

Jörg Robert, *Vor der Klassik. Die Ästhetik Schillers zwischen Karlsschule und Kant-Rezeption* (Berlin – Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), 478 pp.

Jörg Robert claims for Schiller's particular mode of thought the unique trait of being "zugleich beharrlich und wandlungsfähig" (p. 422). In addition to the charm of brevity, this statement has the compelling qualities of being both true and important, especially where the origins and tendencies of Schiller's classical aesthetics are at issue. His *Vor der Klassik. Die Ästhetik Schillers zwischen Karlsschule und Kant-Rezeption* participates in the noticeable, and laudable, push in recent scholarship to reclaim Schiller from the appearance of an unqualified indenture to Kant, and to reassert the philosophical and aesthetic continuities between his *Sturm und Drang* and classical periods. The characterization of a Schillerian *Klassik* fueled by an "Ästhetik *par provision*" (p. 18) put forth here proves far more engaging than the traditional view of a narrowly focused aesthetic program chiseled in marble and utterly divorced from earlier projects and influences. Robert's ambitious study is long, dense, intricate, and, in my view, quite successful. Most impressively, it requires the author to operate throughout in the matrix of philosophical incongruity and aesthetic ambivalence he identifies as Schiller's native realm. He defends the poet as a complex and eclectic philosophical thinker, even when Schiller would fail to recognize him-

self as such. (I thank Robert in particular for the compact and useful formulation: "Wenn Schiller noch im ersten *ästhetischen Brief* davon spricht, dass 'es größtenteils Kantische Grundsätze sind, auf denen die nachfolgenden Behauptungen ruhen werden', so liegt darin geradezu eine Verken- nung der eigenen Wurzeln", p. 27).

In a study that devotes significant space to themes of optics and perspective, it is interesting to observe the author's tendency to approach his object from the side; which is to say that he relies heavily on marginal(ized) texts to ground his corrective interpretation of Schiller's aesthetics. The *Fieberschrift* and the *Bürger-Rezeption* receive a full chapter each. Such "minor" texts are sometimes paired with major ones, both, it seems, in order to lend the former significance, and to establish a foundation for a revised view of the latter. The *Fieberschrift*, for instance, is brought into thematic connection with *Die Räuber*, whose feuding brothers are here understood as the embodiments of distinct fever presentations. In a similar vein, the caustic *Bürger-Rezeption* is cleverly reframed as a medical case study similar to that of the pupil Grammont from Schiller's *Karlsschule* days. Discussion of the fragment *Die Polizey* encompasses texts as far-ranging as *Fiesko* and the *Ästhetische Briefe*. While not exactly a minor text, *Die Künstler* surprises and gratifies in its role as interpretive touchstone in this study. Robert makes a nuanced and persuasive case for viewing *Die Künstler* as the quintessential Schil-

lerian text, and places it at the center of a web of motivic connections that weaves together works as seemingly divergent in theme, genre, and authorial intent as the *Ästhetische Briefe*, *Der Geisterseher*, *Don Karlos*, *Die Sendung Mose*, *Die Maltheser*, and, most interestingly, Adam Weishaupt's *Anrede an die neuauftzunehmenden Illuminatos dirigentes*.

The author's prose is thoroughly academic, though he occasionally strikes a mildly conversational tone. My preference for a lighter, more playful style is undoubtedly rooted in my own nationality and constitutes no real criticism of Robert, who can and does turn a nimble phrase. I did detect a slight tendency to become somewhat associative in his argumentation when drawing parallels between Schiller's life and work, as he does with some frequency in the discussion surrounding *Die Künstler*. There is a distinctly fanciful note, for instance, in such observations as "*Die Künstler [sind] vorstellbar als akademische Festrede, vorgetragen an einer nicht näher zu spezifizierenden Bildungsanstalt, einer Karlsschule für Künstler, aus Anlass des Abschieds der Zöglinge*", and "*Indem Schiller die beiden Desiderara Kunst und Weiblichkeit – im platonischen Mythos der doppelten Venus identifiziert, kompensiert er die zwei Beraubungen der eigenen Kindheit*" (p. 280). This is a minor point, however, as such musings do not really jeopardize the study's rigor, but rather add a bit of welcome color. My greater objection, and even here I cannot necessarily

claim that it is a legitimate one, is to the image of Schiller as a hard-nosed philosophical thinker and theoretician that emerges in this and in similarly oriented studies. I cannot help but wonder, fairly or otherwise, whether the clarity of mind and mastery of the philosophical matter showcased there truly belong more to the scholar than to the poet.

Robert's *Vor der Klassik* is a substantial work with much to interest the serious student of Schiller. It belongs in graduate libraries in my country and other outposts of *Auslandsgermanistik*. Within the German-speaking world, it easily earns its shelf space in any university library.

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**Yvonne Nilges, *Schiller und das Recht* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2012), 399 pp.**

**I**l volume di Yvonne Nilges è una novità assoluta. Versione rielaborata della *Habilitationschrift* presentata dall'autrice nell'estate del 2010 presso la Neuphilologische Fakultät dell'Università di Heidelberg, esso si concentra per la prima volta in maniera sistematica e storicamente accurata su "Schiller come poeta e pensatore del diritto" (p. 7). Certo, ci sono già stati alcuni tentativi (pochi, a dire il vero) in questo senso, che sono però risultati essere o necessariamente brevi (nel caso di articoli) o troppo orientati in senso speculativo senza un'adeguata attenzione alle fonti, in partico-