Frank Hörnigk, ed.: Material. Heiner Müller

Pam Allen

Indiana University, Bloomington

Follow this and additional works at: https://newprairiepress.org/gdr

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 License.

Recommended Citation

https://doi.org/10.4148/gdrb.v15i2.924

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in GDR Bulletin by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact cads@k-state.edu.
An说了, "is reflected even in the origin of the scholars included in this volume. Indeed, the careful national balance of contributors seems somewhat con­trived: two from each of the Germanies, one each from the USA and USSR, and the remaining four from countries that could be considered semi-West (Spain, Italy) and semi-East (Poland, Yugoslavia).

Vlado Obad’s insightful commentary on Müller’s poetics of fragmentation show unifying characteristics in a number of diverse plays. Other articles deal with various aspects of Wolokolamsker Chaussee I, II and III, Zement, Philoktet, and Bildbeschreibung. Among the more interesting contributions, Frank Hörnigk offers an eloquent and timely discussion of Müller’s understanding of history. The brilliant contribution by Wolfgang Emmerich identifies Greek myth as "ein zentrales Bezugsystem für Heiner Müller." Taking an altogether different approach, Jost Hermand simulates a dialogue between two directors who are considering ways of including Müller in Berlin’s "750. Jahrfeier." Director-A (Hermand himself?), who worked with the 1957 production of Müller’s Lohndrücker, tries to per­suade young director-B of the relevance of this play for today’s audience, a point recently proven by the enormous success of the play under Müller’s own di­rection at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. Director-B concedes: "Schließlich ist heute die gesamte Welt eine riesige Fabrik geworden, in der wir ständig--bei brennendem Feuer--unsere verschiedenen Ringöfen repar­ieren müssen, damit das Ganze nicht einfach in die Luft geht." This comment, a mise en abyme for the entire volume, marks Müller as an artist who addresses not merely his fellow socialists, but the world.

Pam Allen
Indiana University, Bloomington


One of several publications paying tribute to Heiner Müller’s 60th birthday on January 9, 1989, this scholarly volume is a helpful tool for Germanists, or for anyone seeking greater insight into this artist’s creative talent. Half of the book is devoted to original writ­ings by Müller: speeches, prose fragments, poetry, letters, commentaries; and the plays Die Hamletmas­chine and Bildbeschreibung. The editor’s criterion, to select works that shed light on Müller’s Selbstver­ständnis, explains the choice of plays included: both represent particularly significant crisis points for the author. Written between 1953 and 1988, all entries have been previously published, more than one-third in Rotwelsch (Merve, 1982), but republication in this collection offers easier access to a number of often-quoted texts, as well as to a few that are likely to be obscure to the Germanist ("Phönix" and "Taube und Samurai") or too recently published to be widely noted ("New York oder das eiserne Gesicht der Freiheit" and "Shakespeare eine Differenz"). The collection cele­brates Müller as a multi-faceted and aesthetically fasci­nating writer, and implicitly suggests the rich inter­textuality in his oeuvre of more than three decades.

The other half of the volume consists of ten com­mentaries addressing various aspects of Müller’s dra­matic writing. The editor’s intention, to show the author’s efforts towards what Müller himself called a "universelle[r] Diskurs, der nichts und niemanden aus­schließt," is reflected even in the origin of the scholars included in this volume. Indeed, the careful national balance of contributors seems somewhat con­trived: two from each of the Germanies, one each from the USA and USSR, and the remaining four from countries that could be considered semi-West (Spain, Italy) and semi-East (Poland, Yugoslavia).

Pam Allen
Indiana University, Bloomington