

The Sellout of Art and Nature? – About Outer and Inner Peace

Humanity and nature teeter at the brink of abyss today unlike at any other point in human history before. For the first time in the history of nature's development, human action leads to the destruction of not only lives but of the basis of life. The unbridled conviction that advancement is only possible through technological "innovation" has brought humanity and nature into this situation. Extinction of species in flora and fauna – to this extent man-made for the first time in history -, climate change, the nuclear threat and the estrangement of humans in the technologized world they created are only some of the heralds of worse things to come.

We believe in the possibility of a shift in values that would grant nature a value on its own and which perceives the conscious man as part of nature, not as separate from it. We authors are conscious of our responsibility. In this same perception that is both positive and negative, contemporary art is created. Artists cannot and do not want to ignore this but instead make a statement and point out causes and effects through their works.

Authors seem to be powerless in their creative legacy when the outer peace falls apart, when blood is spilled, when flesh is burning at the behest of warlords. But we who permeate the minds and hearts of people through our works have a high responsibility for the inner peace of our readers, for they trust us and might identify with us and our heroes. When we deny the teachers of war their books of war, we can contribute significantly to outer peace and cannot only enlighten but contribute significantly to peace between the people.

Two very different German authors who witnessed World War 2, Wolfgang Borchert and Heinrich Böll, have shown that commitment against war and for peace is not lost in printed words. Böll sat down in front of the gates of the US American military camp Mutlangen in order to protest against the stationing of nuclear missiles. Young Wolfgang Borchert, who died shortly after the war, used all opportunities in and beyond his literary creations to say NO to any form of inhuman policy.

Germany made war history on an unimaginable scale but there were always brave writers who didn't get involved and who strived for humane values. These are the ones that we want to commemorate today. We want to let them speak, like writer Hans M. Schmidt from Steinau: he continues the thought of Borchert's "NO" and writes in his collection of aphorisms "Gedanken wider den Zeitgeist" (Thoughts versus the zeitgeist):

"Für mich steht einem klaren NEIN zu einer Sache immer ein ebenso klares JA zu einer anderen Sache gegenüber."

[To me, a clear NO towards one thing is always linked to a clear YES towards another thing.]

War and mass murder are supported by people not being directly involved who accept these events or suppress them. In both world wars, teachers let themselves be used as a tool of war propaganda by the ruling class. These rulers found followers and opportunists in our midst as well, writers who would write military text books under the disguise of literature. Thus, opposing war means to uncover war and its consequences and effects in the daily life of the people unsparingly. This was exemplified by Barlach, Remarque, Tucholsky and Zweig – just to mention a few authors – in the time before and after World War I.

Why art and culture have the obligation to question the power of money

Such questions are oftentimes perilous, as well as the social and environmental exploitation of humans. as not least illustrated by recent history, when the protection of nature from greed-fueled, acquisitive destruction is concerned, inquirers become the target of violence very easily. And when corruption and greed eat away at entire states only strategies of appeasement are discussed and not the fundamental question of the role of money in society. This does also apply to how man handles nature, which the visionary Friedrich Schiller already described 200 years ago in his letters about the aesthetic education of man:

„Die Dichter sind überall... die Bewahrer der Natur. Wo sie diese nicht ganz mehr sein können und schon in sich selbst den zerstörenden Einfluss willkürlicher und künstlicher Formen erfahren... da werden sie als die Zeugen und als die Rächer der Natur auftreten. Sie werden entweder Natur sein oder sie werden die verlorene suchen.

(Über naive und sentimentale Dichtung)“

[In every place, the poets are preservers of nature. If they cannot be this anymore and experience the destructive influence of arbitrary and artificial forms... they will appear as the witnesses and as the avengers of nature. They will either be nature or they will search for what has been lost.

(About naïve and sentimental poetry)]

Moloch (the reckless use of money) money, which has (almost) consumed all interests by now, has the potential to destroy not only nature but also the self-esteem of people, their inner freedom and their economic existence. They bow to the dictatorship of their hand-made tool (money), and the better they do this the “freer” do they feel: like a sorcerer’s apprentice (Goethe’s “Zauberlehrling”) who is even proud of forgetting his own nature. The basic mistake – of “rationalizing” the exchange of products of nature by means of the invention of MONEY – has long been forgotten.

In a place where MONEY acts as nature’s enemy, our culture should lead us back to nature on the path of reason and liberty, said Schiller.

The participants of the World-Poetry-Festival “Zwischen unseren Worten – Poesie überwindet Grenzen” (Between Our Words – Poetry Overcomes Borders) are conscious that the sole subjugation of all things natural and human to the utilization principle of the market destroys the vital diversity principle of nature of which man is the integral element. Diversity is vital to both the existence of life and the creative legacy of man. Those who destroy diversity in nature and in human action destroy life and creativity and, simultaneously, the basis of their livelihood.

Rödermark, September 2016

Signatures:

International participant

Nahid Esnafpour (Iran)

Maria Juliana Villafane (Puerto Rico)

Mindy Zhang (China/USA)

Silvia Cuevas Morales (Chile/Australien/Spanien)

Dumitru M. Ion (Leiter der Internationalen Kulturakademie Orient-Occident (Rumänien)

Maarja Kangro (Estland)

Mesut Senol (Türkei)

Bisera Suljic-Boskailo (Bosnien und Herzegwonia)

Annabel Villar (Uruguay/Spanien)

Julio Pavanetti (Uruguay/Spanien) – Präsident „Liceo Poetico de Benidorm“

Francoise Roy (Kanada/Mexico)

Valérie Forgues (Kanada)

Lana-Valeria Dumitru (Rumänien/Großbritannien)

Guests from Deutschland

Petra M. Jansen (Gelnhausen)

Monika Landau (Hannoversch Münden)

Ljubica Perkman (Bosnien-Herzegowina/Rodgau)

Dieter Brumm (Hamburg)

Hans Melchior Schmidt (Steinau)

Sylvia Meise (Frankfurt)

Carola Hügli (Rödermark)

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