



Gestures of Ethical Life: Reading Hölderlin's Question of Measure After Heidegger (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)

David Kleinberg-Levin

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For Greek antiquity, the question of right or fitting measure constituted the very heart of both ethics and politics. But can the Good of the ethical life and the Justice of the political be reduced to measurement and calculation? If they are matters of measure, are they not also absolutely immeasurable? In critical dialogue with texts by Plato, Hölderlin, Rilke, Heidegger, Benjamin, Adorno, Marx, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, and Levi, the author argues that the question of measure has become ever more urgent in the context of a modernity pressured by the conditions of a technological economy and a relativism that threatens to destroy a vital sense of moral responsibility and the commitment to justice that underlies the possibility of freedom. Conceived as a task for the “metaphysics” of memory, this book explores the normative problematic of measure, bringing its deeply buried redemptive promise to appearance in our gestures, uses and abuses of the hands, the dialectic of tact, and the manners of social existence.

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