Hölderlin's 'Celebration of Peace' and Kant's Treaty 'Toward Perpetual Peace'

Performative Types of Writing in Poetry and Philosophy[1]

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1 This piece was written in German for the lecture series "Kunst, Kultur, Gesellschaft" ("Art, Culture, Society") on the topic "1770 – *ein starker Jahrgang. Beethoven, Hölderlin und Hegel im Jahr ihres 250. Geburtstags*" ("1770 – A *Strong Vintage. Beethoven, Hölderlin and Hegel in the Year of their 250th Birthdays*"), and due to the pandemic was shown as a video film with the title "Seit ein Gespräch wir sind … bald sind wir aber Gesang. Hölderlin und die 'Friedensfeier'" ("Since we have been a discourse… but soon we shall be song." Hölderlin and the 'Celebration of Peace') ONLINE on July 21, 2020, at the Centre for Courses for Senior Citizens in Munich. The video film was once more presented at the conference at the University of Zadar, which took place from October 1 to 3, 2020 on the topic of *Urteilskraft und Demokratie – Huldigung des Rechts?* (*Judgment and Democracy – Homage to the Law?*) under the direction of Jure Zovko. This is the first English translation of the German text. In the case of references to classics such as Friedrich Hölderlin, Immanuel Kant or Theodor W. Adorno, the years of first publication or creation are given in order to make it easier for readers to find the textual references who do not have the relevant English translation at hand or who wish to read the German text. Many thanks to David Hellbrück and Andreas Wintersperger for their careful revision of this contribution.

Friedensfeier[2]

Friedrich Hölderlin

Ich bitte dieses Blatt nur gutmüthig zu lesen. So wird es sicher nicht unfaßlich, noch weniger anstößig seyn. Sollten aber dennoch einige eine solche Sprache zu wenig konventionell finden, so muß ich ihnen gestehen: ich kann nicht anders. An einem schönen Tage läßt sich ja fast jede Sangart hören, und die Natur, wovon es her ist, nimmts auch wieder.

Der Verfasser gedenkt dem Publikum eine ganze Sammlung von dergleichen Blättern vorzulegen, und dieses soll irgend eine Probe seyn davon.

1

1. Der himmlischen, still wiederklingenden,
2. Der ruhigwandelnden Töne voll,
3. Und gelüftet ist der altgebaute,
4. Seeliggewohnte Saal; um grüne Teppiche duftet
5. Die Freudenwolk' und weithinglänzend stehn,
6. Gereiftester Früchte voll und goldbekränzter Kelche,
7. Wohlangeordnet, eine prächtige Reihe,
8. Zur Seite da und dort aufsteigend über dem
9. Geebneten Boden die Tische.
10. Denn ferne kommend haben
11. Hieher, zur Abendstunde,
12. Sich liebende Gäste beschieden.

2 Friedrich Hölderlin, "Friedensfeier", in *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* (MA), vol. 1, ed. Michael Knaupp (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998), 361–366.

Celebration of Peace[3]

Friedrich Hölderlin

All I ask is that the reader be kindly disposed towards these pages. In that case he will certainly not find them incomprehensible, far less objectionable. But if, nonetheless, some should think such a language too unconventional, I must confess to them: I cannot help it. On a fine day – they should consider – almost every mode of song makes itself heard; and Nature, whence it originates, also receives it again.

The author intends to offer the public an entire collection of such pieces, and this one should be regarded as a kind of sample.

1

With heavenly, quietly echoing,
With calmly modulating music filled,
And aired is the anciently built,
The sweetly familiar hall; upon green carpets wafts
The fragrant cloud of joy and, casting their brightness far,
Full of most mellow fruit and chalices wreathed with gold,
Arranged in seemly order, a splendid row,
Erected here and there on either side above
The levelled floor, stand the tables.
For, come from distant places,
Here, at the evening hour,
Loving guests have forgathered.

3 Friedrich Hölderlin, "Celebration of Peace", in *Selected Poems and Fragments*, trans. Michael Hamburger, ed. Jeremy Adler (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 208–216.

2

13. Und dämmernden Auges denk' ich schon,
14. Vom ernsten Tagwerk lächelnd,
15. Ihn selbst zu sehn, den Fürsten des Fests.
16. Doch wenn du schon dein Ausland gern verläugnest,
17. Und als vom langen Heldenzuge müd,
18. Dein Auge senkst, vergessen, leichtbeschattet,
19. Und Freundesgestalt annimmst, du Allbekannter, doch
20. Beugt fast die Knie das Hohe. Nichts vor dir,
21. Nur Eines weiß ich, Sterbliches bist du nicht.
22. Ein Weiser mag mir manches erhellen; wo aber
23. Ein Gott noch auch erscheint,
24. Da ist doch andere Klarheit.

3

25. Von heute aber nicht, nicht unverkündet ist er;
26. Und einer, der nicht Fluth noch Flamme gescheuet,
27. Erstaunet, da es stille worden, umsonst nicht, jezt,
28. Da Herrschaft nirgend ist zu sehn bei Geistern und Menschen.
29. Das ist, sie hören das Werk,
30. Längst vorbereitend, von Morgen nach Abend, jezt erst,
31. Denn unermeßlich braußt, in der Tiefe verhallend,
32. Des Donnerers Echo, das tausendjährige Wetter,
33. Zu schlafen, übertönt von Friedenslauten, hinunter.
34. Ihr aber, theuergewordne, o ihr Tage der Unschuld,
35. Ihr bringt auch heute das Fest, ihr Lieben! und es blüht
36. Rings abendlich der Geist in dieser Stille;
37. Und rathen muß ich, und wäre silbergrau
38. Die Loke, o ihr Freunde!
39. Für Kränze zu sorgen und Mahl, jezt ewigen Jünglingen ähnlich.

4

40. Und manchen möcht' ich laden, aber o du,
41. Der freundlichernst den Menschen zugethan,

2

13. And already with eyes dusk-dim,
14. With solemn day-labour smiling,
15. I think that I see him in person, the prince of the feast-day.
16. But though you like to disavow your foreign land,
17. And weary, it seems, with long heroic war,
18. Cast down your eyes, oblivious, lightly shaded,
19. Assuming the shape of a friend, you known to all men, yet
20. Almost it bends our knees, such loftiness. Nothing in
21. Your presence I know; but one thing: mortal you are not.
22. A wise man could elucidate much for me; but where
23. A God as well appears,
24. A different clarity shines.

3

25. Yet not sprung up today, nor unproclaimed he comes
26. And one who did not balk at either flood or flame
27. Not without reason astonishes us, now that all is quiet,
28. Dominion nowhere to be seen among spirits or mortals.
29. That is, only now do they hear
30. The work that long has prepared them, from Orient to Occident,
31. For now immeasurably, fading away in the deeps,
32. The Thunderer's echo, the millennial storm
33. Rolls down to sleep, intermingled with peaceful music.
34. But you, grown dear to us, O days of innocence,
35. It's you, beloved, that bring this feast-day too, and round us
36. The spirit flowers, vespertine in this quiet;
37. And, friends, I must advise you, though
38. Our hair had turned silver-grey,
39. To see the garlands and banquet, now like men immortally young.

4

40. And many there are I would invite, but you,
41. O you that benignly, gravely disposed to men

42. Dort unter syrischer Palme,
43. Wo nahe lag die Stadt, am Brunnen gerne war;
44. Das Kornfeld rauschte rings, still athmete die Kühlung
45. Vom Schatten des geweiheten Gebirges,
46. Und die lieben Freunde, das treue Gewölk,
47. Umschatteten dich auch, damit der heiligkühne
48. Durch Wildniß mild dein Stral zu Menschen kam, o Jüngling!
49. Ach! aber dunkler umschattete, mitten im Wort, dich
50. Furchtbarentscheidend ein tödlich Verhängniß. So ist schnell
51. Vergänglich alles Himmlische; aber umsonst nicht;

5

52. Denn schonend rührt des Maases allzeit kundig
53. Nur einen Augenblik die Wohnungen der Menschen
54. Ein Gott an, unversehn, und keiner weiß es, wenn?
55. Auch darf alsdann das Freche drüber gehn,
56. Und kommen muß zum heiligen Ort das Wilde
57. Von Enden fern, übt rauhbetastend den Wahn,
58. Und trift daran ein Schiksaal, aber Dank,
59. Nie folgt der gleich hernach dem gottgegebnen Geschenke;
60. Tiefprüfend ist es zu fassen.
61. Auch wär' uns, sparte der Gebende nicht
62. Schon längst vom Seegen des Heerds
63. Uns Gipfel und Boden entzündet.

6

64. Des Göttlichen aber empfiengen wir
65. Doch viel. Es ward die Flamm' uns
66. In die Hände gegeben, und Ufer und Meersfluth.
67. Viel mehr, denn menschlicher Weise
68. Sind jene mit uns, die fremden Kräfte, vertrauet.
69. Und es lehret Gestirn dich, das
70. Vor Augen dir ist, doch nimmer kannst du ihm gleichen.
71. Vom Alllebendigen aber, von dem
72. Viel Freuden sind und Gesänge,

Down there beneath the Syrian palm-tree, where
The town lay near, by the well were glad to be;
Round you the cornfield rustled, quietly coolness breathed
From shadows of the hallowed mountainsides,
And your dear friends, the faithful clouds
Cast shade upon you too, so that holy, the bold,
The beam through wilderness gently should fall on men, O youth.
But oh, more darkly, even as you spoke,
And dreadfully determining a deadly doom overshadowed you there. So all
That's heavenly fleets on; but not for nothing;

5

For sparingly, at all times knowing the measure,
A God for a moment only will touch the dwellings
Of men, by none foreseen, and no one knows when.
And over it then all insolence may pass,
And to the holy place must come the savage
From ends remote, and roughly fingering works out his
Delusion, so fulfilling a fate, but thanks
Will never follow at once upon the godsent gift;
Probed deeply, this can be grasped.
And were not the giver sparing
The wealth of our hearth long ago would
Have fired both the roof and the floor.

6

Yet much that's divine nonetheless we
Received. The flame was entrusted
To us, and shore and ocean flood.
Much more than humanly only
Are these, the alien powers, familiar with us.
And you are taught by the stars
In front of your eyes, but never you can be like them.
Yet to the All-Living from whom
Many joys and songs have sprung

Ist einer ein Sohn, ein Ruhigmächtiger ist er,
Und nun erkennen wir ihn,
Nun, da wir kennen den Vater
Und Feiertage zu halten
Der hohe, der Geist
Der Welt sich zu Menschen geneigt hat.

7

Denn längst war der zum Herrn der Zeit zu groß
Und weit aus reichte sein Feld, wann hats ihn aber erschöpfet?
Einmal mag aber ein Gott auch Tagewerk erwählen,
Gleich Sterblichen und theilen alles Schiksaal.
Schiksaalgesez ist diß, daß Alle sich erfahren,
Daß, wenn die Stille kehrt, auch eine Sprache sei.
Wo aber wirkt der Geist, sind wir auch mit, und streiten,
Was wohl das Beste sei. So dünkt mir jezt das Beste,
Wenn nun vollendet sein Bild und fertig ist der Meister,
Und selbst verklärt davon aus seiner Werkstatt tritt,
Der stille Gott der Zeit und nur der Liebe Gesez,
Das schönausgleichende gilt von hier an bis zum Himmel.

8

Viel hat von Morgen an,
Seit ein Gespräch wir sind und hören voneinander,
Erfahren der Mensch; bald sind wir aber Gesang.
Und das Zeitbild, das der große Geist entfaltet,
Ein Zeichen liegts vor uns, daß zwischen ihm und andern
Ein Bündnis zwischen ihm und andern Mächten ist.
Nicht er allein, die Unerzeugten, Ew'gen
Sind kennbar alle daran, gleichwie auch an den Pflanzen
Die Mutter Erde sich und Licht und Luft sich kennet.
Zulezt ist aber doch, ihr heiligen Mächte, für euch
Das Liebeszeichen, das Zeugniß
Daß ihrs noch seiet, der Festtag,

There's one who is a son, and quietly powerful is he,
And now we recognize him,
Now that we know the Father
And to keep holidays
The exalted, the Spirit of
The World has inclined towards men.

7

For long now he had been too great to rule
As Lord of Time, and wide his field extended, but when did it exhaust him?
For once, however, even a God may choose
Mere daily tasks, like mortals, and share all manner of fate.
This is a law of fate, that each shall know all others,
That when the silence returns there shall be a language too.
Yet where the Spirit is active, we too will stir and debate
What course might be the best. So now it seems best to me
If now the Master completes his image and, finished,
Himself transfigured by it, steps out of his workshop,
The quiet God of Time, and only the law of love,
That gently resolves all difference, prevails from here up to Heaven.

8

Much, from the morning onwards,
Since we have been a discourse and have heard from one another,
Has human kind learnt; but soon we shall be song.
That temporal image too, which the great Spirit reveals,
As a token lies before us that between him and others,
Himself and other powers, there is a pact of peace.
Not he alone, the Unconceived, Eternal
Can all be known by this, as likewise by the plants
Our Mother Earth and light and air are known.
Yet ultimately, you holy powers, our token
Of love for you, and the proof
That still you are holy to us, is the feast-day.

9

103. Der Allversammelnde, wo Himmlische nicht
104. Im Wunder offenbar, noch ungesehn im Wetter,
105. Wo aber bei Gesang gastfreundlich untereinander
106. In Chören gegenwärtig, eine heilige Zahl
107. Die Seeligen in jeglicher Weise
108. Beisammen sind, und ihr Geliebtestes auch,
109. An dem sie hängen, nicht fehlt; denn darum rief ich
110. Zum Gastmahl, das bereitet ist,
111. Dich, Unvergeßlicher, dich, zum Abend der Zeit,
112. O Jüngling, dich zum Fürsten des Festes; und eher legt
113. Sich schlafen unser Geschlecht nicht,
114. Bis ihr Verheißenen all,
115. All ihr Unsterblichen, uns
116. Von eurem Himmel zu sagen,
117. Da seid in unserem Haußе.

10

118. Leichtathmende Lüfte
119. Verkünden euch schon,
120. Euch kündet das rauchende Thal
121. Und der Boden, der vom Wetter noch dröhnet,
122. Doch Hoffnung röthet die Wangen,
123. Und vor der Thüre des Haußes
124. Sizt Mutter und Kind,
125. Und schauet den Frieden
126. Und wenige scheinen zu sterben
127. Es hält ein Ahnen die Seele,
128. Vom goldnen Lichte gesendet,
129. Hält ein Versprechen die Ältesten auf.

9

103. The all-assembling, where heavenly beings are
104. Not manifest in miracles, nor unseen in thunderstorms,
105. But where in hymns hospitably conjoined
106. And present in choirs, a holy number,
107. The blessèd in every way
108. Meet and forgather, and their best-beloved,
109. To whom they are attached, is not missing; for that is why
110. You to the banquet now prepared I called,
111. The unforgettable, you, at the Evening of Time,
112. O youth, called you to the prince of the feast-day; nor shall
113. Our nation ever lie down to sleep until
114. All you that were prophesied,
115. Every one of you Immortals,
116. To tell us about your Heaven
117. Are here with us in our house.

10

118. Winds lightly breathing
119. Already announce you,
120. The vapour that drifts from the valley
121. And the ground still resounding with thunder,
122. But hope now flushes our cheeks,
123. In front of the door of their house
124. Sit mother and child,
125. And look upon peace,
126. And few now seem to be dying;
127. The souls of the oldest even
128. Held back by a hint, a promise
129. Conveyed by the golden light.

11

130. Wohl sind die Würze des Lebens,
131. Von oben bereitet und auch
132. Hinausgeführet, die Mühen.
133. Denn Alles gefällt jezt,
134. Einfältiges aber
135. Am meisten, denn die langgesuchte,
136. Die goldne Frucht,
137. Uraltem Stamm
138. In schütternden Stürmen entfallen,
139. Dann aber, als liebstes Gut, vom heiligen Schiksaal selbst,
140. Mit zärtlichen Waffen umschüzt,
141. Die Gestalt der Himmlischen ist es.

12

142. Wie die Löwin, hast du geklagt,
143. O Mutter, da du sie,
144. Natur, die Kinder verloren.
145. Denn es stahl sie, Allzuliebende, dir
146. Dein Feind, da du ihn fast
147. Wie die eigenen Söhne genommen,
148. Und Satyren die Götter gesellt hast.
149. So hast du manches gebaut,
150. Und manches begraben,
151. Denn es haßt dich, was
152. Du, vor der Zeit
153. Allkräftige, zum Lichte gezogen.
154. Nun kennest, nun lässest du diß;
155. Denn gerne fühllos ruht,
156. Bis daß es reift, furchtsamgeschäfftiges drunten.

11

130. Indeed it is travails, designed from
131. Above and there carried out,
132. That are the spice of life.
133. For now all things are pleasing
134. But most of all the
135. Ingenuous, because the long sought,
136. The golden fruit,
137. In shattering gales fallen down from
138. An age-old bough
139. But then, as the dearest possession, by Fate herself
140. Protected with tender weapons,
141. The shape of Heavenly it is.

12

142. Like the lioness you lamented,
143. O Mother, when you lost
144. Your children, Nature,
145. For they were stolen from you, the all too loving, by
146. Your enemy, when almost
147. Like your own sons you had nursed him
148. And with satyrs made gods consort.
149. So there is much you built
150. And much you buried,
151. For you are hated by
152. That which too soon
153. All-powerful, you raised to the light.
154. Now you know the fault, and desist,
155. For, till grown ripe, unfeeling
156. What's timidly busy likes to rest down below.

Kant's and Hölderlin's Self-Referential Instantiations of Peace

It is believed that Friedrich Hölderlin began the poem, the hymn, *Celebration of Peace* on the occasion of the peace treaty of Lunéville on February 9, 1801, during his stay in Hauptwil, Switzerland. Two letters from Hölderlin to his sister Heinrike and to his friend Christian Landauer have survived, in which Hölderlin reports with emphasis on the peace agreement. To his sister he writes on February 23, 1801:

> I am writing to you and the rest of the dear family on the day when among us here all is full of the news of the negotiated peace, and knowing me as you do I do not need to tell you what my feelings are. [...] I think all will now be well in the world. Whether I consider the recent or the distant past, everything seems to be leading up to an exceptional period, days of beautiful humanity, days of certain, fearless goodness and ways of thinking that are lucid and holy and exalted and simple all at once. (Hölderlin to Heinrike Breunlin, February 23, 1801, Hölderlin 2009a, 193)

Remarkably, Hölderlin adds "all that is good and sacred must be celebrated" (Hölderlin to Heinrike Breunlin, February 23, 1801, Hölderlin 2009a, 194). In February 1801, he wrote to Christian Landauer:

> I would of course have begun by speaking of the peace but the first pages of this letter were written I think a fortnight ago. What pleases me most about it is that with it the over-important role political alliances and misalliances have played is over and a good beginning has been made towards the simplicity that is proper to them. [...] It is everywhere a necessary evil to have compulsory laws and their executors. With the end of war and revolution I think that inner Boreas, the spirit of envy, will also cease, and let us hope a lovelier form of sociability than the merely solid and bourgeois will unfold! (Hölderlin to Christian Landauer, February, 1801, Hölderlin 2009a, 196)

Hölderlin is evidently moved by the signing of the peace treaty, and this in turn is how he perceives his immediate surroundings. He anticipates a better time, "the days of beautiful humanity", looks to days long past just as he looks ahead to the future; and he will do the same in his hymn *Celebration of Peace*.

Broadly speaking, the peace treaty of Lunéville represents a peace in the wake of the turmoil following the French Revolution of 1789, a political event with far-reaching consequences that was of profound importance to the poets and thinkers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre argues that the poem was finished under the impression of the peace treaty of Amiens in 1802 (see Hölderlin-Jahrbuch 1957 and Lefebvre 2011). The political and historical ramifications are not something I want to go into here, as it is of secondary importance to Hölderlin (for details see article "France" 2005, 87–89).

Immanuel Kant penned an essay named *Toward Perpetual Peace* on the occasion of the Basel Peace Treaty of April 5, 1795, signed between post-revolutionary France and Prussia. The title of Kant's piece, which appeared in 1795 and was read across a wide audience at the time, is *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project* (*Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf*). It has long been recognized among academics that Kant's peace text follows the form and structure of peace treaties of the time (Höffe 2011, 2; Patzig 1996, 17). Kant's peace essay includes six Preliminary Articles and three Definitive Articles. This is followed by two supplements, "On the Guarantee of Perpetual Peace" and one about a "secret article for perpetual peace". Two appendices come after this. The first is called "On the disagreement between morals and politics with a view to perpetual peace", the second is "On the agreement of politics with morals in accord with the transcendental concept of public right".

The self-referential aspect of this peace treaty that Kant concludes with humanity provides a format that can also be found in Hölderlin's *Celebration of Peace*. Those who write and publish normally want to be heard and to convince readers of their ideas and thoughts. Those who write want to share their thoughts with others. Enlightenment thinking aimed in a special way to spread the light of reason, which male and a few female authors saw themselves as hav-

ing, among the reading public. In this respect, it cannot be surprising that with his essay on *Perpetual Peace* Kant sought to publicise the idea of peace in the deepest sense of the word in a forceful way that recommends itself to the thinking of the other. Giving the philosophical thoughts on peace the form of a treaty turns the readers into contracting parties. Admittedly, this is a treaty that the author, Kant, hands over to the public without receiving any guarantee that the treaty will also be legally signed and honoured on the part of the readers. It is all the more important that the reason and power of judgement of the target audience are addressed through good argumentation, but also that the need emerges to be and become part of the determination to reject the inhumanity of war, as intended in particular by the Preliminary Articles, and to participate in the peace project, as outlined in the Definitive Articles. In this way, the peace treaty invites every individual to consider the proposals of the author Immanuel Kant and to join the peace project in the spirit of humanity. The road to achieving this is the call for the establishment of republics, the idea that corresponds to modern, liberal democracies at their core.

Hölderlin read Immanuel Kant's three Critiques with a great intensity and incorporated numerous ideas. There is no direct evidence that he studied the peace treaty, but there is indirect evidence, which I will discuss briefly. Some ideas from Kant's writing on *Toward Perpetual Peace* might have been authoritative for Hölderlin, which is why it seems appropriate to me to refer to the most important ideas of the essay here.

The three Definitive Articles of Kant's *Peace Essay* develop the actual ideas for securing a lasting peace. According to the first definitive article, this consists in the establishment of a republican state, the only form of state, which, as Kant writes, is, "first on principles of the *freedom* of the members of a society (as individuals), second on principles of the *dependence* of all upon a single common legislation (as subjects), and third on the law of their *equality* (*as citizens of a state*) – the sole constitution that issues from the idea of the original contract, on which all rightful legislation of people must be based – is a *republican* constitution." (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 349/350) According to Kant, the republican state constitution is the best form

of founding a state, the one that is most in line with reason, but also the one that is the most difficult to implement. What is fundamental to it is the principle of representation of citizens by representatives of the state. Kant is critical of what he calls democracy, namely direct rule by the people that dispenses with representation. Furthermore, in his Republic he already envisages a separation of powers of the legislative, judicial and executive branches, as is realised in modern democracies, which largely correspond to Kant's idea of a republic (see Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 351–353).

International law is dealt with in the Second Definitive Article and requires a similar order at the level of peoples. Kant considers the ideal international legal order to be a federation of free states. However, he warns against the development of a single superstate uniting all peoples, a monocracy, which could very easily turn into a dictatorship. The core idea of federalism is that the confederation of states should "not look to acquiring any power of a state but only to preserving and securing the *freedom* of a state itself and of other states in league with it" (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 356). The primary and principal task of the confederation is to secure peace and to do everything possible to avoid future wars.

Kant envisages all this,

> yet reason, from the throne of the highest morally legislative power, delivers an absolute condemnation of war as a procedure for determining rights and, on the contrary, makes a condition of peace, which cannot be instituted or assured without a pact of nations among themselves, a direct duty; so there must be a league of a special kind, which can be called a *pacific league* (*foedus pacificum*), and what would distinguish it from a *peace pact* (*pactum pacis*) is that the latter seeks to end only *one* war whereas the former seeks to end *all war* forever. (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 356)

For Kant, in any case, it is certain:

> This league does not look to acquiring any power of a state but only to preserving and securing the *freedom* of a state itself and of other states in league with it, but without there being any need for them to subject themselves to public laws and coercion under them (as people in a state of nature must do). (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 356)

The republican idea unfolds best, Kant hoped,

> if good fortune should ordain that a powerful and enlightened people can form itself into a republic (which by its nature must be inclined to perpetual peace), this would provide a focal point of federative union for other states, to attach themselves to it and so to secure a condition of freedom of states conformably with the idea of the rights of nations; and by further alliances of this kind, it would gradually extend further and further. (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 356)

According to Kant, the idea of republicanism of individual states serves as the seedbeds of a transnational legal and peace order, which gradually replaces the natural state of war – a constant risk – in favour of a legal order (see Kersting 1996, esp. 172–186).

In the Third Definitive Article, Kant asserts that the cosmopolitan right "shall be limited to conditions of universal *hospitality*" (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 357). Kant explicitly emphasises that he is not talking about philanthropy, a gift by grace or inclination, so to speak, but about a right. A right, however, is something to which everyone is entitled, to which one can lay claim. The fact that Kant, like many others of his time and those before, indeed like many to this day, speak of universal rights and yet then advocate exclusive rights in favour of White Men, is regrettably demonstrated by Kant's attitude to women on the one hand in his *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right*, the first part of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, and in *Anthropology*, as well as in his devaluation of people of some nations, as can be read in his *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (*An-*

thropology from a Pragmatic Point of View) of 1798 (Kant 1999a [1797], AA VI, 313–315 and Kant 2006 [1798], AA VII, 303–321 and elsewhere; see also Kleingeld 2019 for a very good discussion on the topic).

What one must be able to assert in general is not the right to be a guest, but a right to visit, which enables one to go where one wants as a visitor. From a cosmopolitan perspective, this right cannot be prevented from being violated in certain states.

> Here, as in the preceding articles, it is not a question of philanthropy but of *right*, so that *hospitality* (hospitableness) means the right of a foreigner not to be treated with hostility because he has arrived on the land of another. The other can turn him away, if this can be done without destroying him, but as long as he behaves peaceably where he is, he cannot be treated with hostility. (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 357/358)

On the other hand, if one wants to grant a right of hospitality, as the current problem of large migratory movements makes necessary, then, as Kant laconically adds, without going into detail, "a special beneficent pact would be required", to regulate the domestic community (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 358):

> What he can claim is not the *right to be a guest* (for this a special beneficent pact would be required, making him a member of the household for a certain time), but the *right to visit*; this right to present oneself for society, belongs to all human beings by virtue of the right possession in common of the earth's surface on which, as a sphere, they cannot disperse infinitely but must finally put up with being near one another; but originally no one had more right than another to be on a place on the earth. (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 358)

Kant limits world citizenship to the right of visitation because he is most concerned with arguing against the horrors of colonisation and with it the displacement or restriction of those who have settled in an area:

> If one compares with this the *inhospitable* behavior of civilized, especially commercial, states in our part of the world, the injustice they show in *visiting* foreign lands and peoples (which with them is tantamount to *conquering* them) goes to horrifying lengths. When America, the negro countries, the Spice Islands, the Cape, and so on and so forth were discovered, they were, to them, countries belonging to no one, since they counted the inhabitants as nothing. (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 358; see also Brandt 2011)

These reflections by Kant are still frighteningly relevant today, considering the inconceivable injustice that has occurred over a long period of colonisation in various parts of the world.

Similar to Kant, who, in the face of injustice and recurring wars with all their devastation, used the occasion of the Peace of Basel on April 5, 1795 to formulate a peace treaty with all mankind in his essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*, and in doing so expresses a self-referential, performative moment of his political philosophy, Friedrich Hölderlin, on the occasion of the Peace of Lunéville on February 9, 1801, creates a celebration of peace that is not merely a statement, nor a poetic statement about peace, but performatively stages a celebration of peace.

The moment of performativity, the moment of self-fulfilment is already articulated in the title. It reads: *Celebration of Peace*. Unlike many of Hölderlin's other poems, the title is set without an article. It is not called 'The Celebration of Peace', which would start a poetic narrative, but rather, laconically, *Celebration of Peace* (*Friedensfeier*; see MA 3, 206). It is a "mode of song" ("Sangart") as the introductory words note, a singing of peace.

The self-referential character of the poem as a celebration and as a celebration of peace can be seen in several instances and contexts. Not only is the poem, according to Hölderlin's understanding, a song to begin with. Not only Hölderlin's poetry and especially his later poetry, but also his Bildungsroman *Hyperion or The Hermit in Greece* as well as his Sophocles-oriented tragedy *The Death of Empedocles* are linguistic testimonies to a highly musical, language-sensitive, tonally well-formed and rhythmic way of speaking.

The performative aspect of Hölderlin's *Celebration of Peace* emerges in the way

- that a festive space is created in the minds of the reader and listener;
- that a sonic composition with a rich, almost modern sounding landscape is set up and composed for our inner ear, which goes far beyond the composition of poetic speech and song (Gesang);
- that it is in fact composed to a high degree at all;
- that the prince of the celebration is sung about in a present-absent manner, his identity changing through various contexts of the poem *Celebration of Peace*;
- that the present / future / past (beautiful) humanity is invited and includes the readers and listeners throughout the ages;
- that the time formed in the poem and the time of the addressed readers are therefore created in a highly virtuosic manner

The poem consists of 12 stanzas that vary in number of verses and a total of 156 lines. Three stanzas each form a closer thematic unit. These four units of three stanzas each count 39 verses, subdivided into 12, 12 and 15 verses. The thematic structure of the four strophic triplets can be summarised as follows:

- Stanzas 1–3 introduce the banquet hall, the guests, the prince of the feast, the occasion of the feast
- Stanzas 4–6 widen the view into the depths of time, evoking the Gospel of John, the dying of Jesus with hope for a better world; reflecting on the long time, the length of time it takes people to comprehend God-given gifts
- Stanzas 7–9 join the beginning at the end and can essentially be understood as philosophical reflections that identify the celebration of peace not merely as a momentary event, but as a new presence of the divine

- The stanzas 10–12 broaden the concrete time of the celebration of peace into a perspective of the peace of the future, but also remind us of the fragility of peace. The linguistic style is clearly different here with the shorter verses, which makes the joy of peace perceptible with lighter, faster movement, but also the breathless concern of not being able to preserve the fragile treasure of peace

The Evocation of the Banquet Hall, the Arrival of the Guests, the Prince of the Feast

The first stanza conjures up a banquet hall that Hölderlin discovers in the blueprint of nature, various interiors within it and visible to our inner eye. It is a landscape in which the narrator sees festively set tables, mountains of tables, or so it seems. The boundary of the hall may be thought of as mountain ranges, the sky above is the roof. The space is furnished with "green carpets", "sweetly familiar" is what Hölderlin calls the room, in a phrase that is typical for him, making a blissful dwelling apparent, but also bringing a good, positively charged familiarity into play. The phrase "The sweetly familiar hall" ("Seeliggewohnte[r] Saal", verse 4) creates a feeling of security, almost embraces the reader and takes him into this hall, where the culinary delights are provided for, "Full of most mellow fruit and chalices wreathed with gold" ("Gereiftester Früchte voll und goldbekränzter Kelche", verse 6); one might imagine fruit trees on the hillsides. The hall is an "anciently built" one because, after all, it is mountains that form the tables and walls. If the solid old walls of the mountains provide strength, we are also granted a sense of well-being, for: "And aired is the anciently built, / The sweetly familiar hall" (verses 3–4).

Moreover, Hölderlin already evokes a festive mood with the first and following verse, which creates a world of sound as well as atmosphere and specifically appeals to the senses: "With heavenly, quietly echoing, / With calmly modulating music filled" ("Der himmlischen, still widerklingenden, / Der ruhigwandelnden Töne voll", verses 1 and 2). There is a sacred, solemn mood for and in the performance

through carried “calmly modulating music” tones and sounds, one’s breath is free and open in the “aired” hall, despite its venerable age, for it is “anciently built” and “sweetly familiar”, as mentioned earlier. The German phrase “Seeliggewohnt[]” – that Michael Hamburger translated as “sweetly familiar” – implies at least two different meanings; in the sense of ‘blissfully dwelt’ it awakens the idea of a good, joyful, pleasant dwelling in this hall of nature, which is both nature and shelter, being a hall. But the second part of the phrase, “[] gewohnt”, reminds us of ‘Gewohnheit’ and therefore also implies a habit, a sense of orientation and being at home.

Now it can also be said that nature, the outdoors, is the place where wars are waged, where lives are threatened, unprotected, where people die in great numbers. Hölderlin does not speak of it, at least not directly. Admittedly, peace as a theme makes war present in a passive way, in its absence. The declaration of peace, the celebration of peace turns the inhospitable place into a blissful, festive, dwelling place. What a glorious image to place before the eye of the imagination.

In his poetic works, Hölderlin artfully interweaves the most diverse levels of the senses, in other words of seeing, hearing, breathing, feeling in general, with levels of thought. What emerges in the verses of the first stanza presented here is not only the description and presence of the banquet hall, but a banquet hall for seeing, hearing, feeling, the perception of mood, forming and arranging itself before the inner senses. This hall, now ready, is prepared for the reception of the guests at the evening hour: “For, come from distant places, / Here, at the evening hour, / Loving guests have forgathered.” (“Denn ferne kommend haben / Hieher, zur Abendstunde, / Sich liebende Gäste beschieden.”, verses 1/10–12) Long distances have been travelled, the guests have arrived, the feast can begin. But who are the guests?

Throughout the poem, there are only a few individuals who emerge from the anonymous group of “Loving guests” with a tangible identity. I will return to these later on. There is much to suggest that the reader belongs to the large anonymous group of guests. At the end of the third stanza, the implicit I appears as host, and lets – all of us – know: “But you, grown dear to us, O days of innocence, /

It's you, beloved, that brings this feast-day too, and round us / The spirit flowers, vespertine in this quiet; / And, friends, I must advise you, though / Our hair had turned silver-grey, / To see to garlands and banquet, now like men immortally young." (Verses 3/34–39)

These verses indicate that all are invited who count themselves among the beloved guests. On the one hand, guests have come, as the end of the first stanza states, and on the other hand, the host advises people of all generations to provide wreaths and food: "And, friends, I must advise you, though / Our hair had turned silver-grey, / To see to garlands and banquet, now like men immortally young".

The lyrical narrator also states: "And many there are I would invite" ("Und manchen möcht' ich laden", verse 4/40). *Celebration of Peace*, I argue, has a here and now just as much as it embraces places and times virtually. Thus it also addresses the future of any reader.

If one tries to make the host of this feast, this celebration of peace, tangible, one should be careful not to identify the frequently appearing narrator-I throughout the poem with Friedrich Hölderlin. The sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit lyrical I is a singer and poet (Sänger), as becomes clear in some passages; he, the host, is a person of knowledge who embraces the depths of time just as he embraces a style of singing that, as Hölderlin wrote in one of the letters mentioned earlier, who "consider[s] the recent or the distant past"; he goes on to say, "everything seems to be leading up to an exceptional period, days of beautiful humanity, days of certain, fearless goodness and ways of thinking that are lucid and holy and exalted and simple all at once" (Hölderlin to Heinrike Breunlin, 23.2.1801, Hölderlin 2009a, 193). The poet Hölderlin most certainly projected some of his convictions into the implicit singer in his poetry. However, the two should be kept clearly separate.

One important figure is missing in our evening gathering, in the presence of the guests – the prince of the feast-day. "And already with eyes dusk-dim, / With solemn day-labour smiling, / I think that I see him in person, the prince of the feast-day." ("Und dämmernden Auges denk' ich schon, / Vom ernsten Tagwerk lächelnd, / Ihn selbst zu sehn, den Fürsten des Fests.", verses 2/13–15) On the one hand, guests have arrived, on the other hand, further guests, who are apparently still to come, are advised to provide wreaths and food. But

one person in particular is also emphasised, namely the "prince of the feast", Michael Hamburger translates twice, "the prince of the feast-day", "Fürst des Festes", who is first explicitly addressed as prince in stanza 2 verse 2/15 and then again in stanza 9 verse 112. He is expected in stanza 2, "I think that I see him in person" ("denk ich schon […] Ihn selbst zu sehn", verses, English 2/15, German 2/13 und 15). The context in stanza 9 is: "To whom they are attached, is not missing; for that is why / You to the banquet now prepared I called, / The unforgettable, you, at the Evening of Time, / O youth, called you to the prince of the feast-day;" ("denn darum rief ich / Zum Gastmahl, das bereitet ist, / Dich, Unvergeßlicher, dich, zum Abend der Zeit, / O Jüngling, dich zum Fürsten des Festes", verses 9/109–112). He was sent for, but he did not explicitly come. It is open, whether he will come or not. He is present in the expectation. The question is: is it the prince of the feast – a youth, who is called to the feast by the lyrical protagonist, the host – or is a youth called to come to the prince of the feast. Grammatically, this cannot be clearly ascertained here in the German text of the poem. The translation decided to make a difference between the youth and the prince of the feast. However, the overall context rather suggests that it is the prince of the feast, a youth, who is invited here. The prince of the feast, who is he, what is his role? The prince, the one who is first, why is he not the one inviting to the feast? Why is he invited?

In literary circles, there are various interpretations for the identity of the Prince of the Feast. He, addressed as a youth in particular, could be Napoleon Bonaparte, whom not only Hölderlin revered for a long time as the messenger of a post-revolutionary new and better time. In the second stanza, it is said of the prince of the feast that he "like[s] to disavow [his] your foreign land", that he is "weary, it seems, with long heroic war", that he takes on the "shape of a friend", and that he is addressed as someone "known to all men", that is, in German, an "Allbekannter". The verses in question are found here:

> But though you like to disavow your foreign land,
> And weary, it seems, with long heroic war,
> Cast down your eyes, oblivious, lightly shaded,
> Assuming the shape of a friend, you known to all men, yet

> Almost it bends our knees, such loftiness. Nothing in
> Your presence I know; but one thing: mortal you are not.
> A wise man could elucidate much for me; but where
> A God as well appears,
> A different clarity shines. (Verses 2/16–24)

Identifying Napoleon, as the saviour of the European post-revolutionary world, as one candidate of the prince of the feast here in the poem is plausible. The storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789 is considered the magical date of origin of the French Revolution, which stands for the disempowerment of the aristocracy and the establishment of the new civil rights of liberty, equality, fraternity (in other words, peace, I might add). As is well known, these new freedoms and political hopes were initially deeply disappointed when events were derailed by the Terreur, the guillotine, radical democracy; this later gave Napoleon the role of saviour of the new bourgeois ideals in the eyes of many, including Hölderlin.

After the tiring heroic campaigns, the poem says, the universal figure changes his identity, and takes the form of a friend – but he is not even present at the feast, although he is supposed to be there and is eagerly awaited. The commander becomes the friend of the people celebrating peace. But who is it that bends a knee? "doch / Beugt fast die Knie das Hohe", writes Hölderlin in verse 2/20. Is it a noble one who bends the knee in the face of the Prince's majesty? Or is it the Exalted, the High One himself, the Prince of the feast, who almost bends the knee in the face of the peace that is being celebrated? The German phrasing allows for both, and perhaps it is the author's intention to keep this ambiguity open. The translation interprets and negates the ambiguity: "Almost it bends our knees, such loftiness" (verse 2/20). What is irritating about the identification of Napoleon with the prince of the feast is that the narrator now confesses:

"Nothing in / Your presence I know; but one thing: mortal you are not." ("Nichts vor dir, / Nur Eines weiß ich, Sterbliches bist du nicht." Verses 2/20–21) Napoleon is a human being, and as is well known, mortal. One might think that even in Hölderlin's time, Napoleon as a hero was considered immortal in terms of the deeds and convictions

he stood for and the hopes people associated with him. But the following verses 2/22–24 read:

"A wise man could elucidate much for me; but where / A God as well appears, / A different clarity shines." ("Ein Weiser mag mir manches erhellen; wo aber / Ein Gott noch auch erscheint, / Da ist doch andere Klarheit.") Not only here, but more often in the poem there will be talk of a god, one of the gods. Can the immortality of a hero, celebrated by humanity, be elevated, even temporarily, to the status of a deity? In a monotheistic world of faith, this would be blasphemy. But Hölderlin speaks from the horizon of a mythological cosmos of gods. The famous *Ältestes Systemprogramm des Deutschen Idealismus* (*The Oldest Programme for a System of German Idealism*) speaks of a new "mythology of *reason*", of a new "*sensible religion*" that is to be founded (N. N. 2009 [around 1797], 342). There is much to suggest, without my being able to elaborate on it here, that Hölderlin played his part in these thoughts written down by Hegel's hand (N. N. 2009 [around 1797], note 390).

It should be noted here that the prince of the feast was also identified with other figures – God the Father, Christ, Saturn, the God of peace, to name a few (MA 3, 206/207; see also Szondi 1970).

I am in favour of superimposing the different interpretations, as Hölderlin did in other poems when he addresses mythical deities in one as Christ, as Dionysus, as Zeus or others. This might seem farfetched, but it is not, as I have just indicated. One thing is certain: In the 156 lines and 12 stanzas in total, there will neither be any arrival of this prince of the feast, nor will his identity become clear.

It is still important to take a closer look at the third stanza, which reads:

> Yet not sprung up today, nor unproclaimed he comes
> And one who did not balk at either flood or flame
> Not without reason astonishes us, now that all is quiet,
> Dominion nowhere to be seen among spirits or mortals.
> That is, only now do they hear
> The work that long has prepared them, from Orient to Occident,
> For now immeasurably, fading away in the deeps,
> The Thunderer's echo, the millennial storm

> Rolls down to sleep, intermingled with peaceful music.
> But you, grown dear to us, O days of innocence,
> It's you, beloved, that bring this feast-day too, and round us
> The spirit flowers, vespertine in this quiet;
> And, friends, I must advise you, though
> Our hair had turned silver-grey,
> To see to garlands and banquet, now like men immortally young.
> (Verses 3/25–39)

The God, the All-Known, is not "unproclaimed", is not only expected by the lyrical narrator-I, the host of this poetically sung celebration of peace, but by everyone. His arrival is expected, he is a hero "who did not balk at either flood or flame", and his arrival comes at a time when domination is not to be seen, not to be recognised, as formulated in the poem. This may reflect the post-revolutionary change of power in some European countries as well as the open power relations at the onset of peace in general after the end of a war.

It is precisely such a dying away of war in the explicit sense of the word and the dawning of peace that Hölderlin shapes here in a deeply impressive way: "For now immeasurably, fading away in the deeps, / The Thunderer's echo, the millennial storm / Rolls down to sleep, intermingled with peaceful music." ("Denn unermeßlich braußt, in der Tiefe verhallend, / Des Donnerers Echo, das tausendjährige Wetter, / Zu schlafen, übertönt von Friedenslauten, hinunter.") The sounds here are composed most artfully: It is an immense roar combined with a thunderous echo, probably of cannon shots, of the war drum encouraging battle and of fanfares that one might perceive with the inner ear. But this loud noise fades into the depths, falls asleep, as the words expressly state, in order to free and open the soundscape for something else: "The Thunderer's echo, the millennial storm", the Europe of the centuries-long, indeed over a thousand years of war noise, now transforms into cadences of peace that drown out the earlier desolate din. What a wondrous vision. One might also say that the banquet hall – built into nature, projected into it – is set in the very place where the warring enemies used to destroy each other, even if Hölderlin does not explicitly reflect this in poetry. With peace comes silence, a soothing stillness, another sound characteristic

that, as we know, belongs to music like acoustic pauses. But silence also enables inner focus, concentration, in which the spirit blossoms, as some say.

Noteworthy, too, is the wording that the "days of innocence", also bring the feast today, too: "auch heute das Fest". That means, the feast may take place today, but also in the future or in the past. The openness of time is lost in the English translation: "But you, grown dear to us, O days of innocence, / It's you, beloved, that bring this feast-day too, and round us / The spirit flowers, vespertine in this quiet". ("Ihr aber, teuergewordne, o ihr Tage der Unschuld, / Ihr bringt auch heute das Fest, ihr Lieben! und es blüht / Rings abendlich der Geist in dieser Stille", verses 3/34–36).

Peace has not come for the first time, it is being celebrated now and today, as it has been many times before, with the difference, of course, that a thousand-year storm is now abating– that is, there is the prospect of establishing lasting peace, after the French Revolution and, before that, the American Declaration of Independence, reaching entirely new dimensions politically. A few years earlier, Kant had also put the vision of eternal peace into writing, in a covenant, with his peace treaty with humanity.

The first three stanzas of this peace hymn by Hölderlin take the reader and listener into the events of the feast; the place, time and occasion are now known and made tangible, the celebration can now begin with all the "loving guests", who have gathered for the evening hour.

"now that all is quiet, / Dominion nowhere to be seen among spirits or mortals"

This turn of phrase in verses 3/27–28 draws attention to a passage of text Hölderlin addressed to his friend Isaac von Sinclair on December 24, 1798, during a stay in Homburg (today's Bad Homburg). He writes in this letter:

> […] it is a good thing, and even the first condition of all life and all forms of organization, that no force is monarchic in

> heaven or earth. Absolute monarchy will always cancel itself out, because it has no object; in the strict sense it has never even existed. Everything is interconnected, and suffers as soon as it is active, including the purest thought a human can have. And properly speaking an *a priori* philosophy, entirely independent of all experience, is just as much a nonsense as a positive revelation where the revealer does the whole thing and he to whom the revelation is made is not even allowed to move in order to receive it, because otherwise he would have contributed something of his own.
>
> Anything made, every product, is the result of the subjective and the objective, of the individual and the whole, and the fact that the share the individual has in a given product can never be completely separated from the share the whole has in it shows once again how intimately every individual part is bound up with the whole and that together they make up *one* living whole which, *individualized through and through as it is, consists of parts which are entirely independent* but *at the same time intimately and indissolubly interconnected*.

Hölderlin ends his letter with the reflection:

> Of course, from any one *finite perspective one of the independent forces in the whole will be the dominant one*, but it can only be regarded as temporarily dominant, a matter of degree. (Hölderlin to Isaac von Sinclair, Homburg, December 24, 1798, Hölderlin 2009a, 117–118)

"Absolute monarchy will always cancel itself out" Hölderlin emphasizes. As the context makes clear, this is a philosophically metaphysical consideration that at the same time and inevitably brings up the question of political forms of government. The context in which absolute monarchy was literally abolished, or at least radically questioned, is of course the French Revolution, an event that is also in the back of Hölderlin's mind. There is no mention of law or politics in the rest of the letter to Sinclair, which has only survived as a fragment. However, just one week later, at the turn of the year 1798/1799,

Hölderlin wrote a letter to his half-brother Karl Gok that is remarkable for the context at hand in several ways. Several times in it, he addresses the bond between philosophy, politics and poetry: he got caught up "into all sorts of thoughts about the interest the Germans currently have in speculative philosophy and in reading matter of a political nature and also, but in smaller measure, in poetry" (Hölderlin to Karl Gok, 31.12.1798/1.1.1799, Hölderlin 2009a, 119) He also notes the "beneficial influence philosophical and political reading matter is having on the development of our nation", the Germans. He is annoyed by the "the affected talk of heartless cosmopolitanism and inflated metaphysics" among Germans. He sees a remedy for this in the acquaintance "with the constitutions and philosophers of the world" (Hölderlin to Karl Gok, 31.12.1798/1.1.1799, Hölderlin 2009a, 120), but also in the development of interest in the general, which is able to put aside short-sighted and one-sided personal interests, customs and opinions and to question their meaning where this is necessary for the better progress of humanity.

"Kant is the Moses of our Nation", as Hölderlin writes, morally as unconditionally as pragmatically far-sighted, leading us out of the desert, making philosophy a political study; just as, in general, philosophy and politics, duty and law, have to go hand in hand, supporting and accompanying each other, as Hölderlin thoughtfully notes on January 1, 1799. Although, according to Hölderlin with great clairvoyance, people adhere "too one-sidedly towards the great autonomy of human nature, still it is the only possible philosophy *for our time*". Hölderlin emphasises:

> For all that, the interest in philosophy and politics, even if it were more general and serious than it is, falls far short of being sufficient for the education of the nation, and it would be a good thing if there were at last an end to the boundless misconceptions that lead to art, and especially poetry, being devalued by those who practise and enjoy it. So much has already been said about the influence of the arts on the education of man, but it always came out as if it wasn't meant to be taken seriously, and that was quite natural, because they didn't reflect on what the true nature of art, and especially

> poetry, is. (Hölderlin to Karl Gok, 31.12.1798/1.1.1799, Hölderlin 2009a, 121)

Poetry is not a superficial pastime or distraction, but gives us a sense of tranquillity that is a source of vitality, a view shared by Hölderlin and Friedrich Schiller. Several of these reflections bring to mind Schiller's concept of aesthetic education as well as that of active determinability in the essay *Ueber die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (*On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*) from 1795. It is the central task of art to stimulate in people a state of active determinability that makes them open and receptive to beauty and all that aesthetic education seeks to awaken in the sensual and spiritual forces: Morality, freedom, responsibility, for oneself and for others, and more generally a sense of the common good in society (see Waibel 2013). Like Schiller, Hölderlin prescribes a "philosophico-political cure", a "political and philosophical education" for the Germans (Hölderlin to Karl Gok, 31.12.1798/1.1.1799, Hölderlin 2009a, 123).

The people of that time, including Hölderlin, lived in a fever of revolution, of renewal. It is a philosophical attitude of the spirit that is guided by the idea of renewing oneself from the individual, of questioning, of becoming actively active, of making a difference. These are the basic elements of Kant's and Fichte's philosophy, and the postkantian writers, including Hölderlin, tended to follow them.

With his book *Hölderlin und die Französische Revolution* (*Hölderlin and the French Revolution*), published in 1969, Pierre Bertaux made a decisive contribution to bringing the political dimension of Hölderlin's poetic work into view.

At the same time, it is clear that the orientation of the philosophers and poets of this time towards subjectivity does not mean retreating into an inwardness, but rather that it is clear that the renewal, opening up, transformation emanating from spirited individuals must also be a transformative event for society as a whole. The vision of a new beginning is consequently one that must ultimately have an effect on politics and that, with the philosophical and spiritual new beginning, an opening for the new must take place. The openness

that Hölderlin so powerfully sings about has attracted many interpreters.

Openness is here in Hölderlin's philosophy another word for freedom. It speaks to the horizon of possibilities to be grasped in thought and action, but also to the need and responsibility to shape where matters of life are not yet fixed. Openness is a freedom in which one is placed in order to become active, to take responsibility if necessary; or also in order to endure and cope with the uncertainty, unpredictability, the very openness of life.

Freedom is a commodity that must first be understood by the individual in its singularity as well as in its generalisability, that must be created as a value in order to then have an effect on the world through action. Freedom has many facets, sometimes also that of creating openness because prevailing norms and values are questioned. The French Revolution of 1789, but also the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, was experienced and recognised as such a turning point at the time, and still is today. It is very gratifying that the ideas of freedom, equality, citizenship and peace have their historical place and that some of them have been realised. The fact that these ideas still hold a great deal of potential for future developments, that what has been achieved covers up some blind spots – after all, what does equal rights for women, people of a different gender or people of colour mean today – is a great aspiration that demands realisation, in our minds, in education, in culture, in politics.

Hölderlin studied numerous writings on the political philosophy of his time by Rousseau, Fichte, Kant, and was probably involved in discussions with Hegel and his questions on the philosophy of law. He was familiar with Schiller's intention not to make literature an instrument of politics, but nevertheless to articulate central convictions in it. Hölderlin's *Celebration of Peace* is a song, but a song that paints a picture of a more beautiful humanity.

It is astonishing and worth emphasising that Hölderlin very clearly testifies to an anti-monist and anti-hierarchical position both in his letters around the turn of the century and in the poem *Celebration of Peace*. He is obviously very serious about celebrating a peace that not only means the end of wars, but aspires to a social peace

that brings real freedom and equality into view and allows them to be expected.

"Much, from the morning onwards, / Since we have been a discourse and have heard from one another, / Has human kind learnt; but soon we shall be song"

These important verses are found at the beginning of stanza 8 (verses 91–93). Here we are talking about the morning, whereas in the first stanza the guests of the peace celebration have gathered at the evening hour. This could lead one to equate the *Celebration of Peace* with the events of a day. It may be a world-day, but it is certainly not a day in the literal sense. In Hölderlin's thinking, morning can be associated with the Orient, the East, Asia and Greece, from where the Scriptures, the Bible, found its way to the West, to the Occident. Biblical content is alluded to several times in this poem, which I will not go into here. It should be mentioned that in stanza 4, Jesus is mentioned without being explicitly named. He is one of those whom the host-narrator would like to invite to the feast: "And many there are I would invite, but you, / O you that benignly, gravely disposed to men / Down there beneath the Syrian palm-tree" (verses 4/40–42). The friendliest young man, kindly and earnestly ("freundlichernst"), a word composition characteristic of Hölderlin with his fine linguistic sensibility – this young man under the Syrian palm tree is Jesus Christ. The poem goes on to speak of the "beam" (verse 4/48), the beam of light that Jesus' words brought to humankind. The poet, of course, laments the "deadly doom" that befell Jesus on the cross, and at the same time, with an enjambment of stanzas, offers the consolation that this death, this doom, was not in vain:

> But oh, more darkly, even as you spoke,
> And dreadfully determining a deadly doom overshadowed
> you there.
> That's heavenly fleets on; but not for nothing;

> For sparingly, at all times knowing the measure,
> A God for a moment only will touch the dwellings
> Of men, by none foreseen, and no one knows when. (Verses 4/5/49–54)

Napoleon was already described as a youth in the poem, now Jesus is spoken of as a youth under a Syrian palm tree. This is evidence that there are different identities to be assigned to the prince of the feast. Hölderlin refers several times, and also here, to the fact that the gifts of the gods, the divine signs, including those of Jesus, can only be borne by humans to a small extent, according to their capacity for comprehension. So, obviously, many signs, many small gifts from the gods are needed in the long world-day, from morning to evening, from the Orient to the Occident, through which the heavenly ones gradually send Goodness, Beauty and Truth to humankind, since humankind again and again proves incapable, even unworthy, of recognising, grasping and holding on to the divine gifts.

Jesus is preacher and spokesman on the morning of the world-day of Christianity that begins with him and his word. The Church has kept the conversation with him alive. Where religion is actively experienced and practised, it can be said that "we have been a discourse and have heard from one another," (verse 8/92), again a linguistic turn of phrase that is deeply touching and a call to examine if where people are in conversation, we really listen to one another: "Seit ein Gespräch wir sind und hören voneinander"! In this world day, this day from the morning, in which the "Thunderer's echo, the millennial storm", or in German, "Des Donnerers Echo, das tausendjährige Wetter," Hölderlin sings, roared over Europe, the West, humankind has experienced much. Having experienced much includes the Enlightenment hope of having become wiser from the disasters, of having learned. The promise is that soon we will be singing – "but soon we shall be song", "bald sind wir aber Gesang" (verse 8/93). Moses, Jesus, Kant let us hear their word, have initiated turning points in time. But the poet Hölderlin counts himself among the singers, like Homer or Pindar or Plato, whose vision is that not only songs resound and fade away, but that it is a WE, a community, that IS singing. A great word, a bold hope.

Speaking and listening on the one hand, and singing, alternating with a chorus, the we of speaking and listening, the we of singing – Hölderlin had a deep awareness that literature, that the poetry he sought to create, had to be a mirror of the whole, more beautiful, better human being. He distinguished philosophy from this. He developed a procedure according to which he assigns to the poetic imagination and fantasy, in all its immediacy, as much its place as to the many other things that need to be shaped in a significant work of poetry. He gives an idea of this in a note he made on the occasion of his translation of Antigone by Sophocles. In 1804, he explicitly states what can already be observed in earlier works as well:

> The rule, the calculable law [...] is one of the various sequences in which imagination and feeling and reasoning develop according to poetic logic. For whereas philosophy only ever treats one of the soul's capacities, so that the presentation of this one capacity makes up a whole and the mere hanging together of the parts of this one capacity is called logic, poetry treats the various capacities of the human being so that the presentation of these various capacities makes up a whole, and the hanging together of the – more autonomous – parts of these different capacities may be called a rhythm (in a higher sense) or the calculable law. (Hölderlin 2001 [1804], 113)

The consideration that "imagination and feeling and reason develop according to poetic logic", "Vorstellung und Empfindung und Räsonnement, [sich] nach poëtischer Logik, entwikelt" (MA 2, 369), and that these different faculties are linked in poetry, while philosophy develops only one sequence, namely that of reason, or better, résonnement, reveals Hölderlin's highly reflective awareness of the problems of poetic, artistic activity. The logos of imagination concerns the choice of fable, story or object of representation. The deliberation of sensation refers to the musicality, rhythm and metrics of language as well as the sensation of feelings, or the creation of moods ("Stimmungen"). The deliberation of reflection refers to the layer of reflection present in the work of art, but not to the poetological reflection, which is a meta-reflection of the work of art.

Composing the poetic whole, and thereby combining different levels such as the feeling, the content of the object, the musical rhythm into a whole that passes through very different parts, is not only a central concern in the main poetological writing *Wenn der Dichter einmal des Geistes mächtig …* (*When the Poet is once in Command of the Spirit …*) but is also reflected several times in the *Frankfurter Aphorismen* (*Frankfurt Aphorisms*), also called *Sieben Maximen* (*Seven Maxims*). Hölderlin states about the work of the poet that he must find the right measure of enthusiasm and sobriety, must sound out the right emotional state in himself and in the work, in order to then also emphasise how much he expressly thinks in musical dimensions when composing a work as a whole, that is, he understands the "song", the "Gesang", of poetry and the poet quite literally:

> Altogether he [the poet] must accustom himself not to wish to achieve the whole that he intends in the individual moments, and to suffer that which is momentarily incomplete; his desire must be, that he surpasses himself from one moment to the next, *to the degree and in the manner that the object demands it*, until finally the main tone of the whole profits. But under no circumstances should he think that he can only surpass himself in a *crescendo* from weakness to strength, he will thus become untruthful, and overstrain himself; he must feel that he gains in lightness that which he loses in significance, that stillness replaces intensity, and thoughtfulness replaces verve in a beautiful way, and thus in the continuance of his work there will not be a necessary tone that does not to a certain extent surpass the one before, and the dominant tone will only be dominant because the whole is composed in this and in no other way. (Hölderlin 2009b [1789/1799], 241)

The singer is a composer, a composer who wants to present a highly complex whole, and who reflects on this in the most precise way in terms of production aesthetics, work aesthetics and reception aesthetics, in order to take these reflections over into the production process, which at the same time must free itself from wanting to plan everything, in order to allow creative freedom its appropriate place.

This consideration of poetry as composition, as music, as song, is an appropriate moment to address Theodor W. Adorno's famous essay, which he entitled *Parataxis*. One of Adorno's central concerns is to put Heidegger's readings of Hölderlin into context. With his contribution, Adorno created a new caesura in the reception of Hölderlin in the 1960s, which was oriented, among other things, towards Walter Benjamin's reception of Hölderlin. Adorno sees an openness at work in Hölderlin's poetry that orients its form to music. "Great music is a conceptual synthesis; this is the prototype for Hölderlin's late poetry, just as Hölderlin's idea of song [Gesang] holds strictly for music: an abandoned, flowing nature that transcends itself precisely through having escaped from the spell of the domination of nature." (Adorno 2019 [1963–1964], 394) Adorno linked this to his observation that Hölderlin's poetry is paratactically ordered. That is: "Dispensing with predicative assertion causes the rhythm to approach musical development, just as it softens the identity claims of speculative thought, which undertakes to dissolve history into its identity with spirit." (Adorno 2019 [1963–1964], 396) This is clearly turned against Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, its metaphysical appropriation of his being and against the tendency to dissolve poetry into philosophy, as Adorno states in clear polemics in the first sections of his essay (Adorno 2019 [1963–1964], 380–381; Kreuzer 2011, 183–192; Bayerl 2002, 110–118). Adorno goes on to say: "Once again, the form reflects the idea as though it were hubris to fix the relationship of Christianity and antiquity in propositional form. It is not only the micrological forms of serial transition in a narrow sense, however, that we must think of as parataxis. As in music, the tendency takes over larger structures." (Adorno 2019 [1963–1964], 396) In the paratactic equation of linguistic formations, Adorno sees a linguistic gesture at work that has normative significance.

What is said is placed next to each other on an equal footing, forming an open sequence that can be broken off, but does not culminate in a supreme one. The hypotactic sentence architecture, on the other hand, creates subordination and superordination. The paradigmatic meaning for what is said therefore also designates the one who says something. The paratactic gesture obviously also includes dispensing with predicative assertions, since they also imply hierar-

chy. The serial principle of parataxis, which Adorno identifies as an outstanding feature of Hölderlin's poetry, and in which he already recognises an essential form of musical composition in Hölderlin's poetry, has obvious traits to the twelve-tone technique, which Adorno himself studied, explored and applied during the years of his own composing.

Adorno not only reflected on Hölderlin's poetry in the 1960's, but also made Hölderlin's late poem from the so-called Tower Period, namely *Die Linien des Lebens… (The Lines of Life…)* the basis of one of the 6 compositions in the context of the *Sechs Bagatellen für Singstimme und Klavier op. 6 (Six Bagatelles for Voice and Piano op. 6)* that he composed. The Bagatelles were written in the years 1923–1942 (see Klein/Kreuzer/Müller-Doohm 2011, XV). All six bagatelles refer to texts, something rather untypical for this genre, which, influenced by important compositions such as those of Beethoven, Bartók and Webern, rather suggests small, cyclically unbound instrumental pieces (see Waibel 2017).

At the time of composing the 6th Bagatelle on Hölderlin's poem *Die Linien des Lebens… An Zimmern (The Lines of Life… to Zimmer)*, from 1934, Adorno probably did not yet have all the insights he elaborated on Hölderlin in his contribution *Parataxis*. And yet it is most remarkable that this piece of Adorno's compositions is the one that is most strictly composed according to the principles of twelve-tone technique. Clearly, a direct line leads from this composition to what Parataxis contributed, even though there are more than 30 years between them. Hölderlin's poem reads:

> The lines of life are various; they diverge and cease
> Like footpaths and the mountains' utmost ends.
> What here we are, elsewhere a God amends
> With harmonies, eternal recompense and peace. (Hölderlin 1998c [1812], 329)

Back to the song *Celebration of Peace*, which Hölderlin introduces with the remark: "But if, nonetheless, some should think such a language too unconventional, I must confess to them: I cannot help it. On a fine day – they should consider – almost every mode of song

[Sangart] makes itself heard; and Nature, whence it originates, also receives it again." (Hölderlin 1998b [1803], 209)

The style of singing, as Hölderlin lets the reader know, breaks with conventions. Beautiful days, of course, promise open hearts of listening, openness to engage with the new, openness to a style of singing that breaks with conventions to make possible a new dwelling, a new spirit, a new we. This singer relies, in keeping with Kant, on his inner nature, which gives art its new rules: "Nature, whence it originates, also receives it again."

Kant stipulates in a famous definition of the artist-genius, that must have been binding for Hölderlin:

> *Genius* is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art. Since the talent, as an inborn productive faculty of the artist, itself belongs to nature, this could also be expressed thus: *Genius* is the inborn predisposition of the mind (*ingenium*) *through which* nature gives the rule to art. (Kant 2000 [1790], AA V, 307)

In stanza 6 of the Celebration of Peace, we hear talk of the All-Glorious One, the Father of all existence, whose Son is addressed here as the "Ruhigmächtiger" ("quietly powerful"). The holidays are days of song, are days of joy, are days on which the high spirit draws near to the people. Hölderlin's verses read:

> Yet to the All-Living from whom
> Many joys and songs have sprung
> There's one who is a son, and quietly powerful is he,
> And now we recognize him,
> Now that we know the Father
> And to keep holidays
> The exalted, the Spirit of
> The World has inclined towards men. (Verses 6/71–78)

In stanza 8, there is a turn of phrase that juxtaposes conversation and song and differentiates them from each other. The idea continues with an enjambment in stanza 9. The context of verses 91–117 is:

Much, from the morning onwards,
Since we have been a discourse and have heard from one another,
Has human kind learnt; but soon we shall be song.
That temporal image too, which the great Spirit reveals,
As a token lies before us that between him and others,
Himself and other powers, there is a pact of peace.
Not he alone, the Unconceived, Eternal
Can all be known by this, as likewise by the plants
Our Mother Earth and light and air are known.
Yet ultimately, you holy powers, our token
Of love for you, and the proof
That still you are holy to us, is the feast-day.

The all-assembling, where heavenly beings are
Not manifest in miracles, nor unseen in thunderstorms,
But where in hymns hospitably conjoined
And present in choirs, a holy number,
The blessèd in every way
Meet and forgather, and their best-beloved,
To whom they are attached, is not missing; for that is why
You to the banquet now prepared I called,
The unforgettable, you, at the Evening of Time,
O youth, called you to the prince of the feast-day; nor shall
Our nation ever lie down to sleep until
All you that were prophesied,
Every one of you Immortals,
To tell us about your Heaven
Are here with us in our house. (Verses 8/9/91–117)

Celebration of peace, feast, banquet, reminiscent of Plato's Symposium, – it is the poet's song that grants hospitality in a distinctive way. Hospitality, one is reminded of Kant's world citizenship, humanitarianism, which Kant admittedly addresses in a very sober philosophical and at the same time demanding way in the peace treaty, demanding because hospitality ("Wirthbarkeit") is not grace, not philanthropy, but a *right*.

The appeal to what reason and enlightenment demand in Kant's perspective is one thing. The other, however, is a renewed and higher Enlightenment, as conceived by Friedrich Hölderlin or Friedrich Schiller or, as the Enlightenment of the Enlightenment, by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. In a more explicit sense than Kant, these call for the education of the whole human being, that is, not only of the rational but also of the sensual and emotional human being. In the *Fragment philosophischer Briefe* (*Fragment of Philosophical Letters*) Hölderlin therefore not only speaks of a higher context that must be formed and shaped as opposed to the mechanical course of human life, but he even speaks "of the duties of love and friendship and kinship, of the duties of hospitality, of the duty to be magnanimous towards one's enemies" (Hölderlin 2009c [around 1796/1797], 237). If the concept of duty points to Hölderlin's readings of Kant's moral philosophical writings, which he admittedly interprets beyond Kant, the idea of the duty of hospitality and magnanimity towards enemies points to a reading and interpretation of Kant's peace essay.

> A condition of peace among men living near one another is not a state of nature (*status naturalis*), which is much rather a condition of war, that is, it involves the constant threat of an outbreak of hostilities even if this does not always occur. A condition of peace must therefore be *established*; for suspension of hostilities is not yet assurance of peace, and unless such assurance is afforded one neighbor by another (as can happen only in a *lawful* condition), the former, who has called upon the latter for it, can treat him as an enemy. (Kant 1999a [1795], AA VIII, 348/349)

The state of peace is not a state of nature. Therefore it must be "established"; "Er muß also *gestiftet* warden", Kant tells the readers of his essay *Toward Perpetual Peace*.

The poet invokes song, a banquet hall in nature, a well-composed soundscape in which the thunderous noise of war descends, fades, falls silent to make way for the sounds of peace, a clear breath that proclaims joy and hope, as stanza 10, the beginning of the final triplet,

ends with Mother Earth now knowing that she must not drag what is not yet ripe into the light before its time in order to keep the peace.

The vision of peace:

Winds lightly breathing
Already announce you,
The vapour that drifts from the valley
And the ground still resounding with thunder,
But hope now flushes our cheeks,
In front of the door of their house
Sit mother and child,
And look upon peace,
And few now seem to be dying;
The souls of the oldest even
Held back by a hint, a promise
Conveyed by the golden light. (Verses 10/118–129)
Translation: Linnea Gustavsson

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