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978-0-521-28366-3 - Re-Interpretations: Seven Studies in Nineteenth-Century  
German Literature

J. P. Stern

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# Re-interpretations

## *Seven Studies in Nineteenth-Century German Literature*

J. P. STERN

*... that we are not very reliably at home  
in the interpreted world.*

R. M. RILKE

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521283663](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521283663)

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First published by Thames & Hudson 1964

Reissued by the Cambridge University Press 1981

Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2010

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-23983-7 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-28366-3 Paperback

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To Sheila Stern

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MY THANKS are due to the editors of *The Modern Language Review*, *The Cambridge Review*, *The Listener*, and to George G. Harrap and Company, Limited, publishers of *German Studies presented to W. H. Bruford*, London 1962, for permission to reprint in this book material which first appeared in the pages of their publications.

I am conscious of, and deeply grateful for, the encouragement and helpful criticism of many friends, colleagues and students. In Chapter I, 3 I have drawn extensively on an unpublished essay by D. H. Green, without which I would not have ventured into the hallowed precincts of medieval literature. Chapter V has benefited from the pertinent criticism of F. H. Hinsley. Several parts of the book, and especially Chapter III, were the subjects of conversations with Paul Roubiczek; to acknowledge something of what I owe to his generous friendship and wisdom is a very special pleasure. Similarly, the stimulus I have received from Erich Heller in the course of our old friendship has been a constant delight throughout the writing of this book. To my students past and present, willing and sometimes perhaps baffled partners in a common enterprise, I owe many an escape from obscure formulation. To Ellen Sutton I am grateful for many helpful comments and for her patient care in the preparation of the typescript; to Michael Wood and Terence Rogers for help with the proofs.

All my quotations are translated; the assistance I have received in that task, and in countless other ways, is acknowledged in my dedication.

*St John's College, Cambridge*

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## PREFACE TO THE 1981 REISSUE

While preparing this reprint of a book written some eighteen years ago I came across several passages which, partly as a consequence of re-reading the works discussed here, partly in the light of more recent criticism, I would have liked to alter. I also became aware of some additions I would have liked to make; in particular, discussions with Richard Humphrey convinced me that a consideration of the novels of Willibald Alexis would have enriched the range of the book as well as modified some of its conclusions. However, I had to content myself with correcting a number of plain errors, and I am deeply grateful to several friends—among them Alec Stillmark, and above all Nicholas Boyle—for helping me to do this. Whether the critical procedure outlined in the Introduction and followed in these pages amounts to a method it is for the reader to decide; in this respect, at all events, I have seen no reason for change.

J.P.S.

*Christmas 1980*