beautiful progression and alternation. (62)

The two demands correspond to the two moments discussed above: the oneness of childhood and the opposition of the alternation of tones. But a closer look at the two demands reveals a complexity beyond the opposition of homogeneity and heterogeneity along which they seem to define themselves against each other. The first demand presumes the splitting into parts and their reunification; it cannot be a simple, simultaneous identity of parts if division has already been achieved. The second demand commands the spirit to exit from itself, but, at the same time, to reproduce itself; an understanding of this "herausgehen," this exit, solely as the move towards differentiation overlooks the way in which the replication of the same is also demanded. Differentiation is included in the demand for community; the reproduction of the self dominates the demand for leaving the self. The conflict that, at first glance, would seem to emerge only between the two demands already forms an essential part of each

demand. Division and unification are required in each demand.

Each demand already contains the conflict which will be played out between the two demands. The two demands that conflict are actually one demand for conflict. The demand is for this conflict, for the **[End Page 547]** extreme "points of rest" in which the contradictory event of "unvereinbares vereinigen," of unifying what cannot be made one, can occur:

der Widerstreit des geistigen Gehalts und der idealischen Form einerseits, und des materiellen Wechsels und identischen Fortstrebens andererseits vereinigen sich in den Ruhepunkten und Hauptmomenten, und so viel sie in diesen nicht vereinbar sind, eben in diesen auch und ebendeßwegen fühlbar und gefühlt werden. (305, word order altered)

the conflict of the spiritual content and the ideal form on the one hand and between the material alternation and identical striving on the other hand, unite in points of rest and principal moments, and, to the extent that they cannot be reconciled they also become feel-able and are felt in these. (64)

It is precisely because ("ebendeßwegen") they cannot be made one that they can be felt. The conflict of division and of unification is not resolved. Each remains distinct and cannot be made one, but there are moments when they can be united in a "feeling." Opposition and unification are united in this feeling. This is the concept of the oneness of unity, which allows to be felt what cannot be made one.

The conflict remains unresolved and is not superseded. The two demands conflict and suspend each other in every moment of the poetic operation; they are "in jedem Moment aufgehalten" (303). The standstill of the final moment is already there as the suspension within the double demand in the beginning of the poetic operation.

In the extreme points of conflict and suspension of the demands on the poetic operation, the most intimate relation is felt. The complexity of Hölderlin's understanding of unification emerges from the doubleness of the most original demand. The conflict aimed for is necessary for the feeling of the whole, which is a whole only in so far as it is unified. The feeling of a whole is the goal of the conflict and fulfillment of the original demand.

#### **IV. Direction**

The demand for the unity of opposition and unification also appears as the demand to continue and to proceed, but the progression of Hölderlin's text cannot be understood in terms of movement forwards or backwards. The hyperbole is not only thrown forward; it cannot even be understood directionally. The poetic operation is thus the movement towards another understanding of motion: **[End Page 548]**

Die Verfahrensweise des poetischen Geistes bei seinem Geschäftte kann also unmöglich hiemit enden. Wenn sie die wahre ist, so muß noch etwas in ihr aufzufinden seyn, und es muß sich zeigen, daß die Verfahrensart, welche dem Gedichte seine Bedeutung giebt, nur der Übergang vom Reinen zu diesem Aufzufindenden, so wie rückwärts von diesem zum Reinen ist. (309)

The mode of operation of the poetic spirit in its enterprise can thus impossibly end with this. If it is the true operation, there must be something else to find in it, and it must be shown that the manner of operation, which gives the poem its meaning, is only the transition from what is pure to that which is to be found, as well as backwards from this

to what is pure. (68)

The signification and knowledge made possible by formal opposition is only the path to the moment of totality. The "Aufzufindendes," this thing to be found, cannot be named otherwise, because it is the end of the operation, something which is unknowable within the progression. But that point is already in the operation: "so muß noch etwas *in ihr* aufzufinden seyn" ("there must be something else to be find *in it*") (my emphasis). The structure of the thing to be found, the moment to occur, forbids the distinction of back and forth, because it is defined as a moment that allows for an impossible movement in which everything moves backwards and forwards:

--ich sage so ist nothwendig, daß der poëtische Geist bei seiner Einigkeit, und harmonischem Progreß auch einen unendlichen Gesichtspunct sich gebe, beim Geschäftte eine Einheit, wo er im harmonischen Progreß und Wechsel alles vor und rückwärts gehe. (311)

--I say it is thus necessary that the poetic spirit in its unity and harmonic progression also give itself an infinite perspective in its enterprise, a oneness, where it will traverse everything back and forth in harmonic progression and alternation. (70)

The demanded end point redefines the sense of the entire progression as a "progression towards something." The poetic operation is not directed "towards" this non-point, "towards" something or some place, because the path includes that which must be found. The alteration of the path itself is the goal. A moment that is infinite must be included within the series. This final moment leads to a transformation of the process that finds it within itself.

The mode of consideration of opposition presents the progression from the isolated perspective of a single element involved in the progression, but, when another mode of consideration is adopted, **[End Page 549]** the two opposed elements are thought together, and the series no longer appears as mere opposition. With this new mode of consideration, the simultaneous presence of both opposed elements makes possible the feeling of the spirit as a whole and not merely as appearing in one of its single, determined modes. The move to this other mode of consideration, which is the move to the concept of the oneness of unity, marks a change in the way that progression and opposition are understood. The specific and material characteristics of the opposed moods and meanings in the series are seen as opposed but also, and more importantly, as unified. The change is from the finite, determined single mode that appears in conjunction with another mode to a feeling of the spirit in its infinite totality,

. . . so daß von harmonischverbundenen eines wie das andere im Punkte der Entgegensetzung und Vereinigung vorhanden ist, und daß *der Geist in diesem Punkte in seiner Unendlichkeit fühlbar ist*, der durch die Entgegensetzung als Endliches erschien . . . (310) <sup>9</sup>

so that, in the point of opposition and unification, one as well as the other of the harmonically opposed is present, and so that at this point that *spirit*, which appeared as finite through opposition, *can be felt in its infinity*. (69)

The poetic spirit can only appear as finite and as a single tone opposed to another tone; the spirit cannot appear as such, in its infinity. Thus, the change from one mode of consideration to another does not allow the spirit to appear as such. Instead, there is a "feeling" of the spirit in its infinity. The change is from finite appearance to an infinite sensation.

## V. The poetic self

Totality cannot appear as an object or a subject or as their opposition in knowledge, because totality as such encompasses all three:

[S]o muß das erkannte immer nur mit dem Erkennenden und der Erkenntniß beeder zusammengenommen jene dreifache Natur des poëtischen Ich ausmachen, und weder als Erkanntes aufgefaßt vom Erkennenden, noch als Erkennendes aufgefaßt vom Erkennenden, noch als Erkanntes und Erkennendes aufgefaßt, von der Erkenntnis, noch als Erkenntnis aufgefaßt vom Erkennenden, in keiner dieser drei abgesondert gedachten Qualitäten, wird es als reines poëtisches Ich in seiner dreifachen Natur . . . erfunden. (312) **[End Page 550]**

What is known can thus only constitute the threefold nature of the poetic self when taken together with the knowing subject and knowledge, and neither as what is known apprehended by the knowing subject, nor as the knowing subject apprehended by the knowing subject, nor as what is known and the knowing subject apprehended by knowledge, nor as knowledge apprehended by the knowing subject; in none of these three separately thought qualities is it found/invented as the pure poetic self in its threefold nature. (72)

Each of the three positions is too limited to be the perspective from which the poetic self can be grasped. For the pure poetic self to be found or invented ("erfunden"), it must be present as all of the components of appearance or knowledge.

Hölderlin also formulates the dilemma of the apprehension of the poetic self in the vocabulary of opposition and unification. The feeling of the spirit must be of both the opposition and unity, and the union of that opposition and unity, that make it up:

. . . denn wenn Einigkeit und Entgegensezung in [poëtischer Individualität] unzertrennlich verbunden und Eines ist, so kann sie der Reflexion weder als entgegensezbares Einiges, noch als vereinbares Entgegengesetztes erscheinen, sie kann also gar nicht erscheinen, oder nur im Charakter eines positiven Nichts, eines unendlichen Stillstands . . . (311-12)

. . . because when unity and opposition are inseparably bound and one in poetic individuality, poetic individuality can appear to reflection neither as an opposable unified nor as a unifiable opposed, it can thus not appear at all, or only in the character of a positive nothing, an infinite standstill. (71)

When unity and opposition are combined, and totality achieved, they cannot appear. The spirit in its totality can be characterized neither as merely "ichhaft" ("I-like")--"entgegensezbares Einiges" ("opposable unified")--nor as merely "nicht-ich-haft" ("Not-I-like")--"vereinbares Entgegengesetztes" ("the opposed which can be made one"). It must be the simultaneity of both "I" and "Not-I" and of opposition and unity which cannot appear, because appearance demands those divisions and oppositions.

Appearance thus breaks down at the moment of totality, and it cannot even be said that it breaks down because of some "thing." Appearance breaks down because it is relationality itself, the possibility of appearance, that demands to be felt. This relationality is not a positive thing, but positing itself. Every thing is dissolved into relations--into the relations that allow for every thing to appear.

What, then, is felt in this moment? The text responds to this **[End Page 551]** question by continuing--". . . or . . ."--and offers another possibility: "thus it cannot appear at all

or . . ." The poetic self is not only unknowable, impossible or non-appearing. The sentence continues:

. . . sie kann also gar nicht erscheinen, oder nur im Charakter eines positiven Nichts, eines unendlichen Stillstands, und es ist die Hyperbel aller Hyperbeln der kühnste und letzte Versuch des poetischen Geistes, wenn er in seiner Verfahrensweise ihn je macht . . . das poetische Ich aufzufassen . . . und doch muß er es, denn da er alles, was er in seinem Geschäftte ist, mit Freiheit seyn soll, und muß, indem er eine eigene Welt schafft . . . (311-12)

. . . it can thus not appear at all or only in the character of a positive nothing, an infinite standstill, and it is the hyperbole of all hyperboles, the boldest and last attempt of the poetic spirit, if it ever makes it in its mode of operation . . . to grasp the poetic self . . . and yet it must, because it must be everything that it is in its enterprise with freedom, and must, by creating its own world. (71-72)

The "or" opens up the possibility of the sensation of the impossible. The sensation is not felt by any person, not by any determinate self, but by the poetic self. No individual poet has the sensation, because the poetic spirit and the poet in Hölderlin's text cannot be understood as individual subjects. The poetic spirit exists only in its creative relation with material, a relation in which the spirit and the knowing subject are forced to give up their primacy.

The sentence continues by naming the sensation as the creation of a world. The sensation of the poetic self must also be a moment of creation. "Grasping the poetic self" and "creating one's own world" are related by apposition. The apprehension of the poetic self is not self-consciousness, but the non-consciousness of the poetic, creating self.

## VI. The intimation of language

The phrase "creation of a world" is a redescription of the final moment of the poetic operation and appears in the "Indication for Presentation and Language" as the moment of the intimation of language:

[I]n diesem Augenblicke ist es, wo man sagen kann, daß die Sprache geahndet wird, und wenn nun wie in der ursprünglichen Empfindung eine Reflexion erfolgte, . . . sie giebt dem Herzen alles wieder, was sie ihm nahm, sie ist belebende Kunst, wie sie zuvor vergeistigende Kunst war, und **[End Page 552]** mit einem Zauberschlage um den andern ruft sie das verlorene Leben schöner hervor, bis es wieder so ganz sich fühlt, wie es sich ursprünglich fühlte. (319)

In this moment, one can say that language is intimated, and if now a reflection were to occur as in the original sensation, . . . it gives everything back to the heart that it took from it, it is vivifying art, as it was intellectualizing/spiritizing art before, and with one magical beat after another, it calls forth more beautifully the lost life until [life] feels itself as fully as it felt originally. (79-80)

Vivifying art occurs in the final moment of the poetic operation. But the text allows no certainty of this moment; the vivification occurs only "if a reflection were to occur." The original demand of the spirit is fulfilled only "after" the final moment, in the linguistic figuration of the forms of knowledge and of the beautiful, in the creation of the poetic spirit's own world. But this "after" cannot be claimed with certainty. The "or" that opens up the possibility of the sensation of totality never gives up the first possibility that there

might not be the sensation of the poetic self.

The text marks these uncertainties and proceeds to elaborate what would occur if there were a transition beyond the final moment. Totality cannot be presented, but language emerges from the feeling of totality as the poet's own world. The product of the reflection is language: "Das Produkt dieser schöpferischen Reflection ist die Sprache" ("The product of this creative reflection is language") (320-21). The moment of totality occurs within the alternation of tones as its interruption, but the poet must maintain the relation to totality within the progression itself. Language serves as the thread or memory of totality:

[E]s ist seine letzte Aufgabe, beim harmonischen Wechsel einen Faden, eine Erinnerung zu haben, damit der Geist . . . in den verschiedenen Stimmungen sich gegenwärtig bleibe, so wie er sich ganz gegenwärtig ist, *in der unendlichen Einheit*. (311)

It is its last task to have a thread or memory in the harmonic alternation, so that the spirit remain present to itself, just as it is present to itself *in the infinite unity*. (71)

The thread or memory maintains a relation to totality. The final moment must be maintained within the progression of tones. The effect of this memory on the alternation of tones gives the poetic operation its excessive character and its other, more appropriate name: errancy. **[End Page 553]**

## VII. Conclusions: errancy

In an important passage of Hölderlin's text, the excessive movement of the poetic operation appears under the name of errancy. <sup>10</sup> To grasp the centrality of this word, Hölderlin's text must be read beyond itself, because the text maneuvers to avoid errancy and exclude it from the poetic operation at the same time that it places errancy at the center of the poetic operation.

The word "irre" appears only once in "On the Modes of Operation of the Poetic Spirit," in the third paragraph, during the discussion of the meeting of the material and spiritual conflicts that begins the progression of forms. The spirit intends for this meeting with the material conflict to merely reproduce the conflicts within the spirit. Material would thus play a role already anticipated within the limited conflicts of the spirit, and its opposition to the spirit would have been fully prepared within the spirit:

[Der Stoff] ist das woran und worinn das jedesmalige poetische Geschäft und Verfahren sich realisirt, das Vehikel des Geistes, wodurch er sich in sich selbst und in anderen reproducirt. (306)

[The material] is that with which and in which every poetic enterprise and operation realizes itself, the device of the spirit, by which it reproduces itself in itself and in others. (65)

The spirit needs material to serve as its objective form and to allow for presentation. The progression of forms can only commence in the relation of the spirit to material. <sup>11</sup>

But the material "Stoff" is not merely "that by means of which" the spirit accomplishes its work. It is radically opposed to the spirit and forces the spirit to recognize its alterity in their encounter:

[Der Wirkungskreis] ist der Tendenz nach, dem Gehalte seines Strebens nach dem poetischen Geschäfte entgegen, und der Dichter wird nur zu leicht durch seinen Stoff irre geführt, indem dieser aus dem Zusammenhange der lebendigen Welt genommen der poetischen Beschränkung widerstrebt, indem er dem Geiste nicht bloß als Vehikel dienen will. (306)

In its tendency, the content of its striving, [material] is opposed to the poetic enterprise, and the poet is all too easily led astray by his material, as **[End Page 554]** the latter, taken out of the context with the living world, resists the poetic limitation as it does not want to serve the spirit as a mere device. (65)

These sentences present both the resistances of material and the second appearance of the word "poet" in Hölderlin's text. The poet is not the spirit alone, because the poet requires the meeting of the spiritual and material conflicts. The spirit appears in the passage as that which would make the encounter with material into an encounter with the same; the poet appears only in the creative encounter between the spirit and material. In the encounter, the poet is led astray. Led astray from what straight path? From the straight path that would be prescribed by the spirit and on which there would be no encounter with material, and which would thus not be poetic, because the poetic operation requires the encounter with material if it is not to be "leere Manier" (306). If there were some subject in control, the path of poetry would be a straight one; but because poetry cannot be understood merely in terms of subjects and objects, its path is anything but straight. The movement of the poetic operation is thereby renamed as a "leading astray." The beginning of form is also the beginning of errancy.

But what is the relation of errancy to the poetic operation considered in its entirety? The sentence continues:

Indem wenn [der Stoff] auch recht gewählt, ist sein nächster und erster Fortschritt in Rücksicht auf ihn Gegensatz und Sporn, ist in Rücksicht auf das Dichterische Erfüllung (306).<sup>12</sup>

Even if [the material] is chosen correctly, its closest and first progress in regard to [the spirit] is opposition and spur, is in regard to the poetic[,] fulfillment (65).

The straying progress of the material and the spirit can be understood in two ways. For the spirit, the progress is opposition. But regarded poetically the movement is "fulfillment." To understand the relation of errancy to the poetic operation, the sentences dealing with the poet and the poetic must be read together: "the poet is all too easily led astray by his material" and "the material, opposing progress is fulfillment in regard to the poetic." The juxtaposition of sentences leads to the conclusion that the poet who is led astray is the **[End Page 555]** fulfillment of the poetic operation. The poet who is "irre geführt," led to err, is the poet led to fulfillment.<sup>13</sup>

Errancy is thus not the leading away from the correct path, but the correct path itself. Errancy renames the poetic operation; it fulfills all the demands of the poetic spirit. Material resistance and the straying it causes allow for the commencement and the fulfillment of the poetic operation.

But the reading of errancy proposed here must take account of the text's resistance to errancy. Hölderlin never explicitly equates errancy and fulfillment. The reading of errancy in Hölderlin's texts must account both for its centrality and its apparent marginalization.

In the next paragraph, there is a separation of the poetic operation from the movement

of errancy and even from the moments of conflict that the text has repeatedly presented as necessary.<sup>14</sup> There is a receptivity within material for the poetic operation "nonetheless" and "regardless of this conflict." There is an attempt to ward off errancy, but errancy appears even more insistently in that very attempt. Hölderlin gives a list of the characteristics of the poetic operation and is forced to leave a blank:

Es muß sich aber zeigen, wie dieses Widerstreits ungeachtet, in dem der poetische Geist bei seinem Geschäftte mit dem jedesmaligen Elemente und Wirkungskreise steht, dieser dennoch jenen begünstige, und wie sich jener Widerstreit auflöse, wie in dem Elemente das sich der Dichter zum Vehikel wählt, dennoch eine Rezeptivität für das poetische Geschäft liege, und wie er alle Forderungen, die ganze poetische Verfahrensweise in ihrem Metaphorischen ihrem Hyperbolischen, und ihrem \_\_\_\_\_ Charakter in sich realisire in Wechselwirkung mit dem Elemente, das zwar in seiner anfänglichen Tendenz widerstrebt, und geradentgegengesetzt ist, aber im Mittelpuncte sich mit jenem vereinigt. (306) **[End Page 556]**

It must however become apparent, regardless of the conflict which the poetic spirit has in its enterprise with the respective element and sphere of influence, how the former favors the latter, and how the conflict is resolved, how in the element which the poet chooses as a vehicle there nevertheless lies a receptivity for the poetic enterprise, and how he realizes within himself all the demands, the whole poetic operation in its metaphoric, its hyperbolic, and its \_\_\_\_\_ character in mutual effect with the element, which resists in its initial tendency and is diametrically opposed, to be sure, yet which unites with the former in the middle point (65-66).

Despite the repeated emphasis in the preceding paragraph on the necessity of conflict and on the independence of material, the conflicts of the poetic operation recede here, and material becomes a mere vehicle. But the blank space alerts us to something that exceeds this reduction and dissolution of conflict and errancy.

What is it about the poetic operation that its character cannot be fully described? The blank in Hölderlin's text is not accidental, not any more accidental than the incompleteness of "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit" or of Hölderlin's other poetological writings. The poetic operation cannot be fully described because it attempts to contain something that cannot be named. The blank space marks, or fails to mark, that which cannot appear in the poetic operation. Like the moment when appearance breaks down, nothing can appear but the very conditions of appearance itself. Here, that condition is the blank on the page. The list "metaphoric, hyperbolic, \_\_\_\_\_" is a climactic enumeration; it ascends in degree of excess. The last term is the adjective corresponding to the "Hyperbel aller Hyperbeln" (312), the excess beyond excess. In a passage cited above, the text attempts to find a name for this missing character: "[Die Einheit] kann also gar nicht erscheinen, oder nur im Charakter eines positiven Nichts, eines unendlichen Stillstands" (312) ("Unity can thus not appear at all, or only in the character of a positive nothing, an infinite standstill" [71]). Hölderlin's entire text can be read as the attempt to present the "character" of this moment of standstill. The blank space is another attempt to come to terms with--and come to a term for--this character that cannot appear and that both paralyzes appearance and makes it possible.

Errancy appears as the name of the progression of the poetic spirit that is altered by the blank space, that nameless, necessary moment within the poetic operation. Five years after the composition of "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit," in Hölderlin's text accompanying his translation of the Pindar fragment that he entitled **[End Page 557]** "Von der Wahrheit" ("Of Truth"), there is a concise reflection on the types of errancy that there might be and on the necessity of at least one of those in an

encounter with the truth:

Furcht vor der Wahrheit, aus Wohlgefallen an ihr. Nämlich das erste lebendige Auffassen derselben im lebendigen Sinne ist, wie alles reine Gefühl, Verwirrungen ausgesetzt; so daß man nicht irret, aus eigener Schuld, noch auch aus einer Störung, sondern des höhern Gegenstands wegen, für den, verhältnismäßig, der Sinn zu schwach ist. <sup>15</sup>

Fear of truth, out of pleasure in it. Because the first lively apprehension in the living senses is, like all pure feeling, exposed to confusions; so that one does not err because of one's own guilt, nor because of a disturbance, but because of the higher object, for which, comparatively, the senses are too weak. <sup>16</sup>

The moment of "Auffassen" or apprehension describes that first impression for which "Sinn" (sense, mind, meaning) is too weak. The overwhelming--overdemanding, "Überforderung"--of the senses leaves its mark on "one," on the "Sinn" which appears as their straying. Erring is necessary here, not because of a particular, avoidable shortcoming or disturbance, but because of the inability of meaning or sensibility to receive a higher object, truth or the poetic self, that cannot be known or subsumed into any schema of sensibility or knowledge. At the same time, the higher object contains and grounds all relations of opposition and unification which are, however, incapable of grasping themselves as a whole. Totality is sensed, is a sensation, is sensing--all at once. The result is a confusion which overflows the moment of apprehension and continues into the relations that have their beginning there. Errancy serves as a reminder of the excess of the originating moment. Relations cannot be separated from the infinite standstill that forms their totality. Exposed to confusion, the poet errs, and errancy carries with it the marks--or lack of marks--of this first "lively apprehension." The totality at the center of the poetic operation is thus not merely removed from the forms of the alternation of tones but removes the poetic operation itself into a realm that Hölderlin's text presents as a labyrinth, as "irre." **[End Page 558]**

The errancy of the poetic operation is not just a twisted and confused "ver-fahren" that loses its way. Grimm's *Wörterbuch* tells us that "irre führen" means drifting:

IRRE . . . die ältere sprache und die neuere des gewöhnlichen lebens brauchen *irre* . . . nhd. vorzüglich in den verbindungen *irre führen* . . . *einen irre leiten, führen* vom rechten ableiten, verführen 5. zustand der verwirrung, des schwankens, der ratlosigkeit. <sup>17</sup>

ERRANCY . . . in older and newer common usage *errancy* mostly used in the combinations *irre führen* (lead astray), *einen irren leiten, führen* (lead or guide someone astray), divert from the right path, seduce 5. condition of confusion, of wavering, of perplexity.

But the related word "irren" also means "to stop," "to delay":

IRREN . . . 3) in der älteren sprache aber gewöhnlich vom vorwärtsschreiten abhalten, hindern . . . impedire . . . hemmen. <sup>18</sup>

TO ERR . . . 3) but in older usage common for detain from walking forward, hinder, . . . impedire . . . inhibit.

The movement forward of the poetic spirit is not only a straying but is also marked by a constant halting. The poetic spirit's errancy is also a suspension, a standstill, that corresponds to the demand for the instantiation of totality in every moment. The final moment accompanies the progression within the alternation of tones. Errancy is both

motion and suspension.

The poetic operation is always marked by an impossible and necessary moment of sensation that halts and leads forms and appearance astray. This moment remains at its center as the contradiction that defines the poetic operation. The final moment's impossibility also remains; the operation leads towards and away from it and contains it at every point and must do so. The progression of tones attempts to contain totality and thus shifts its movement into the errancy that results from the progression's necessary contact with an undetermined halting. It is the center that is necessary for the feeling of the whole that binds the series together. The final moment is infinite; it is always there in the poetic operation as what cannot be there, as what makes it possible, as a disaster within poetic language. **[End Page 559]**

The thread that language provides is not deliverance from errancy, but the thread that sustains errancy in a relation to the felt totality of poetic self-consciousness. Language gives to forms the relation that opposition and forms cannot provide by themselves--the relation to totality that makes them possible. Appearance, knowledge, and the beautiful are always linguistic, and it is this linguisticity that gives them their tie to totality and that submits them to the errancy presented in Hölderlin's text. The moment of standstill cannot be formed but remains in language both to deform and lead astray presentation and to restore presentation's claim to totality. Language emerges in the final moment and serves as its reminder. The absoluteness of that final oneness of unity is thus not isolated; presentation and form remain dependent on and oriented towards the unrepresentable and the formless by means of the thread offered by language. There is no determination without what is undetermined, no form without formlessness.

But even the memory offered within language is only a possibility. The poetic self "can . . . not appear at all or only in the character of a positive nothing, an infinite standstill." Hölderlin's text insists on both the possibility and impossibility of the most beautiful moment and everything that would emerge from it or claim it as an origin. Language is only ever intimated in the moment of totality; it may only belong to a future poetic operation. The poetic language of Hölderlin's text may only ever be promised, the relation to totality may always also be impossible, and the alternation of tones may only be a row of unrelated atoms. The "Indication for Presentation and Language" remains merely an indication, and Hölderlin's four questions which opened this paper remain questions, asserting claims about language that cannot be verified--or, rather, they can be verified, but only as erring. Errancy extends even to the possibility of errancy itself; speaking of errancy exposes speaking itself to errancy. How could this one utterance be exempt from a general errancy? In "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit," language is made liable, *empfänglich*, for something that does not allow it to speak in good and due form alone. The movement towards an understanding of formlessness as "beyond forms and in their very depth" must itself end in erring and may, possibly, end by erring.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke 14: Entwürfe zur Poetik* eds. Wolfram Groddeck and D.E. Sattler (Frankfurt a.M.: Roter Stern Verlag, 1984), 318, numbering added. Unless otherwise noted, all Hölderlin citations in German are from this edition and

volume. All emphases are Hölderlin's.

2. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters on Theory* translated and edited by Thomas Pfau (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988), 78-79, numbering added. Unless otherwise noted, all Hölderlin quotations in English refer to this edition. Some of the translations are modified. All emphases are Hölderlin's.

3. Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 54.

4. Lyotard, 153.

5. Winfried Menninghaus emphasizes the irreducibility of the poetic operation to a "bloß zeitliche Stufenfolge" in *Unendliche Verdoppelung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 112-14. But Menninghaus' work is an exception. In *Der gesetzliche Kalkül: Hölderlins Dichtungslehre* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1962), Ulrich Gaier is often helpful in his clarifying explications of "On the Mode of Operation of the Poetic Spirit." But this tendency towards clarity is also the book's main shortcoming. Gaier insists on the "balance" and "reconciliation" that Hölderlin's poetic operation achieves; these terms dominate his discussion (see pages 87-116). There are moments in *Der gesetzliche Kalkül* when Gaier seems to recognize what cannot be reconciled in the final moment's impossibility (especially pages 95-96), but the book ultimately fails to take account of the intractability of the final moment and the centrality of what cannot be understood under any clear law or calculation. Hölderlin's "Gesetz" would be something more than merely "calculable" (see the reading of Hölderlin's law in Thomas Schestag's *Parerga* [Munich: Klaus Boer Verlag, 1991], 15-50). The emphasis on the clarity of Hölderlin's thought is a reaction to those who accuse Hölderlin of obscurantism. Lawrence Ryan opens his discussion of "On the Mode of Operation" with a consideration of these claims and of the necessity of avoiding the reactive position of insisting on Hölderlin's clarity. Ryan's understanding of the poetic operation as a circular, "excentric" path allows his reading to avoid some of the problems of Gaier's reading. See Lawrence Ryan, *Hölderlins Lehre vom Wechsel der Töne* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960), 30-48; 80-103.

6. For a discussion of the "Objektivierbarkeit" of the spirit, see Lawrence Ryan, 32-41. The corresponding excess appears in the material conflict in the form of the infinitive; it is always something that is "to be described, to be painted, to be formed" (305).

7. Jean-François Courtine, *Extase de la raison : Essais sur Schelling* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 51, my translation.

8. "Das epische dem Schein nach naive Gedicht ist in seiner Bedeutung heroisch. Es ist die Metapher großer Bestrebungen" (369). ("The epic, seemingly naive poem is heroic in its significance. It is the metaphor of great efforts" [83].) My brief summary of the alternation of tones is based on the discussion of the poetic operation in Peter Fenves, "Hölderlin," *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* ed. Michael Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

9. Hölderlin underlines "fühlbar"--"feelable"--four times. See p. 240.

10. Two readings of errancy in different Hölderlin texts contributed to the analysis that follows: Hans-Jost Frey, *Der unendliche Text* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1990), 77-123; and Thomas Schestag, *Parerga*, 17-50.

[11](#). For a discussion of the beginning of form in the poetic operation, see Ryan, 32-33.

[12](#). This is an alternate reading of the manuscript suggested by the editors of the Frankfurt edition and corresponds more closely with the manuscript than the editors' final version. See 247-49 and 271.

[13](#). The relation of errancy and fulfillment in this text has escaped critical notice. Perhaps one reason for this is the fact that the version published in the Hellingrath and Stuttgart Hölderlin editions makes it seem that material offers resistance to the "poetic fulfillment": "[w]enn [der Stoff] auch recht gewählt ist, sein nächster und erster Fortschritt in Rücksicht auf ihn Gegensatz und Sporn ist in Rücksicht auf die dichterische Erfüllung" (Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. III, ed. Friedrich Beissner [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1943], 245). See editorial note in the Frankfurt edition (271).

[14](#). Ulrich Gaier and Lawrence Ryan repeat Hölderlin's exclusion of errancy. Gaier dismisses an interpretation of the poetic operation as "Herumirren" and tries to present the poetic operation as "ein sicherer Fortschritt" that leads to the "tatsächliche Gegenwart des Unendlichen" (Gaier, 96). Ryan presents errancy as a stage that must be surpassed (Ryan, 84).

[15](#). Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke 15: Pindar* ed. D.E. Sattler (Frankfurt a.M.: 1987), 349.

[16](#). Friedrich Hölderlin, *Poems and Fragments* translated by Michael Hamburger (London: Anvil Press, 1994), 633, translation modified.

[17](#). Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch IV, 2* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1877), 2157-63, my translation.

[18](#). Grimm, 2163, my translation.