Call for Papers

Jahrbuch der Internationalen Heiner Müller Gesellschaft 1 (2024)

Ed. by Norbert Otto Eke, Janine Ludwig und FlorianVaßen

In 2024 the International Heiner Müller Society will begin publishing a yearbook with Aisthesis Verlag (Bielefeld, Germany) in which scholarly research, archival findings and material, as well as shorter contributions such as reviews and project descriptions will appear. We are seeking contributions for the first volume texts of about 15 pages (5000 words / 30,000 characters) with a thematic focus on Heiner Müller’s discourse of nature.

The Yearbook’s theme leads deep into a field of agonistic discussions whose topicality is obvious. Human beings increasingly destroy nature in the Anthropocene and as a result their own sources of life. They are “at war” with nature, which “defends” itself in the form of ecological catastrophes. In this context the theater is challenged to ask about new responsibilities, modes of practice, and goals, different themes and constellations, and a new aesthetics and form, as for example they are addressed in Frank Raddatz’s *Das Drama des Anthropozäns* (Berlin 2021) or Frank Oberender’s *Gaia-Theater* (Berlin 2022). We also point to the connection of literature and nature in the concept of *Nature Writing*, the ecocritical model (Gabriele Dürbeck / Urte Stobbe, 2015; Benjamin Bühler 2016), and ecofeminist approaches as discussed by Karen J. Warren in *Ecofeminist Philosophy* (Lanham, MD 2000).

Within this framework the Yearbook’s focus is directed toward the continually shifting configurations and constellations of nature and their meaning within Müller’s dramas and theatrical work. This was the case in his plays of the 1950s and 1960s, which sharpened the view of economic rationalization as the sphere for adjusting body and nature when physically connoted aspirations of pleasure collide with the utopian projections of communism / socialism, and it continued into the late work of staging revolts of nature as the incommensurable “reserves” of utopia. At the one pole of the semantics of nature we find its industrialization and domination by humankind as a progressive metaphor in the comedy model of the mini-drama *Herakles 5*. At the other pole is the definition of revolution as the elemental violence of nature that Müller adapted from Aimé Césaire’s and Leopold Sedhor Senghor’s existential ontology of Négritude, when in *Der Auftrag* he confronts the anthropocentric definition of the essence of history with an irrational model of avenging, retaliating nature / landscape as the principle of emancipation from history’s reifications, enslavements, and mutilations.

The contradictory, fluid, and fragile field of thinking in these terms of nature images strikes us as not yet treated adequately and systematically enough. The planned Yearbook seeks from this perspective to close a gap if at all possible in the interdisciplinary discussion of literary and theater studies, history and philosophy.

We are seeking contributions on the following topics in Müller’s work:

- metaphorization of body-nature (body and nature)

- industrialization of nature as emancipatory experience

- domination of nature / destruction of nature

- semantics of resurgence (of nature)

- Nature-writing (ecocriticism) as an aesthetic-structural approach

Thematic proposals and exposés (maximum one page) in German or English should be sent by 30 April 2023 to all three editors:

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Decisions about acceptance will follow promptly; completed submissions in German or English are due by 31 October 2023.