

Literature Seminar

15 January 2013

Ute Link entitled her class: 'Hölderlin – A Poet in Tübingen', and I knew that once again we were going to be amazed by yet another marvel that this charming town in the heart of Baden-Württemberg had produced. It is astonishing to walk along the Neckar or through the cobbled streets of the *Altstadt* and know we are sharing in the shadows and sights of those past figures like Friedrich Schelling, Johannes Kepler, Joseph Ratzinger, and the poet Friedrich Hölderlin.

We learnt that the writer bore within him a progressive spirit. Though born into and writing from the setting of Classicism, his works displayed revolutionary traces of the Romantic Movement. Despite his somewhat grey and staunch Protestant upbringing and education, Hölderlin's works captured a deeply personal appreciation for the natural world and an almost pantheistic experience of the classical gods. As a consequence of his writings' premature sentiments and the unacceptable love for his student's mother, Hölderlin often felt a misplaced figure. However, he left a riveting legacy of lyric verse and it was here one again in Tübingen, that he found eventual peace in his final days.

But I sit under clouds (each one
Of which has peace) among
The ordered oaks, upon
The deer's heath, and strange
And dead the ghosts of the blessed ones
Appear to me.

- Hölderlin



Portrait by Franz Karl Hiemer



The house where Hölderlin settled in Tübingen