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**Client and Contractor as
Protagonists of Revolution.
Reflections on Heiner Müller's Drama
Der Auftrag. Erinnerungen an eine Revolution
(“The Mission. Memories of a Revolution”)**

The German dramatist Heiner Müller discusses the issue of revolution drawing on his own experiences with radical changes in society. He chooses the Caribbean as the setting for his drama. Inspired by both the demands of the French Revolution of freedom, equality and fraternity and the successful Haitian Revolution of 1804 in which Haiti attains its freedom from colonial rule, he drafts his drama *Der Auftrag. Erinnerungen an eine Revolution* (“The Mission. Memories of a Revolution”, 1979). In doing so, he works with themes out of Anna Seghers' short story “Das Licht auf dem Galgen” (“The Light on the Gallows”, 1961). Anna Seghers is a 20th century German author. She also held the position of president of the German writer's society in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from 1952 until 1978.

1. Biographical dates

Heiner Müller was born in 1929 in Saxony, Germany. He is only a teenager when his father, a convinced social democrat, is deported to a concentration camp during the Nazi regime in Germany. At age 16, near the end of World War II, he is drafted into the army. After the war, Heiner Müller decides to settle in the Soviet sector of Germany, later to become the GDR. There he becomes politically engaged and active as a journalist. In 1956 he starts writing dramas that expound the problems of the young socialist society in the GDR.

The negative experiences that were made by Heiner Müller's parents, especially by his father, with Hitler Germany and the founding years of the GDR influenced his view of society. In a *curriculum vitae* composed in 1956 he writes:

Mother: [...] sewer, father: [...] administrative secretary (1933, as a functionary for the SPD [Social Democratic Party of Germany], in “protective custody” in the concentration camp Sachsenhausen amongst others. After his release and evacuation out of the residential district unemployed until the year 1938. 1941 renewed “protective custody” (treason article). After his return from war captivity head of the employment agency, then department head of the District Office in Waren and successively Federal State Secretary of the SED [United Socialist Party of Germany] for Culture, Universities, etc. (Schwerin). 1947 Mayor of Frankenberg/Saxony. 1951 expulsion from the SED as a “Titoist”. Ever since in Western Germany (Müller 1994: 375).¹

Even though his parents and brother decide to move to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) Heiner Müller decides to remain in the GDR. Years later upon being asked why his father left the GDR he does not have much to say. He merely remembers that he “was in stronger agreement than his father with the measures being taken, such as the expropriations” (66).

However, as early as the beginning 1960s, public discussion of the realization of socialist ideas in the GDR is discouraged by the government. Heiner Müller’s drama *Die Umsiedlerin* (“The Resettler Woman”, 1961), that takes a critical look at aspects of the instituted land reform and collectivisation of the agricultural sector, is immediately shut down after its premiere. Additionally, Heiner Müller is expelled from the writer’s society of the GDR. It is not until 1988 that he is readmitted into the society. He is also forbidden to publicize. Starting in the late 1960s Heiner Müller discusses the way in which socialism has been realized in the GDR. He does this in an encoded fashion by interpreting texts out of Greek and Roman mythology. These dramas focus on the dialectic between the individual and society. The individual tries to fend off the needs and demands of the collective to which the collective reacts with an increasing bondage of the individual. Time and again the writings of Heiner Müller fall out of favour with the responsible bureau for cultural affairs of the GDR. Numerous times he writes a self-criticism and thereby saves himself from repression by the state authorities and ensures his survival as an artist. He says: “My writing was more important to me than my morals” (180); as well as: “I had the chance to save my texts from condemnation through good lies [...]” (198). Heiner Müller’s view of the world be-

1 All German citations have been translated into English by the author.

comes increasingly radical. History seems to him as an endless repetition of violence and suppression. This belief is also a predominant motive in his herein discussed drama “The Mission”.

Due to his clever interaction with the power holders in the GDR and the support of those sympathetic to him, Heiner Müller receives the permission to travel into the USA by the government of the GDR in 1975. In the 1980s, years before the Berlin wall fell, he is also allowed to move freely between the two German states and awarded by both for his literary work. After the German reunification in 1989 he is mainly active as a director. Shortly before his death in 1995 he takes on the exclusive creative direction of the “Berliner Ensemble”, a theatre that has previously become famous under the leadership of Bertolt Brecht.

2. Müller’s drama “The Mission”

Heiner Müller’s drama “The Mission” takes place during the time of the French Revolution. A government official of the Parisian Convention commissions three French citizens to ignite a slave revolt in British-ruled Jamaica, taking the successful Haitian Revolution as a role model. Müller characterizes the French Republic at this historical point in time: it becomes the origin of the revolution, the country that invokes terror in the nobility and the ray of hope for the poor (Müller 2004: 53). The three citizens that have been commissioned to instigate the revolution come from very different social backgrounds: Debuisson is a doctor and the son of a slaveholder in Jamaica, Galloudec is a Breton farmer and Sasportas² a freed slave. When they arrive in Jamaica they have to withhold their real intentions. Debuisson says: “I am, who I was: [...] the son of slave holders in Jamaica with the right of succession to a plantation with four hundred slaves.” Galloudec becomes a “farmer out of Brittany that has learned to hate the revolution due to the blood bath caused by the guillotine. Devoted servant of the noble Debuisson [...]”. He believes “in the holy order of the monarchy and clergy”. And finally Sasportas: “On the run from the successful black revolution in Haiti I have subjected myself to

2 In Anna Seghers’ version Sasportas is a Spanish Jew. This change of character is a clear indication that Müller is trying to give his reflections on the question of colonialism a greater emphasis.

Master Debuissou because God has created me to serve in slavery. I am his slave" (54-55).

In the course of the realization of their mission and through life circumstances in Jamaica the differences in their social backgrounds become increasingly apparent. The former slave accuses the French farmer: "The grasp for the soup bowl was your revolution" (59). Furthermore, he warns the son of the slave holder: "The charade of the white revolution has come to an end. We sentence you to the death penalty, Victor Debuissou. Because your skin is white. Because your thoughts are white under your white skin" (61). Soon Napoleon appears on the political scene. The mission becomes decrepit. "The world returns to what it was, a home for masters and slaves" (67). Debuissou decides for a life as a slave holder and gives up the ideals of the revolution. Sasportas and Galloudec decide not to abandon their original mission. In the course of further events, Sasportas is hung as a rebel leader in Port Royal in Jamaica. Galloudec is wounded but manages to flee to Cuba where he dies of gangrene in a hospital. Before his death, however, he composes a letter to their client, the French government official informing him of the course of events. In the letter, he requests the annulment of the mission. But the client distances himself from the mission: "I have to be careful. France is no longer a republic and our consul has turned into an emperor in the midst of conquering Russia" (51).

In midst of the main plot seemingly surrealistic elements are placed: the meeting of Debuissou with his parents sitting in the open closet, his first love on a throne. Also the elevator scene: a plot that mainly takes place in France and Jamaica is interrupted by a scene set in an elevator in which a stranger, who speaks of himself as if speaking of a stranger, loses all perception of time because the handles on his watch suddenly accelerate, rotating with an immense speed. He has lost all orientation by the time the doors of the elevator open and suddenly finds himself on a dusty, lonely street in Peru. He was actually on his way to an appointment with his boss. This insertion could be seen as a reference to the universality of human behaviour independent of time and setting. It is also a point in the drama where the central theme is addressed: What does the contractor do if he cannot fulfil his mission? In this case because he is not able to reach his boss's office. "I exit the elevator at the next halt and am left without a

mission with the now superfluous tie still tied ludicrously below my chin on a dirt road in Peru" (65). This scene can also be interpreted as an allusion to the philosophical and political dilemma of revolutionary work (Teraoka 1986: 68).

Upon reading the drama for the first time, I was shocked and could not place it. The crude language, provocative scenes, the often abrupt jumps from one part of the action to the next perturbed me and made it hard for me to understand the message of the drama. A couple of examples to clarify this point: Heiner Müller has three prostitutes symbolize freedom, equality and fraternity in order to show how vulnerable these ethical and moral values are to corruption. He uses sexual metaphors: "Treason smilingly shows its breasts, silently parts its thighs. Its beauty caught on to Debuisson like fire" (74-75); as well as realistic descriptions that are gruesome in their iciness: "The gallows stand on a cliff. When they are dead, they will be cut off and fall into the ocean. The rest will be taken care of by the sharks" (51).

Only after several readings did I find a connection to the work. I now also value the partial episodic clarity of language that he uses that often asserts itself as aphorisms, for example: "A revolution has no time to count its victims" (71). Now I understand the need for the provocative style. Heiner Müller's rather non-historical approach leaves ample room for interpretation by the reader. It becomes a general model for revolution, rather than a factual account.

Müller's writing style appears to be fragmented. He jumps from one thought to the next but he is, nevertheless, able to express the interdependence of all the contrary ideas in the following basic questions: firstly, the relationship between the individual and the revolutionary process; secondly, the individual in the dichotomy between acceptance and refusal of responsibility for himself and for society; and thirdly, the involvement of the individual in historical processes.

In his autobiography Heiner Müller speaks of his fascination with dreams and one is lead to believe that he tries to imitate the powerful language of dreams:

I have always been interested in the narrative structure of dreams, the unlimited, the negation of causal coherences. The contrasts enable an acceleration. The whole effort of writing lies in achieving the quality of one's own dreams, including the freedom from interpretation. Faulkner's best texts offer this quality. [...] Reading Faulkner is like reading a river. His people are landscapes (Müller 1994: 298).

On another occasion he accentuates that he is neither able to read morally, nor write morally (229). This may also be an explanation for the nakedness of his words that partially appear brutal in their directness. He explains his intensive and absolutist search for the strongest possible accordance with reality in the following fashion:

Writing needs an agreement in love or hate with the subject. [...] The agreement with the subject separates literature from journalism. The journalist cannot write if he is in agreement with his subject (289).

Heiner Müller also points out the limitations of theatre as a medium:

[...] triumphs in the theatre are works that are not really new. That which is successful is the old new. Already because of its entire apparatus theatre in general is not innovative. One can be more innovative linguistically in lyrics than in drama. Theatre has to remain within the realm of the commonplace for it to be successful (205).

3. How “The Mission” came to be

Müller describes that upon reading Anna Seghers’ “The Light on the Gallows” he immediately decided to write “The Mission”. He spontaneously includes the motif in the following poem:

MOTIF IN A. S.
 Debuissou in Jamaica
 Between black breasts
 In Paris Robespierre
 With a shattered Jaw.
 Or Joan of Arc when the angel stayed away
 The angels always stay away in the end
 THE PILE OF MEAT DANTE CAN'T GIVE MEAT
 TO THE STREET
 LOOK AT THE MEAT IN THE
 STREET
 OPEN THE HUNT ON THE DEER IN THE YELLOW
 SHOES.
 Jesus Christ. The devil discloses the realms of the world to him
 THROW OFF THE CROSS AND EVERYTHING IS YOURS.
 In times of deceit
 The landscapes are beautiful.

MOTIV BEI A. S.
 Debuissou auf Jamaika
 Zwischen schwarzen Brüsten
 In Paris Robespierre
 Mit zerbrochenem Kinn.
 Oder Jeanne d'Arc als der Engel ausblieb

Immer bleiben die Engel aus am Ende
 FLEISCHBERG DANTE KANN DER STRASSE
 KEIN FLEISCH GEBEN
 SEHT DOCH DAS FLEISCH AUF DER
 STRASSE
 JAGD AUF DAS ROTWILD IN DEN GELBEN
 SCHUHN.
 Christus. Der Teufel zeigt ihm die Reiche der Welt
 WIRF DAS KREUZ AB UND ALLES IST DEIN.
 In der Zeit des Verrats
 Sind die Landschaften schön (Müller 1977: 80).

However, it is not until years later that he writes the premeditated drama. Müller interprets Seghers' narrations to be her way of dealing with Stalinism; Napoleon acting as the representative of Stalin. Nevertheless it is a different theme that has caught Müller's interest: the motif of treason.

Seghers describes it in the following fashion: It is only when during a halt on a hilltop in Jamaica when the voice of treason initially starts speaking to the Jacobin Debuisson – the news of the 18th Brumaire has reached him and he now knows that the revolution is over – that he sees the beauty of Jamaica for the first time (Müller 1994: 297).

With the title of his drama, "The Mission. Memories of a Revolution", Müller complies with Anna Seghers' demand that literature should always be the memory of the revolution.

Müller relates that he lacked the dramaturgy for the content he had in mind. The impressions that he gained in the course of a voyage to Mexico and Puerto Rico helped him.

In Mexico I found the format. The second part of the elevator text is the protocol of a dream, the dream the product of a nightly walk from a remote village to the main street to Mexico City, on a field path between fields of cacti; no moon, no taxi. Every now and then dark figures appeared like Goya's pictures and passed us by; sometimes with flashlights, other times with candles. A passage of fear through the Third World (297).

Müller also points out the use of other personal experiences in the drama. The scene in the elevator is also a reflection of Müller's procession to the then-head-of-state Erich Honecker. The meeting took place in the building of the Central Committee of the United Socialist Party of Germany (SED)³ where one reached the upper floors with a

3 The SED was the sole State Party of the GDR.

paternoster: “On every floor a soldier sat across from the paternoster with a machine gun. The building of the Central Committee was a high security apparatus for the prisoners of power” (298).

Heiner Müller has staged “The Mission” twice: 1980 in the “Volksbühne” in East Berlin which was additionally his first work as a director. 1982 he staged it in the West German city Bochum. The two performances turned out very differently. Müller: “It was not a repetition; in the GDR it was a contemporary piece, in Bochum a far-off fairy tale” (298).

4. Müller’s discourse concerning revolution and Brecht

In this drama Heiner Müller takes a critical look at the betrayal of a revolution by prior revolutionaries. Taking the Haitian Revolution as a role model for the revolutionary activity in Jamaica, the author creates a parable that implies that revolutionary processes have similar stages they go through. According to his work this is due to human nature and the resulting interactions between people, society and each individual and his own beliefs. The immanent conflict for the bourgeois intellectual between revolutionary action and the retreat into his own private existence is depicted. Debuissou has the possibility to return to his original bourgeois lifestyle. In contrast, Galloudec the farmer and Sasportas the former slave do not have this option.

Even though Heiner Müller is frequently categorized as the most critical but also most loyal heir of the contemporary German authors, he himself describes his relationship to Brecht as “selective as of the beginning” (225). And he continues: “It was generally a problem that Brecht had his classic Marxist categories that were unable to conceive a reality that was much more complex and differentiated” (229). “The Mission” can certainly be seen as a dispute with the political didactic play *Die Maßnahme* (“The Measure”, 1929/1930; published in 1931) by Bertolt Brecht, even though “the entire supporting ideology of ‘world revolution’ is revealed finally to be imperialist and Eurocentric” (Teraoka 1986: 66).

In the midst of the conflict-laden socialist tradition lies the critical exploration of bourgeois history and the dilemma of the bourgeois intellectual revolutionary as the main themes of Müller’s drama. The fact that he uses the fundamental structure of Bertolt Brecht’s “The

Measure” adds a critical allusion to the Russian Revolution and its consequences. The extension of the French Revolution to Jamaica represents the export of the socialist revolution to the Third World. In essence Müller appears not to differentiate between the bourgeois French Revolution and the socialist Russian Revolution. Both revolutions are unable to feed their people, while at the same time demanding a universal validity for themselves. The use of masks for the agitators in both dramas is also striking. Brecht utilizes them to bestow utter anonymity while Müller uses them to reflect the individual social background, the social class and racial affiliation of the individual. Therefore, they are neither anonymous, nor exchangeable. Müller completely breaks with the model constituted by Brecht by declaring the “white” revolution of Europe as failed (Teraoka 1986: 68): “The revolution is the mask of death. Death is the mask of the revolution” (Müller 2004: 56). Contrary to Brecht who busies himself with correct revolutionary tactics, Müller emphasizes the hypocrisy of the revolution itself that is led by the privileged white people.

The three emissaries in Heiner Müller’s drama exemplify different views of the revolution: Debuissou represents the French intellectual who is not personally affected by the repression but becomes involved due to a liking of the idea of a revolution. Galloudec represents the position in the middle:

Communism is the middle, although I no longer believe in even this. Of course the middle is a prerequisite, but one can no longer use this as a measure for movement. It is a prerequisite for the, seen from our perspective, completely anarchistic or absurd liberation movements. Khomeini or whatever... I still believe that the conservation of this middle position in Eastern Europe is an important prerequisite for the effectiveness of the anarchistic and absurd liberation movements in other parts of the world.⁴

Sasportas represents the attitude of the proletariat, but also the revolutionary movements in other parts of the world. He stands for revolution in Jamaica without any European leadership (Teraoka 1986: 75-76). This approach is less the result of sympathy for the understanding of revolution propagated by Rosa Luxemburg as the opponent of Lenin on the part of Heiner Müller, but rather as an allusion to the ideas of Frantz Fanon (1952; 1961) who advocates a unique path of

4 “Schreiben aus Lust an der Katastrophe” (1980); cited from Teraoka (1986 : 75).

revolution for the countries of the Third World and demands of them the development of an own concept of revolution. He refuses an orientation along European institutions and along the ideas of the colonial masters. Müller identifies himself with Fanon's assessment that the hope of the Third World can only rest within the refusal of the claims of universal validity of the dominant European traditions.

Nevertheless, the reduction of Heiner Müller's "The Mission" to its political assertion not only leads to an exclusion of the large extent of his philosophical reflections:

Of course there are situations in which I express myself politically and not as an artist, but as soon as I start writing this down, it is already an artefact. Speaking and writing are two different things. When writing the text takes the lead. In the aesthetic discussion of modernity one finds the concept of a utopia as a constant companion. One says that if not in the content, one at least finds the concept of a better world in the form of a work of art. I have also always believed along with Brecht, that in the beauty of a formulation of a barbaric fact the hope for a utopia is encompassed. I no longer believe this. At some point one must accept the separation between art and life (Müller 1994: 200-201).

Müller never saw himself as a political poet (183).

A major aspect in Müller's drama is the breaking down of the abstract analysis of revolution to the respective participation of the individual in the revolutionary process. Every one is involved at some point, whether it be voluntarily or involuntarily. Be it as a contractor or client. A mission can be important for both the client and the contractor. The client can define himself through such an assignment. The contractor, on the other hand, is given the opportunity to demonstrate his competence. There are, however, cases in which the client suddenly retracts from his responsibility and the contractor is forced to make an independent decision for which he himself is then liable. It is at this point that it becomes apparent in how far an individual is willing to take the responsibility for himself and for others and what ethical and moral ideals he will stand up for. Heiner Müller's "The Mission" is a drama that discusses this moral conflict of the individual and combines it with a political statement.

At the end of the 20th century, Heiner Müller created a kind of model for revolutions in his drama in a Caribbean setting. He was not so much concerned with historical facts, as with the portrayal of some universally valid phenomena of revolutions. The impression is created

that the knowledge of Caribbean circumstances that he applies in his drama are not based on personal research but only on his literary template from Anna Seghers.

5. Examples of how the Haitian Revolution is perceived in German literature

Heiner Müller is not the only representative in German literature that deals with the Haitian Revolution.⁵ However, it is common to all of them that it is never Haiti that seems to be the central theme but rather questions that directly affect Europe or the author. I will now exemplarily go into some detail on Heinrich von Kleist and Anna Seghers who has, after all, built the foundation for Müller's drama. The texts of all three authors reflect a complex, intercultural encounter. The general framework already provides the presetting for tension between own and foreign culture.

In 1811 the German poet Heinrich von Kleist writes his novella "Verlobung in St. Domingo" ("The Engagement in Santo Domingo"). He does this based on the revolutionary events in Haiti that he has researched thoroughly as a contemporary. He depicts the political context realistically and combines this with a tragic love story. In typical Kleist fashion the lovers must be parted due to the fact that they are out of touch with reality. Never having left Europe, this subject has a strong exotic appeal to him. In his narrative he repeatedly draws back on European contents and moral concepts. The backdrop to his love story is the successful slave revolt in Haiti against the French colonialists between 1791 and 1804. A Swiss officer in the service of the French colonialists is lured into a trap by an Afro-Haitian family. The officer and the daughter of the family, a very light-skinned mulatto, fall in love with each other. The girl wants to protect and rescue him from her own family, but he fails to realize this and feels deceived instead. As a result he shoots her and upon realizing his mistake shoots himself as well.

Kleist does not question French colonial rule in Haiti. He still regards the Blacks as unripe for freedom at this point in history (Uerlings 1991: 348-349). It is not described as a political vision for the

5 See Andreas G. F. Rebmann, Heinrich von Kleist, Anna Seghers, Hans Christoph Buch.

future, but as a revolt against “injustice endured in the past” (351). Even though Kleist criticizes conditions in Haiti

a position consequently refusing colonialism and slavery as a “structural relationship of violence” [...] is not discernible. Similarly, there is no mention of a justification for an abolishment of slavery by revolution (351).

It is also not the racial difference between the white Swiss officer and the daughter of a mulatto that is the central issue, but the – in this case vitally important – question of trust between the two lovers. Kleist’s narration follows a literary pattern of his time:⁶ a white man is captivated by indigenous people in the Caribbean, falls in love with an exotic woman who risks her life to rescue his, but upon being rescued he deceives her. Accordingly, the indigenous woman is depicted in a very European way. In Kleist’s narration the racial affiliation can be observed in terms of conflict potential: The white European officer and the black rebel are diametrically opposed in the Caribbean. The exotic beloved is the daughter of a mulatto. The lovers’ relationship is described as one between two white people. The beloved is described in the terms of the then-European *Zeitgeist*. “The ‘hero of European civilization’ fails” but with him it is “not the Western civilization that fails. On the contrary: its values experience a resurrection in the complementary figure of the ‘noble wild woman’” (Uerlings 1991: 355).

Anna Seghers, who lived in exile during the time of the Nazi regime in Germany and knew the Caribbean from her own experience, often highlights the life situation of the suppressed and segregated people in her works. She has made Haitian history a subject of her narrations numerous times. In the time frame between 1949 and 1980 she publicized six Caribbean stories in which Haiti keeps playing a part.⁷

In her short story “Das Licht auf dem Galgen” (“The Light on the Gallows”) she gives Heiner Müller the material for his drama. That which he only touches upon briefly in his drama is historically based and depicted with extraordinary empathy for the country and its people in Anna Seghers’ story. Anna Seghers is much closer to the reality

6 “Inkle and Yarico”.

7 In her “Die Hochzeit von Haiti” (“Haiti’s Wedding”) the Haitian Revolution is the main theme. In “Das Licht auf dem Galgen” (“The Light on the Gallows”) the Haitian Revolution is an important background story.

of the people that she is describing. At times she succumbs to the temptation to place her own interpretation of history into the foreground, partially disregarding the historical sources. So, she falsely describes the mindset of the French Jacobins to the colonies free from all contradiction and stylises the Haitian Revolution to a “consequent continuation of the French Revolution” (Uerlings 1991: 363). She builds up her narratives from the white people’s perspective. Haiti is allotted the function of a role model for Jamaica:

At the end of his life, with the noose already hanging around his neck, Sasportas shouts out to the Blacks who have been summoned to watch the spectacle: “You Negros, do it like they did in Haiti!” This position is meant when it appears to Galloudec “as if a light is shining towards him from the top of the gallows” (368).

Debuisson, as a French man born in Jamaica and heir to a local plantation, reflects on the failure of the Jamaican Revolution and realizes that:

the price for a revolution similar to the one in Haiti is the destruction of the country, [...] France has not sent the agents out of love for the freedom and equality of the black people. On the contrary: the uprisings in Jamaica were meant to force England and Toussaint, with whom France was at war, to have to intervene. For Haiti the danger of a black dominion and a detachment of the colony from the mother country would then be much smaller (368-369).

Anna Seghers does not recognize the development of own political and religious ideas by the black people but in essence takes on a eurocentric view of the world. Only if the black person adapts to the white culture he has the chance to become an equal. Anna Seghers has difficulties in recognizing the differences of the European and Caribbean cultures and misjudges the complexity of interests in colonial society within the time period: The largest part of the population in colonial society consists of the slaves. They are lowest in the social hierarchy. Additionally they have their own hierarchy within their social class. At its top one finds the mulattos, followed by the Afro-Americans who were born in the so called New World. At the very bottom you find the freshly deported slaves from Africa. A step up on the social ladder are the free mulattos. Together with the free blacks they make up the social middle class. The *Code Noir*, instituted by Louis XIV, is very favourable to this social class by not only decreeing that children with a white father and a Negro mother are free but

that they possess a right to an equal education as the legitimate children of the father. Upon their return from their studies in France these mulattos, known as *affranchis*, receive a piece of land from their father as well as their own slaves. Near the end of the 18th century they possess a third of the country and a quarter of all the slaves in Haiti. They control large sectors of trade and industry. The internal hierarchy of this social class is determined by the lightness of skin and by wealth. At the top of the society one finds the white people. Within this social class the nobility and the owners of the large plantations build the top, followed by army and government officials, as well as the rich merchants, which are in turn followed by representatives of the free professions. However, the majority of the white population consists of small tradesmen, farmers, day labourers and craftsmen. In addition to this colonial society you find small communities that consist of runaway slaves and their descendants, known as *marrons*, in clandestine places in the country.

Anna Seghers focuses on putting a stronger emphasis on the Haitian Revolution and its historical classification. She is led by the assumption that it was only due to the orientation along the lines of the ideas of 1789 and the general openness towards the European culture of the Haitian revolutionary Toussaint that the foundation of the Republic of Haiti in 1804 was enabled. Herbert Uerlings (1991: 373) points out that the figure of the martyr Sasportas has a striking resemblance with the figure of Toussaint Louverture; both in the end premature with their ideas and are the victims of a painful death as a result of deceit.

It is not difficult to establish a relationship between Anna Seghers' life and her narrative. The ideas of 1789 were betrayed by Napoleon, getting the three emissaries in Jamaica into serious trouble, but they were also deceived in 1933 in Germany and as a result, amongst other things, forced Anna Seghers into exile. As a German, Marxist Jew she primarily felt deceived by Germany. After the Hitler-Stalin-Pact and later after the revelation of the XXth Party Convention of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), she also felt deceived by the Soviet Union as well as the Western World, especially the USA that refused to offer her refuge. Consequently Anna Seghers spent part of her time in exile in the Soviet Union. In her narrative "The Light on the Gallows" she probably incorporated reflections on situations she

experienced in the socialist everyday life of the GDR: the question of the deceived who later turns himself into a traitor. Anna Seghers was forced several times to give up her own position for the benefit of the Party or the State, thereby betraying her own moral values.

Heiner Müller was influenced by the deceit of the ideas of the French Revolution by Hitler fascism and the later deformation of socialist ideas in the Soviet Union as well as in the GDR like Anna Seghers. In contrast to Anna Seghers, however, who still repeatedly underlines the success of the Haitian Revolution as a great wonder of liberation, Heiner Müller abstains from any judgement of the events. Contrary to her he formulates the right to a Black Revolution. In this the position of Sasportas as the bearer of the Black Revolution is ambivalent:

On the one hand it confirms the lacking ability to differentiate between death and revolution that is repeatedly stressed especially by Debuissou [...]. On the other hand it reads like a contradiction to Anna Seghers' description of the negro Bedford: "His brothers only calculated with the difference between black and white. Early on, however, he had been able to differentiate between justice and injustice" (Uerlings 1991: 379-380).

The revolutionary consciousness of Sasportas continuously develops in the course of Müller's drama. While at the beginning he strives to substitute the repression of the blacks by a repression of the whites he later recognizes, at the latest when his revolutionary mission from France is disposed of and Debuissou declares their work as finished, that he must develop his own revolutionary model. He turns his face on a point of view that is based on racial affiliation: "And as long as there are masters and slaves we are not released from our contract" (Müller 2004: 69). And: "I have said that the slaves have no home. That is not true. The home of the slaves is the uprising. I am going into the battle armed with the mortifications I have experienced" (73). Sasportas emphasizes his demand:

When the living can no longer fight, the dead will fight. With every heart beat of the revolution the flesh will grow back on the bones, the blood into their veins, life into their death. The uprising of the dead will be the battle of the landscapes, our weapons will be the forests, the mountains, the oceans, the deserts of the world. I will be forest, mountain, ocean, desert. Me, that is Africa. Me, that is Asia. Both of the Americas is me (74-75).

In his drama “The Mission. Memories of a Revolution” Heiner Müller distances himself from the avant-garde function of a European understanding of revolution and opens up the possibility for a new utopian model of revolution. Whether he allots more chances of success to this new model remains unsettled.

Three poets, three different views on the subject. Literature cannot portray the historical reality. At best, it can present tendencies that seem especially important to the respective author from his point of view. Therefore it can be concluded that one can never create a complete picture of the historical truth. Indeed, it is questionable whether even historiography is able to do so.

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