

Romanticism, Humanism, Judaism The Legacy of Hans Eichner

Romantik, Humanismus, Judentum Hans Eichners Vermächtnis

Edited by / Herausgegeben von
Hartwig Mayer, Paola Mayer & Jean Wilson

Peter Lang

52

Kanadische Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur
Études canadiennes de langue et littérature allemandes
Canadian Studies in German Language and Literature

Hans Eichner belongs to that group of Jewish intellectuals who fled Nazi Germany or Austria in the 1930s and who subsequently exerted a formative influence on German Studies in the English-speaking world. Eichner made a new home in Canada, where he taught first at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and then for many years at the University of Toronto. He was known mainly for his work on Thomas Mann, on German Romanticism, and as a co-editor of the historical-critical edition of Friedrich Schlegel's collected works. The essays in this volume by Hans Eichner's colleagues, friends, and students deal with Romanticism, Humanism and Judaism, subjects which occupied Eichner throughout his long scholarly career. Contributors also pay homage to his importance as scholar, as teacher, and as the author of an autobiographical novel about the fate of Hungarian-Austrian Jews, written late in his life. The essays illuminate the work of a Jewish scholar who was always conscious of the paradox of dedicating his life to German literature, after and despite the Holocaust.

Hans Eichner gehört zu den jüdischen Intellektuellen, die in den dreißiger Jahren aus dem Nationalsozialistischen Deutschland oder aus Österreich flohen und in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts eine prägende Rolle in der Auslandsgermanistik spielten. Eichner fand in Kanada seine neue Heimat, wo er zuerst an der Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, und dann viele Jahre an der Universität Toronto lehrte. Er wurde vor allem bekannt durch seine Arbeiten über Thomas Mann, die deutsche Romantik und als Mitherausgeber der historisch-kritischen Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe. Die Aufsätze in diesem Band, verfasst von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern Hans Eichners, nehmen die Themen Romantik, Humanismus und Judentum auf, mit denen sich Hans Eichner während seiner langen wissenschaftlichen Laufbahn auseinandersetzte. Andere Beiträge würdigen seine Bedeutung als Wissenschaftler, Lehrer und als Autor eines autobiographischen Romans über das Schicksal der ungarisch-österreichischen Juden, den er spät in seinem Leben schrieb. Die Aufsätze zeichnen das Bild eines jüdischen Wissenschaftlers, der sich immer des Paradoxons bewusst war, trotz des Holocausts seine Lebensarbeit der deutschen Literatur zu widmen.

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Gegründet von

Armin Arnold, Michael S. Batts
und Hans Eichner

Herausgegeben von

Rodney Symington

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Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Oxford • Wien

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Hans Eichner October 30, 1921 – April 8, 2009¹

Hans Eichner was born on October 30, 1921 and grew up in Vienna in the predominantly Jewish Leopoldstadt district. After Hitler annexed Austria in 1938, he fled to England, and was then sent to an internment camp in Australia. He often said that there, at the “camp university” set up by the detainees, he received the education that had been denied him as a Jew in Austria. On his return to England, he enrolled at the University of London while working during the daytime. He received his B.A. in Mathematics, German and Latin in 1944, his B.A. Honours in German Language and Literature in 1946, and his Ph.D. in German Literature in 1949. He taught at Bedford College, University of London from 1948 to 1950, and then took up a position at Queen’s University (Kingston, Ontario, Canada). In 1967, he moved to the University of Toronto, where he chaired the German Department from 1975 to 1984. The numerous honours Hans Eichner received in the course of a long and distinguished career include: election to the Royal Society of Canada (1967), the Gold Medal of the Goethe Institute Munich (1973), LL.D. from Queen’s University (1974), University Professor at the University of Toronto (1981), the William Riley Parker Prize of the Modern Language Association of America (1982), the Hermann Boeschenstein Medal of the Canadian Association of University Teachers of German (1988), LL.D. from the University of Toronto (2003).

Hans Eichner was a brilliant scholar. He published and edited numerous books and articles on German literature, ranging over two centuries, from Goethe to Thomas Mann. He had an international reputation as a scholar of German Romanticism. In particular, his work on Friedrich Schlegel, which included several books, many articles and the co-editorship of the historical-critical edition, made him a leading authority on that author.

1 The following is a slightly amended version of the obituary which appeared in the *Bulletin* of the University of Toronto.

Hans Eichner was an inspired teacher who instilled a love of literature in many students, and he had a remarkable success rate as doctoral supervisor.

Hans Eichner was a literary author as well as a scholar. During his days in London, he published poetry, and, much later, wrote a novel, *Kahn & Engelmann*, which is a monument to Austrian Jews. It appeared in hardcover in Austria (2000), as a paperback in Germany (2002), and in an English translation in Canada (2009).

There was yet another side to Hans Eichner. He loved rock-climbing, badminton and sailing, and he was extremely fond of his island in the Rideau Lakes district of Ontario, where he spent many summers in the company of his dogs, and where he did much of his writing.

Introduction

Hans Eichner died on 8 April 2009 at age 87, after a long and successful career as scholar, teacher, and writer. The effects of this career extend beyond the corpus of Eichner's work: through his teaching, lectures, and exchanges of ideas with colleagues, he fostered and enriched the work of others in the profession. This process did not end with his death. The present volume is a document and product of it, as well as a tribute to Hans Eichner and his scholarship. It brings together contributions by Eichner's students, colleagues, and friends. The composition of the team of editors itself reflects Eichner's gift for meaningful interaction with people at every stage of a career. Hartwig Mayer was a colleague of many years' standing in the German department at the University of Toronto who became a friend and collaborator. Jean Wilson wrote her Ph.D. thesis under Eichner's supervision, while Paola Mayer took some of his courses at the undergraduate level, and was inspired by them to pursue a Ph.D. in German Studies.

This volume was originally conceived as the standard type of "essays in memory of ...," but in the end became something a little different, reflecting in more substantial and direct ways the various aspects of Hans Eichner's work as scholar, teacher, writer, and personality. The themes mentioned in the title were chosen because they address the main topics of Eichner's work as a scholar (and to some extent as a creative writer), and because they encapsulate the main foci of the essays collected in the volume.

It is fitting that "Romanticism" appears as the initial theme, for Hans Eichner made his reputation first and foremost as a scholar of German Romanticism. This occurred primarily, but not only, through his work on Friedrich Schlegel, which included co-editorship of the historical-critical edition, a monograph in the Twayne series, and a number of seminal articles. The preeminence of the theme is reflected in the volume by a cluster of essays: two directly assessing Eichner's contribution to Friedrich Schlegel scholarship, two continuing the work of

exegesis of Schlegel's oeuvre, and two on other Romantic authors, building on Eichner's methodology and findings.

The term "Humanism" applies to certain authors on whom Hans Eichner worked, such as Goethe and Thomas Mann (the latter interest reflected in the volume by two essays), and to the tradition of thought and values which they represent, however problematically. On a less obvious but far-reaching level, "Humanism" captures the moral dimension of Eichner's life and work: his concern with the Holocaust, the history of European Jewry, and the broad ethical issues these raise; his commitment to teaching such issues; and his insistence on the need for a *Germanistik* that would acknowledge an obligation in this area. This theme and Eichner's commitment to it are reflected in more or less direct ways in many of the essays, both those dealing with Jewish themes and those assessing the legacy of Hans Eichner the scholar.

The second theme thus shades into the third, "Judaism," the most pervasive and arguably the most important, in Hans Eichner's life and in this volume. "Judaism" shaped Eichner's life and identity as an individual; it also refers to one of his scholarly concerns, manifest, for example, in his interest in the rehabilitation of forgotten Jewish writers, and to the above-mentioned commitment to bring to light both the humanist and the criminal aspects of the German "legacy" to the world. Three contributions address his seminal essay *Der Blick auf den Ettersberg*, which captures the paradox of the proximity yet mutual invisibility of Weimar and Buchenwald. This theme became increasingly important to Eichner in later life; it was the major subject of his reading in the last few years before his death, and he was planning a monograph on Jews in European literature. In the present volume, the theme of Judaism is taken up by the three essays mentioned above, by two dealing with Eichner's semi-autobiographical novel, and by several on Jewish authors and themes.

The shape and order of the present volume reflect Hans Eichner's legacy in broader than just scholarly terms, and to some extent mirror the trajectory of his career as scholar, teacher, and creative writer. The first cluster of essays concerns itself directly with Eichner as scholar: first as scholar of Friedrich Schlegel, then via a broader retrospective that places his work in the context of trends in *Germanistik*, or collects and reflects on memorable moments in it and their significance. A second, larger cluster is comprised of scholarly essays inspired by Eichner's

work or reflecting similar subjects and concerns. These are arranged chronologically according to the authors they treat and mirror the broad spectrum of Eichner's scholarly interests: Friedrich Schlegel, German Romanticism as a whole, Thomas Mann, Jewish themes and authors. At the same time, some essays in this group also pay tribute to Hans Eichner the teacher: they are written by his students – one essay reflects directly on his pedagogy – or carry forward his methodology. The final cluster is devoted to Hans Eichner the creative, Jewish writer. This is a late phase of his career and the most personal. Two essays deal with his novel *Kahn & Engelmann*, and the final contribution to the volume provides a historical context in which to view this dimension of Eichner's work and identity.

A brief overview of the essays reveals a web of commonalities and interconnections. The first three studies offer a retrospective on the impact and significance of Hans Eichner the scholar, especially, but not only, of Romanticism. Theodore Ziolkowski concentrates on Eichner's legacy as a Schlegel scholar: he points out Eichner's affinity to Friedrich Schlegel, discusses his extensive work as editor and interpreter, assesses the impact of his scholarship on Schlegel, and draws particular attention to the monograph written for the Twayne series as a seminal sustained study on this author. Willi Goetschel does the same thing from a different perspective: he explores some of the motives underlying Eichner's scholarship, and places it in the context of trends in twentieth-century *Germanistik* and its relation to contemporary politics. He devotes particular attention to the place of Jewish scholars and the special problems they faced. Marketa Goetz-Stankiewicz's essay, the last of this cluster, takes a "great moments" approach to a retrospective on Eichner's scholarship: using memorable formulations as red thread, she creates a picture of major themes in his critical work, and seeks to highlight its relevance to today in human and moral as well as intellectual terms. This approach draws attention to the style – elegant, witty, and vivid – as well as the content of his writings.

The next eight essays are more or less directly inspired by Hans Eichner's scholarship. They explore questions which he also dealt with, and build further on the results of his explorations. Eberhard Lämmert analyses Friedrich Schlegel's novel *Lucinde* in the context of its author's theory of the novel as "progressive Universalpoesie" and argues that, viewed from this perspective, *Lucinde* stands its prototype, Goethe's

Wilhelm Meister, on its head. He presents the novel as progressive and revolutionary both in its form and in the political and social affront which its reversal of gender roles represents. Hermann Patsch also focusses on a work by Friedrich Schlegel, the sonnet *Diana Ephesina*. He elucidates its classical background, places it in the context of other contemporary authors, and links the cult of Diana to that of the Virgin Mary. Paola Mayer adopts Eichner's genetic method of exploring the meaning of the term Romantic, developed in his work on Friedrich Schlegel, and uses it to analyze Jean Paul's and E.T.A. Hoffmann's concept of the "Romantic," as applied to music in Hoffmann's case, and to explore Hoffmann's debt to, but also differences from, Jean Paul. Jean Wilson takes her experience of Eichner as teacher as her starting point to discuss the relevance of teaching and learning in the humanities today, seeking to uncover what constitutes meaningful engagement with a text and with an interlocutor. She takes Kleist's *Marionettentheater*, specifically its modelling of teacher-student relationships, as example.

There follow two essays dealing overtly with Jewish authors and themes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Heinz Härtl compares Hebel's *Kalendergeschichte Die zwei Postillione* to other versions of it. He draws attention to the story's antisemitic charge and distinguishes Hebel's version precisely on the grounds that it defuses this aspect. Gerhard Kaiser surveys writings about Paris by German-Jewish authors in the period 1848–1933, shedding light on German-French relations and attitudes to each other, and exploring the role played by nationalism and antisemitism in this context. Two essays on Thomas Mann, the subject of Hans Eichner's first scholarly work, conclude this section. Martin Swales takes Eichner's comments, from the second edition of his monograph on Thomas Mann, as starting point for an examination of Mann's *Die Betrogene* as a (failed?) experiment. Placing it in the context of the novella genre, he compares it to another such work, which also deals with intimate and embarrassing subject matter, Kleist's *Die Marquise von O...* David Pugh analyzes an aspect of narrative technique in *Buddenbrooks*; he focusses on the use of ellipses, on irony, and on other individual features of the characters' language in order to show how the voices of the characters merge and interact with that of the narrator. Pugh's essay forms a link to the final section of the volume via the themes of "Familiensaga," autobiography, and the novel.

As David John points out, Eichner himself in his novel *Kahn & Engelmann* refers to Thomas Mann as a model for this genre.

In the concluding section, the first two essays deal with Hans Eichner the creative writer: that is, with his partly autobiographical novel *Kahn & Engelmann*, a work which relates the fate of a Hungarian-Jewish family, including its migration to Vienna and its destruction in the Holocaust, conceived by Eichner as a memorial to the vanished world of central European Jewry. Both essays address the question of autobiography in the novel. John explores the genesis of *Kahn & Engelmann*, using information garnered through interviews with Eichner's family and friends; he concentrates on the life of the author, and in his examination of the narrative, he asks how much of it is autobiographical. Wolfgang Frühwald works mainly with the text itself, offering a literary analysis of the novel. Placing it in the context of forms of literary expression by Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors, he asks why Eichner chose to write a novel rather than memoirs. Egon Schwarz's contribution takes the form of selected book reviews published earlier in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, which focus on Jewish themes: the Holocaust, questions of identity, and (auto)biography. These are framed by a brief narrative of his relationship and affinity with Hans Eichner. Schwarz's contribution views Eichner in the wider context of Jewish intellectuals – refugees, scholars and writers – who, like him, grappled at various levels with the problem of what it means to be a Jew, and with the fate of Jews in the twentieth century. It thus rounds off the volume by placing the life and career of its subject in a broader picture.

We have chosen as subtitle *The Legacy of Hans Eichner* to draw attention to how the essays in various ways connect with, as well as pay tribute to, the man and his work; how through them a composite portrait emerges of the various dimensions of Eichner's career and their significance; and how his contributions continue to echo in and relate to the work of others.

THEODORE ZIOLKOWSKI

Hans Eichner and Friedrich Schlegel

Anyone who knew Hans Eichner for some forty years, as I did – who had heard him recount the tale of his adventurous escape from Nazi-occupied Austria to England and beyond, who had seen the debonair manner in which he sported his white silk scarf (and knew the story connected with that practice), or who had visited him at his Rousseau-like summer retreat on a tiny isle in the Rideau Lakes – might be tempted to call him a romantic. But the temptation would then dissipate immediately as one recalled Hans’s ironic smile and the shrewd comment of that learned semanticist of the words “romantic” and “romanticism”:

When a philosopher calls a colleague of his “romantic,” he probably means that the fellow is a blockhead. When a real estate agent advertises a “romantic” cottage, the adjective is intended to suggest that the cottage has an old-world charm and a picturesque setting, but what it really means is that there is no electricity and no plumbing.¹

But if not “a romantic,” then what? Hans always struck me as being a modern counterpart of Friedrich Schlegel, the writer to whom after early essays on Goethe, Thomas Mann, and James Joyce he turned and devoted so much of his life’s work. Indeed, despite a late interest in Eichendorff and an impressive command of Romantic literature generally, Hans tended to define Romanticism in terms of that brilliant critic and aphorist. (One of my greatest regrets is that Hans never completed the second volume of his *Deutsche Literatur im klassisch-romantischen Zeitalter*;² it would have been an authoritative and revealing account of German Romanticism.) I suspect that, had Hans not shared so many of Schlegel’s intellectual characteristics, he would not

1 Hans Eichner: The Genesis of German Romanticism, in: *Against the Grain: Selected Essays*, ed. Rodney Symington, Bern 2003, p. 73.

2 Hans Eichner: *Deutsche Literatur im klassisch-romantischen Zeitalter I: 1795–1805*, Bern 1990.

have been able to write so incisively about that dazzling Romantic. (And here I use the word “Romantic” advisedly in the manner of which Hans approved: in a purely historical sense limited to German literature.³)

Hans’s own educational background – he received his undergraduate degree at the University of London with studies in Classics, Math, and German – equipped him almost uniquely to write knowledgeably about the *Universalgenie* whose first book concerned *Die Geschichte der Poesie der Griechen und Römer* and whose critical vocabulary often featured weird mathematical formulae.⁴

Like Schlegel, Hans was a brilliant stylist with a gift for the telling *aperçu*: for example, Schlegel “was often attacked in the footnotes in order to be more profitably plagiarised in the text;”⁵ or Novalis’s *Die Christenheit oder Europa* – “a prose-poem masquerading as history – is more likely to irritate modern readers than to inspire them.”⁶ Moreover, like Schlegel, Hans wrote and published early poems and then produced a novel, *Kahn & Engelmann*, which, while not so scandalous as *Lucinde*, enjoyed considerable success. In sum, Hans was the ideal person, intellectually and temperamentally, to deal on equal and empathetic terms with the most sparkling Romantic mind.

Accordingly I would like to suggest that his Twayne volume, *Friedrich Schlegel*, constitutes the most representative of Hans’s Schlegeliana. In the first place, it is still arguably the best “life and works” we have. The only other contender is the *Rowohlt Monographie* by Ernst Behler,⁷ Hans’s friend and co-editor of the great 35-volume Schlegel edition and whose quality Hans generously acknowledged in a note to the preface of his own work (p. 145). Both books are constrained by the limits of the series in which they appear, but although Behler’s work is well written and illustrated, Hans deals much more exhaustively with the early criticism for which Schlegel is primarily famous and with the novel *Lucinde*, and he repeatedly locates Schlegel in a comparative context

3 Hans Eichner: *Against the Grain* (see note 1), p. 87.

4 See for instance *Friedrich Schlegel: Literary Notebooks 1797–1801*, ed. Hans Eichner, London 1957, p. 87.

5 Schlegel (see note 4), p. 3.

6 Hans Eichner: *Friedrich Schlegel*, New York 1970, p. 109. All subsequent page references to this work appear parenthetically in the text.

7 Ernst Behler: *Friedrich Schlegel in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1966.

that illuminates his characteristics. In any case, no subsequent work has superseded either. Klaus Peter's *Friedrich Schlegel*, adhering to the practice of the *Sammlung Metzler*, provides a useful factual background and valuable bibliographical information but no serious discussion of Schlegel's life and works.⁸ Berbeli Wanning's more recent *Einführung* is concerned less with tracing the biographical development than with establishing continuities between Schlegel's early and later works.⁹ And inevitably gaps in the biography – notably for the early years in Göttingen and Dresden – have been noted and partially filled.¹⁰ Astonishingly, nonetheless, Eichner's and Behler's works still remain the only reasonably full "life and works" of Friedrich Schlegel, while all the other major Romantics – from Schlegel's brother August Wilhelm and his Jena associates Novalis and Ludwig Tieck to Clemens Brentano, Joseph von Eichendorff, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Heinrich von Kleist and even Otto Heinrich Graf von Loeben (Isidorus Orientalis) – have received one or more full-length biographies.

In the second place, Hans chose to write his biography in English and thus provided the Anglo-American reading public with a highly readable biography of the man whom René Wellek termed "one of the greatest critics of history."¹¹ This fact needs to be emphasized because circumstances have changed today, when most scholars of German literature – not just those who were educated and trained in Germany but also many American-born Germanists – write for publication in Germany because, with a dwindling audience of German readers, many North American presses have lost their interest in German literature – and literary studies generally. But Hans belonged as a somewhat younger member to that distinguished generation of emigré scholars who came to prominence shortly after World War II – Bernhard Blume, Erich Heller, Heinrich Henel, Erich Kahler, Victor Lange, Oskar Seidlin, and others – and regarded it as their mission to function as mediators of German literature and culture in their adopted land, who wrote

8 Klaus Peter: *Friedrich Schlegel*, Stuttgart 1978.

9 Berbeli Wanning: *Friedrich Schlegel zur Einführung*, Hamburg 1999.

10 Peter D. Krause: *Zu Errata in der Biographie des jungen Friedrich Schlegel*, in: *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 118, 1999, pp. 592–600.

11 René Wellek: *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950*, vol. 2, New Haven 1955, p. 35.

extensively and elegantly in their acquired language and for “public” journals, and who attracted swarms of students into their classrooms and lecture halls. Accordingly not only the Twayne volume but several of Hans’s most important essays on Schlegel and on Romanticism generally were written and published in English and only subsequently, because of their significance, translated into German.

Finally, the Twayne volume can legitimately be regarded as a *summa* of Hans’s profound Schlegel scholarship. To be sure, he continued for many years to pursue his research: notably two further volumes in the *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe* (*Charakteristiken und Kritiken II* and a volume of *Fragmente zur Poesie und Literatur*) as well as an edition of Schlegel’s *Gemälde alter Meister* (from the journal *Europa*) and a popular edition of Schlegel’s essays *Über Goethes Meister* and *Gespräch über die Poesie* with a magisterial introductory essay. He also collaborated with Behler in a six-volume *Studienausgabe* of Schlegel’s *Kritische Schriften und Fragmente*. However, by the time his “life and works” appeared in 1970, many of his major contributions had already been printed: in addition to the epoch-making edition of *Literary Notebooks* and four volumes of the *KFSA* (vol. 4: *Ansichten und Ideen von christlicher Kunst*; vol. 6: *Geschichte der alten und neuen Literatur*; vol. 5: *Dichtungen*; and vol. 2: *Charakteristiken und Kritiken I*), authoritative essays on *Friedrich Schlegel’s Theory of Romantic Poetry* and *Friedrich Schlegels Theorie der Literaturkritik* and pieces on Schiller and Schlegel, on Schlegel’s drama *Alarcos*, and on *Friedrich Schlegel und wir*, along with *Neues aus Friedrich Schlegels Nachlaß* and *Unbekannte Briefe von und an Friedrich Schlegel*.¹² The Hans Eichner who wrote the Twayne volume had therefore long since established himself as one of the world’s leading Schlegel scholars.

This is not to suggest that Hans’s view of Schlegel was uncritical. He was justifiably skeptical of his subject’s poetic abilities, observing that Schlegel produced “some four hundred pages of inferior verse,” planned plays, epics, romances and novels “that, mercifully, remained unwritten,” and completed one play, *Alarcos*, that “is not entirely devoid of historical interest” (pp. 92–93). He acknowledged that Schlegel was “an inveterate spendthrift,” that he “suffered from fits of depression,”

12 A complete bibliography of Eichner’s publications is conveniently available in *Against the Grain* (see note 1), pp. 405–410. See also the appendix to this volume.

and that he became grossly fat from gluttony of wine and food (pp. 126–127). He disapproved of Schlegel's occasional *ad hominem* arguments, saying that "Schlegel's effort at discrediting the empiricists by imputing impure motives to them cannot be justified" (p. 136). He called Schlegel's treatise on Sanskrit, *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, "an odd mixture of objective scholarship and subjective philosophizing, of facts, intuitions, brilliant insights, and reckless speculations" (p. 105), concluding – most condemningly – that he "planted the seeds of that pernicious theory according to which all civilizations spring from the activities of a single, 'Aryan' race."

At the same time, Hans located Schlegel in a universal comparative context that serves to illuminate both poles of the comparison and that does justice to Schlegel's own enormous breadth of learning. Thus, "like that other famous son of a Protestant clergyman, Friedrich Nietzsche, the young Schlegel had reacted sharply against his father's faith" (pp. 74–75); and, in another context, Schlegel's early history of Greek literature anticipated "Nietzsche's discovery of the Dionysian element in Greek culture" (p. 43). Moreover, his belief that effective criticism must reflect "the impression" (*Eindruck*) that the work of art makes on the critic "anticipated views that were proclaimed a century later" by such writers as Oscar Wilde and Jules Lemaître (p. 39). Given Schlegel's contempt for pure realism, "he would have deplored not only the realism of the nineteenth-century novel, but its method" and "would have hailed such novels as Joyce's *Ulysses* or Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* as the beginnings [...] of a return to the great tradition" (p. 67). Elsewhere *Friedrich Schlegel* teems with allusions to Aeschylus, Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates; to Mondrian and Dürer; to Calderon and Cervantes; to Corneille, Diderot, and Voltaire; to Milton and Shakespeare; and even to Copernicus and Newton, Locke and Hume, thereby situating the German Romantic in a broader context lacking in most other studies of Schlegel.

The "life and works" is centrally important for another reason. For, like Schlegel, Hans believed that the proper view of an author "could perhaps only be found through a repeated study of all his works" (p. 40). That is to say, Schlegel can be fully comprehended only through his writings, which in turn can be fully appreciated only through an understanding of the whole man. Unlike his many other Schlegeliana – the essays, the editions, the introductions – and despite their inestimable

value, then, the Twayne volume constitutes Hans's attempt to come to grips with Friedrich Schlegel as a total *Gestalt*. In its chapters we recognize in highly compressed form many findings reached in earlier works and anticipations of studies yet to come; but here all the otherwise specific findings and analyses are subordinated to the challenge of coming to grips with the whole man. In his preface Hans acknowledges that Schlegel was active in a range of fields exceeding the competence of most biographers and that it is impossible to do full justice to him in a short work. "The present book is thus offered to the reader merely as an introduction, with the awareness that there are many aspects of Schlegel's life and works that are barely touched upon, and none that could be treated in full" (p. 5). Indeed, it is an additional merit of Hans's book that it repeatedly suggests topics for further research: e.g., on Schlegel's three-volume anthology of selections from *Lessings Gedanken und Meinungen* (p. 100).

At every juncture Hans goes beyond the simple biographical facts, which he recounts with narrative flair, to explore the character of the individual at various stages of his life. He notes, for instance, that "compulsive introspection [...] is a frequent phenomenon with gifted adolescents" – a compulsion that gripped Schlegel well into his twenties and led him to the conclusion "that his intellect was dissociated from the rest of his personality and dominated it to an extent that threatened to destroy him" (pp. 14–15). This "fear of emotional atrophy" (p. 15) drove him, in turn, to extremes of behavior in love affairs and gambling. In reaction to these debaucheries Schlegel then turned to the vast study project that resulted in his *Geschichte der Poesie der Griechen und Römer*. Hans shows how extensively Schlegel's early idealization of the Greeks and his theory of art were determined by his study of Winckelmann. His comparison of Sophocles and Shakespeare led to the subjective conviction that Greece represented that harmony denied to him while Hamlet embodied the modern tensions to which he was himself subject (p. 26).

Over and over again Hans shows how Schlegel's own character, his evaluation of specific figures, and his generalizing theories were inextricably intertwined. It was the study of Schiller's essay *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* that finally reconciled Schlegel with his own modernity and enabled him to write his appreciative pen portraits (*Charakteristiken*) of such figures as Friedrich Jacobi, Georg Forster,

and Lessing – essays in which his analyses of specific works led to his assessment of the whole man. This approach resulted eventually in his conception of the work of art as an organic whole, which replaced the sterile criteria of the prevailing neoclassicism and eventually inspired the new Romantic aesthetics. His fascinated acquaintance with Chamfort's *Pensées* prompted Schlegel to introduce into German literature the genre of the aphoristic *Fragment* – a genre ideally suited to his own mind with its flashes of insight and wit, coupled with the inability to sustain a specific project for any length of time.

At this point Hans devotes incisive pages to two topics that had already concerned him in his essays and editions: Schlegel's choice of the words *romantisch* and *Roman* to characterize the modern attitude and its chosen literary form (pp. 48–54) and an extended analysis of Schlegel's *Gespräch über die Poesie* and the famous fragment no. 116 (“Die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie”) to define such central topics as the epochs of poetry, the poetic ideal, and irony. A discussion of Schlegel's *Rede über die Mythologie* then leads to brief but incisive analyses of the author's relationship to Fichte's philosophy and Schleiermacher's theology.

The chapter on *Lucinde*, which analyses the explicitly modern structure of the novel as well as its theory of love, provides the opportunity to present Schlegel's affair with and subsequent marriage to Dorothea Schlegel as a transition to the brief period in Jena surrounding the *Athenäum* and then the move to Paris. There Schlegel established the journal *Europa* – whose title suggests a shift in his own perspectives from antiquity to modernity – which contained his most important art criticism, in which he developed his theory of Christian art and its function “to glorify religion and to reveal its mysteries” (p. 98). It was this theory, Hans argued, more than the Romantic theory of poetry, that infuriated Goethe and caused his alienation from the young Romantics (p. 99). Hans goes on to depict the move to Cologne and to portray Schlegel's *Briefe* concerning his journey through the Netherlands and Rhine regions, which “constitute the most significant landmark in the rediscovery of the Gothic style in Germany” (p. 101). We have already cited Hans's objective assessment of Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*. The years in Paris and Cologne eventually resulted in Schlegel's conversion to Catholicism, a step that Hans shrewdly relates directly to his Romantic theory: for Schlegel came to realize that

“his doctrine of poetry as a source of knowledge depended on an external sanction – that ‘inspiration’ presupposes a ‘spirit,’ that ‘enthusiasm’ presupposes a ‘theos’” (p. 107). Again Schlegel’s fear of the nihilism engendered by a purely secular world of man-made values and its reflection in so many aphorisms from the first half of his life remind Hans of Nietzsche (p. 107).

Schlegel’s emerging conservatism and his conviction that only Austria was still concerned with the preservation of the past led him to Vienna, where in the following years he delivered lectures on history and on world literature and where he subsequently became involved peripherally in the Congress of Vienna. At this point in his life, as Hans summarizes, Schlegel had accumulated an impressive list of achievements. In addition to his lectures and writings on history and literature, “he had significantly influenced the theory and practice of painting, pioneered a juster appraisal of Gothic architecture, and become the founder of Sanskrit studies in Germany” (p. 126). But his final years witnessed a turn to occultism that harmed this public image. He convinced himself that he enjoyed special powers of “magnetism” that enabled him to cure others, to participate in telepathic communication, and to foresee the future. At the same time, he founded a new journal, *Concordia*, in which he published a series of essays fusing his conservative political and theological views in the hope of reconciling the various branches of Christendom and overcoming the schism caused by the Reformation.

In three further series of lectures, he treated such topics as the philosophy of life, of history, and of language, in which he developed his theory of the threefold human nature: Spirit, Soul, and Body. However, spirit and soul are each “rent by a dichotomy” (p. 138): within the soul between imagination and reason, and within the spirit between the will and understanding. With a compulsion to systematization he applied this new theory of consciousness to his philosophy of history, for he saw the Greeks, the Romans, medieval Europe, and modern Europe dominated respectively and successively by understanding, will, imagination, and reason – a division reflected as well, he believed, in the philosophical systems of Kant, Jacobi, Fichte, and Schelling.

Hans concludes his book with the reasonable warning that it would not be fair to judge Schlegel’s life and achievements in the light of the extravaganzas of his last years. Nevertheless, he became the principal

Prügelknabe for the anti-Romantic reaction of the 1830s. In a typically just assessment Hans concludes that, despite the radiance of Schlegel's literary criticism and other achievements of his fellow Romantics, "it cannot be denied that the Romantic movement had turned into an impediment in the way toward social progress and political liberty" (p. 143) – that the Romantic emphasis on imagination and the medieval heritage militated against any effective consideration of urgent sociological problems and tended to support the privileged against the dispossessed. However, following Rudolf Haym, scholars of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries rediscovered and rehabilitated Schlegel as a brilliant literary critic. Foremost among those who uncovered lost manuscripts, reevaluated Schlegel's contributions, and helped to demonstrate his central role in German Idealism was of course Hans Eichner. The work in which his profound understanding of the man and his works was most fully exemplified, I believe, is his still irreplaceable Twayne biography. Every time I pick it up to consult a specific point or simply to peruse a few pages, I hear Hans's unforgettable voice, appreciate his learning borne lightly, and sense the spirit of critical reasonableness with which he approached that Romantic with whose genius he had so much in common.

WILLI GOETSCHEL

An Elective Affinity: Hans Eichner and Friedrich Schlegel

The contribution of Hans Eichner as editor, commentator, and interpreter of Friedrich Schlegel represents a critical intervention in the study of Romanticism, and, as a consequence, in the discourse of German literary and cultural history, criticism, and the way we read – or might read – German literature in general.¹ In order to understand the critical significance of Hans Eichner's work, it is imperative to attend to the historical context that shaped the intellectual and cultural landscape that defined scholarship in the period after 1945. Exploring some of the central motives of Eichner's scholarship will allow us to appreciate the particular way in which Eichner set the accents on the approach to Schlegel. This in turn will not only allow us to comprehend the particular attraction that Schlegel had for Eichner but also help us reflect on our own agendas of reading – or not reading – Schlegel. Through Eichner's critical engagement in the rediscovery of Schlegel, Schlegel and his Romantic project emerged in the period of the postwar depression and the ensuing reconstructionist fervor of German literary studies as a critical reminder that challenged the terms of a hermeneutic practice that began to dominate the scene but suffered from a curious form of cultural amnesia when it came to the first and foremost requirement of hermeneutics, the question of self-examination. In other words, a more nuanced recognition of the critical thrust of Eichner's scholarly project promises to shed light on the continuing importance of Schlegel as a theorist of the study of literature and culture as a genuinely emancipatory project. In the context of the ascendance and eventual institutionalization of Gadamer's school of hermeneutics that took its lead from Hei-

1 This is a slightly expanded and revised version of an essay published under the same title in *The Germanic Review* 85.2, 2010, pp. 107–117. I thank Routledge publishers for their permission to reprint it here.

degger, Schlegel offered a welcome alternative that would allow Eichner to showcase another approach to hermeneutics that promised to be more responsive with regard to challenges that confronted the postwar situation.

Hans Eichner's understanding of Schlegel's signal significance for the project of articulating a new, critical, and progressive vision of what he called Romanticism proposes a rethinking of the project of literary modernity that still carries critical force. Through the work of Hans Eichner, Schlegel's project has become legible as a critical form of an emancipatory humanism that offers an important alternative to the literary, philosophical, and cultural projects around 1800. Yet, more decisively, Hans Eichner's work reminds us that the progressive thrust of Schlegel's thought carried well into the twentieth century and, from there, with remarkable strength, into the present. Schlegel's thought – in the reading Hans Eichner made possible – holds to a certain degree the promise of what can be called post-contemporary: carrying forward the force of critical and critically self-referential self-reflection whose momentous role in the formation of modern literature and philosophy yet awaits full recognition.

Schlegel's vision of literary and philosophical modernity advances a dynamically open approach. One of Schlegel's leitmotivic terms is "interest" or the German or more exactly the Latin form "Interesse." As the term suggests, Schlegel's "interest" resides in the in-between, in what links, connects, but also represents the grounds on which difference is made possible in the first place, i.e. the no-man's land that constitutes the border as the condition for the possibility for any distinction. If Romanticism was too quickly mistaken for a crazed desire for total synthesis, an All-in-One and a hegemonic fantasy gone wild, it was German Romantics like Schlegel, Tieck, E.T.A. Hoffmann and others who made it the very point of their work to stage and rehearse the melt-down of such totalizing claims.

It is especially the achievement of Hans Eichner's initiative as editor, commentator, and interpreter that we are today in a position to appreciate Schlegel no longer simply in terms of his distinct and separate activities as literary critic, historian, aspiring poet and cultural impresario, but rather to recognize his larger significance in terms of a comprehensive vision of Romanticism as the project of re-imagining the task