

TEXT: Gholam Reza Hajatpour and Harald Seubert

Dear Academy Members,

Early in the morning of 20 December we lost our friend Reinhard Knodt. A short illness preceded his death. Nobody had expected this death, at this much too early time. The death came shockingly abruptly, suddenly and painfully. Only a short time before, we had spoken with Reinhard. We wanted to meet each other. Some of his friends will have similarly abrupt waking memories. Reinhard had spoken about death and dying again and again, in the membranous opening to the world beyond, which is second nature to spiritual, artistic people.

The West-East Academy was, entirely and completely, Reinhard's idea. One of his ingenious talents came to fruition here: to unite people of the most diverse colour, intellectual imprint and religious or cultural affiliation. What is most lacking in the present, tolerance of ambiguity, endurance and interaction with others, even completely different ones: it was his elixir of life. He wanted to build bridges between cultures. From this lived the wonderful informal interaction of the Schnackenhof, the house, on the banks of the Pegnitz, where we celebrated unforgettable winter and solstice festivals, and outdoor symposia: true celebrations of thought.

The approach and the ties became stronger without being forced into iron bonds and institutions. The Schnackenhof became the West-East Academy, with a presidium and flat hierarchies. There were also other meeting places: Steinhoevel Castle, Hanover Airport and others. Reinhard's genius for linking created real correspondence and symposia of differences, where those involved thought beyond their specialist array and surprised themselves. The spectrum ranged from Manfred von Osten to Reza Hajatpour, to Tanja Kinkel and Eva Koethen, also Eveline Goodman-Thau, Ludwig Frambach and Fawzi Boubia.

Reinhard did not need the smart keywords of resonance that Hartmut Rosa has now helped to shine: he had already presented a much acclaimed Reclam volume on "aesthetic correspondence" in 1994. He expanded the concept of correspondence in a wonderful overall view inspired by Hermann Schmitz's Phenomenology of the Atmospheric, elegantly written, East-West correspondence, interspersed with aphoristically sharp titles and moments of visual hearing.

Reinhard was a terrific light-footed essayist, he proved this in his radio and magazine essays. Some of it needs to be published post festum and post mortem. The academic milieu alone would not have been enough for him. He was too

much of an artist for that, a master of Nietzschean experimental philosophy. But philosophy, like art, transcends and transcends the realms.

It also remains true that Reinhard Knodt was a philosopher of the highest order. The dissertation 'Die ewige Wiederkehr des Leidens' (The Eternal Return of Suffering) on Nietzsche and Schopenhauer signals this in the overall draft and in the printed version published in 1986.

Reinhard Knodt was not only a gifted friend, but also an admirer: he loved and revered mostly exemplary older philosophers and younger women. The triad of his teachers: Hans-Georg Gadamer, Manfred Riedel and Friedrich Kaulbach shows the former in a clever way. Competition did not have to be everywhere; cultivating free pupils in freedom is a talent of its own.

Reinhard combined literature, music, curiosity about the world, especially in his journeys to India, with reflection and the search for truth. In this sense, Nietzsche was closer to him than the great metaphysicians or post-metaphysicians, which include Hegel, Schopenhauer and Heidegger.

Yet he was also a fiction-writing man of letters with a highly developed sense of language, rhythm and metre. His texts, from novels to librettos, even poems, were sparkingly convincing. It was not so much the closed work that interested him, but the energiea, the correspondence to others, to the not-so-book, to speak with Franz Rosenzweig.

Reinhard had received support from important people early on. His talent was noticed early on. Luise Rinser believed in him, as did Peter Horst Neumann and many others. His literary thinking, his depth, which knew how to conceal itself very programmatically and consciously on the surface, his witty rhetorical power, which never persuaded, drew attention to him early on. He kept the tone, from the beginning at the Nürnberger Blätter, through the co-organisation of the Nuremberg Talks, to the late crisis period: he spoke of the K: War, Crisis Illness. Tragedy and satyr play overlapped, as in the symposium he organised for Israeli writers on the Reichsparteitagsgelände.

Reinhard Knodt's work is light, brushed, dashed like a Chinese pen and ink drawing. He had deep and bright affinities with China and India, on the trail of the great testimonies of the German and European spirit.

In his farewell, made final by his much too early death, one looks back on his life and work in a changed way. The work is much more extensive in themes, chords and sounds than the close-up view suggests. Reinhard's unique personality gives it a liveliness that will remain energetic.

With all this diversity, Reinhard was a philanthropist. He had a sense of beauty, enjoyed wine and music, and he was a true friend to his friends - until the last day.

Your philosophical friends

Reza and Harald