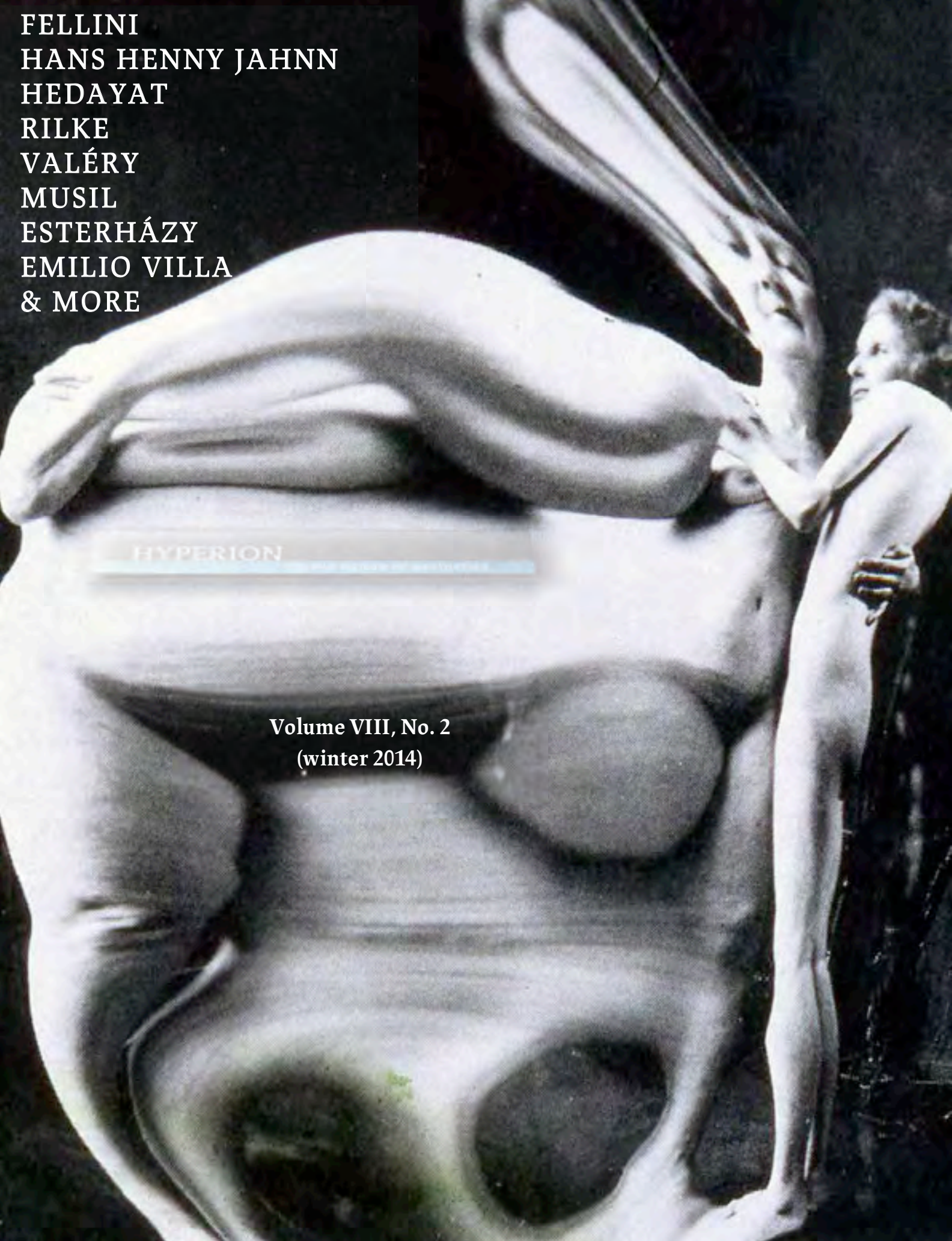


Volume VIII, No. 2
(winter 2014)

❖❖❖

MAST HEAD

Publisher: Contra Mundum Press
Location: New York, London, Melbourne
Editors: Rainer J. Hanshe, Erika Mihálycsa
PDF Design: Giuseppe Bertolini
Logo Design: Liliana Orbach
Advertising & Donations: Giovanni Piacenza
(To contact Mr. Piacenza:
info@contramundum.net)
CMP Website: Bela Fenyvesi & Atrio LTD.

Letters to the editors are welcome and should be e-mailed to: hyperion-future@contramundum.net

Hyperion is published biannually
by Contra Mundum Press, Ltd.
P.O. Box 1326, New York, NY 10276, U.S.A.
W: http://contramundum.net
For advertising inquiries, e-mail Giovanni Piacenza:
info@contramundum.net

Contents © 2014 Contra Mundum Press & each respective author.
All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from Contra Mundum Press. Republication is not permitted within six months of original publication. After two years, all rights revert to each respective author. If any work originally published by Contra Mundum Press is republished in any format, acknowledgement must be noted as following and include, in legible font (no less than 10 pt.), a direct link to our site: "Author, work title, *Hyperion: On the Future of Aesthetics*, Vol. #, No. # (YEAR) page #s. Originally published by *Hyperion*. Reproduced with permission of Contra Mundum Press."

HYPERION
On the future of aesthetics

...the 20th-century metaphor for [syncretism] was "collage," which is bringing different things together into one area. Pound's *Cantos* and similar work by a number of the great Modernists, are essentially collage-based. That is a core 20th-century image — I've said often enough that collage is probably the only 20th-century technical innovation, entering in all its force with the one new 20th-century art, film, as montage. In a way, I want to move these "nomad poetics" into the 21st century, replacing "collage" with the notion of the "rhizome." Something that can go any place, any time. The collage is in a strange way often determined by an aesthetics, and I don't want an aesthetics to determine the nomad poem. Modernism is an aesthetics of the collage, in a way, and that's also the limits of Pound and others, because what can come in, enter that space, finally? Even if it looks like everything comes in, I don't think everything can come in — or, many elements from heterogeneous areas that are brought in will be homogenized quickly by the collage canvas, in fact via an unavoidable aestheticization — and in a historico-political way, that goes a long way in explaining the connection between aesthetics and politics, and especially in that age, with fascism. The way the articulation of aestheticized elements happens in High Modernism leads — or certainly can lead — to relatively fixed and static work. I mean, the great example of that would be Eliot, even more so than Pound. — Pierre Joris, *Cartographies of the In-Between*

HYPERION
On the future of aesthetics

Volume VIII, No. 2 (winter 2014)

Table of Contents

Federico Fellini, Why *Satyricon*? Why Petronius? [0–10]

Hans Henny Jahnn, *Perrudja* (excerpt) [11–29]

Sadegh Hedayat, Death [30–36]

Rainer Maria Rilke, Primal Sound [37–45]

Rainer J. Hanshe, The Sounding Silence of Fulya Peker's Sonic Poetics [46–51]

Fulya Peker, *Nerve Meter: Blink* [video: online only]

Fulya Peker, Who Am I? (Antonin Artaud) [52–57]

Paul Valéry, *Four Letters Concerning Nietzsche* [58–69]

Tim Conley, Auguries: The Stuff of Modernism [70–81]

Robert Musil, *Short Prose* (excerpt) [82–98]

Péter Esterházy, Yes [99–108]

Fritz Senn, *The Odyssey* Through Joycean Lenses [111–137]

Dominic Siracusa, 1, 2, 3 *Odysseys* in Translation: Shame or Pride? [138–145]

Rainer J. Hanshe, Desire & Distance: On Harald Hutter's *Again, I Saw*... [146–149]

Rainer J. Hanshe, Désir et Distance [150–154]

Harald Hutter, *Again, I Saw*... (excerpt) [155–169]

Imre Szemethy & Miklós Szentkuthy on Sári Gerlóczy [170–175]

Sari Gerlóczy, Drawings & Paintings [176–190]

Erika Mihálycsa, Review of *Burning City: Poems of Metropolitan Modernity* [191–199]

HYPERION
On the future of aesthetics

FEDERICO FELLINI

Why *Satyricon*? Why Petronius?

Translated by Christopher B. White

Cinema–literature: it's an approach that usually springs from polemical relationships, misplaced priorities, and fabricated dependencies. Every work of art resides in the dimension in which it was conceived and expressed; transferring it, moving it from its original language to a different one, means cancelling it, denying it. When cinema turns to a literary text, in the best of cases, the result will always and only be an illustrative transposition that simply conserves statistical similarities to the original: the story, situations, characters, in summary a series of materi-

als, opportunities, and occasions that observing everyday reality and reading the newspaper, for example, are capable of supplying with a more generous and stimulating richness and immediacy.

Cinema depicts its worlds, stories, and characters through images. Its form of expression is figurative, like that of dreams. Don't dreams fascinate you, scare you, thrill you, disturb you, and nurture you with images? It seems to me that words and dialogue in movies serve to inform you, to permit you to rationally follow the event and give it a sense of verisimilitude according to the reality we're accustomed to; but it's precisely this operation, references to so-called everyday reality echoing on the images, that takes away at least in part that unreal aspect of the dreamed image, that visual aspect of dreams. In fact, silent cinema has its own mysterious beauty, an evocative power of seduction that makes it more real than sound film because it's closer to the images in dreams; they're always more alive and real than anything we can see and touch.

So why *Satyricon*? Why Petronius?

You have to have an excuse to begin, and who knows why this time I chose *Satyricon*. I read Petronius' book for the first time many years ago, back when I was in high school, an edition of the text with illustrations so intentionally chaste and ugly that it made them all the more erotic. The memory of that reading long ago has always been particularly vivid in my mind, and over time that interest slowly became a constant and obscure temptation. I just reread *Satyricon* after so many years, maybe less voraciously than before, but it was just as entertaining, and

this fresh reading made the temptation to base a film on it more intriguing.

Satyricon is a mysterious text because it's fragmentary. Although its fragmentary nature is emblematic in a certain sense. It's emblematic of the way the ancient world appears to us today. This is the true appeal of the book and the world it depicts. It's like an unfamiliar landscape wrapped in dense fog that you catch glimpses of when it unveils itself now and then. Renaissance Humanists used antiquity to justify and explain themselves, projecting their preconceived notion of antiquity onto it. But I can't project anything; I don't have preconceptions. For me the ancient world is a lost world and my ignorance of it leaves me with no connection to it other than a fantastic, imaginative one, nurtured by hypotheses and impressions severed from facts and historical knowledge.

School, or at least the school I attended, almost always drowns out and freezes the content it aims to cover; it impoverishes it and reduces it to an interminable series of meaningless, abstract notions with no point of reference in the end. The discovery and knowledge of the ancient world you acquire in school, for example, is the cadastral or nomenclatural sort, it encourages a relationship to that world made up of mistrust, boredom, and disinterest, at best a morbid, abject, or rather racist curiosity, in any case it doesn't concern you and is disagreeable like math or chemistry, irrelevant like the training you undergo before national military service.

The ruins? The Appian Way? Or better yet the photos of ruins and the Appian Way you see in history books or on postcards? Watered-down ghosts, lifeless features, cemetery perspectives soaked in funereal sadness for

smug photographers' exhibitions, especially the German ones who take pictures of these ruins against the light at sunset with a couple of little fluffy clouds in the foreground. The frescoes in Pompeii? Herculaneum? What I saw of the Capitoline Museums didn't impress me much; it was obscured by the dullness it acquired from those gloomy readings and lectures in school. The splendid unchanged state of the exhibits that fill the museums is about as familiar as those scholastic notions or the casualness of personal suggestions. At a certain point I thought I recognized the sickly, frightened little face of a cousin of mine from the countryside in a marble bust with empty eyes. Her name was Jole and she had red hair. She was always sick in bed when I saw her and she had to drink constantly. For a moment I felt like there was an imperceptible contact, a fleeting understanding between us; that bust had Jole's face, I caressed its braided stone hair, "Who knows if you can help me a little... Solonina?" (the name was written on a plate on its neck). As I was thinking that, my learned friend who was with me was saying Solonina was skilled at massacres and crucifixions, and her favorite activity was taking the hearts out of her human victims during sacrifices.

The layer of the psyche containing these memories is buried, submerged in millennia of other myths, figures, and stories.

This time I'm even faltering and disoriented over the choice of faces. Usually the human tapestry in a movie of mine is the surest method, the most precise tool for delving into the meaning of the film itself, yet this time the plot is hard to arrange, still uncertain and even incongruous. There are no models, aesthetic standards to follow,

or at least there aren't any compatible with the confused ideas I have in mind. Every conventional means of expression is jumbled, overturned, and if I happen to let myself be tempted by it the result could be unexpected or catastrophic. If I happen to say, "Well, that guy has a Roman face," when that man is dressed and made up like a Roman, he puts on the air of a bureaucrat in the registry office or a streetcar driver. The bust of Messalina in the Capitoline Museums has the plump, easy-going appearance of an egg vendor.

Maybe it was just the other night at the Colosseum... That horrendous lunar catastrophe of stone, that giant skull consumed by time and stranded in the middle of the city, I saw it for a moment as evidence of a civilization from another planet and it sent a shudder of fear and pleasure. It was just for a second but for the first time I felt immersed in the frenetic lucidity of dreams, the feverish temperature of premonitions and fantasy.

To conclude these uncontrolled digressions and return to the subject of the film, I'd like to do this: invent a Roman world as if it were evoked by a supernatural, ectoplasmic operation. I like to imagine that the movie, like an archeologist who uses pottery shards to attempt to reconstruct a fragmentary, incomplete, and mutilated form, an amphora, a bust of a man, or a woman's face, should suggest through incomplete episodes, some without a beginning, others without an end, and yet others still with gaps in the middle, should indicate the boundaries, the realities of a vanished world, the lives of creatures with incomprehensible habits and customs, the rituals, the daily character of a continent buried in the galaxy of time. Historical accuracy, bookish documentation, and self-

satisfyingly erudite anecdotes have no place in a story that aims to revive characters so distant from us, to capture them as if by surprise in the same freedom with which they move, scuffle, tear each other to pieces, are born and die, like beasts in the dense wilderness when they don't know they're being watched.

Maybe I've been speaking a little too freely! But sometimes it serves to stimulate, provoke the film, make it come out of the fog of its hypothetical forms, force it to show itself, declare itself and be recognized. The film should offer a glimpse of an excavated universe, suggest images obscured by the earth, a movie broken with its uneven structure; it should have long, well-organized episodes, others more distant, out of focus, that cannot be rebuilt because of their fragmentary nature. Not a historical film, but a science fiction movie. It should be Ascilto, Encolpio, and Trimalchio's Rome, more remote and fantastic than the planets in Flash Gordon.

I ask myself if it'll be possible to cancel two thousand years of history from our memory, to attempt to imagine the myths, attitudes, and habits of ancestors so remote from us without looking at them with an air of moral superiority, without judging them, without critical reservations, without psychological inhibitions and prejudices? Maybe it won't be possible. I want to try nevertheless; I want to invent a clear, detached eye that knows how to view another dimension unperturbed. Perhaps the ancient world never existed, but there's no doubt that we dreamed it. *Satyricon* should possess the enigmatic transparency, the undecipherable clarity of dreams. The most

difficult task this film requires from me is making two completely opposite and parallel operations coincide. Everything's made up in the film: faces, gestures, situations, objects and environments. Then I have to express the fruit of this imaginative operation in concrete form in order to explore it again, to be able to find it together again intact and unrecognizable. Things happen differently in dreams. They have content that deeply pertains to us, through which we don't express ourselves, but in the light of day the only cognitive relationship we can have with them is intellectual in nature.

I could say decadent Rome resembles our Rome today, with this grim craving to enjoy life, the same violence, the same absence of principles, the same desperation and the same fatuousness. I could say Encolpio and Ascilto, the main characters in *Satyricon*, are a lot like hippies in that they obey only their bodies, search for new meaning in drugs, and ignore their problems. I could say it, and perhaps I'd venture to say I'm right. Yet all of these more or less convincing explanations aren't worth much in the end. The important thing is that in making this film I'm rediscovering a pleasure, a joyous fervor I feared I'd lost. I think I sense that my will to make movies hasn't run out.

Director's Notes.

I DON'T KNOW YOU

WHO ARE YOU?

NAZIS — RACISTS — JODELLE

MINERAL — NEUROTIC — HALLUCINATED —

PSYCHEDELIC —

BARBARIC — SCIENCE FICTION

MARTIANS — MENTAL HOSPITAL.

A different vibration in the air. Do you remember the dream about fat pink men, burned, in the little rooms of the asylum?

Agitation. OVERHEATED.

Like trying to reconstruct an ancient amphora with shards found centuries later.

Dust — Darkness (Evocation).

Ending with parts that are more and more incomplete, torn; fragments...

"...the old man laughed as he pointed to something in the glare..."

"...the horse drenched with sweat..."

"...his eyes had grown sad."

DARKNESS — BLACK TAILS — HOARSE VOICES GURGLING WORDS THAT BECOME MUDDIER AND MUDDIER; DROWNED PEOPLE TRYING TO SPEAK.

REMEMBER:

The horrible fixity of the bas-reliefs. Empty eyes. With no pupils. Bronze eyes.

The parties — The night was studded with fires of joy.

Lots of homes under construction. Bridges. Collapse. (Earthquake at the Insula Felix, the terrifying palace-skyscraper, immense, dark, swarming like Breughel's Tower of Babel.)

A film about the Martians. It should have the same allure made up of alarm and tension as the first Japanese films had for us: you never knew if those characters were laughing or crying, Toshiro Mifune's sudden leaps and feline roars made your heart stop: would he have hugged you like a brother or cut you in half with a blow from his scimitar?

ARRHYTHMIC — FAINT — INDIRECT — UNPREDICTABLE.

Exasperating slowness, the speed of microbes.

ACTED POORLY, with extremely long periods of silence, faltering language. Broken, hesitant; an impersonal dubbing, detached like the voices for news on the radio. Dubbing that's technically incorrect, with voices that finish before their lips do or continue afterward: enough to horrify sound technicians and above all the Americans who, in front of a shot filled with thousands of angry, mutinous sailors, would take the trouble to avidly spy during a sea

in a tempest if the orders the admiral shouts coincide with the movement of his lips.

A great, suggestive and mysterious fable. A film made up of fixed, immobile frames, without dollies or other movements of the camera. A film to contemplate, similar to dreams: and it leaves you hypnotized. Everything will be disjointed, fragmentary. And at the same time strangely uniform. Every detail will stand out, isolated, enlarged, absurd, monstrous: like in dreams. The atmosphere will also be dreamlike. Lots of darkness, lots of night, lots of obscure, dimly lit environments. Or landscapes like limbos, soaked in unearthly sunlight, faded, dreamy. Lots of corridors, ambulatories, rooms, courtyards, alleys, staircases and other similarly distressing, narrow passageways. Nothing bright, white, or clear. Clothing in dirty, opaque colors suggestive of stone, dust, mud. Colors like black, yellow, red, but everything will appear as if clouded by ash falling perpetually. In a figurative sense, I'll try to achieve a contamination of the Pompeian with the psychedelic, Byzantine art with Pop Art, Mondrian and Klee with Barbaric Art... the chaotic liberation of images.

REMEMBER:

INCOHERENT PROPORTIONS.

TINY MEN IN CLOSE-UP AND GIANTS IN THE BACKGROUND. The colossus of Nero transported on a chariot through the alleyways of Suburra.

MAKEUP on the *animals* (I want to do this myself!)

UNFAMILIAR ANIMALS OF EXTINCT SPECIES

IMPORTANT: gestures, winks, grimaces that refer to undecipherable understandings. Fixed stares. Or wander-

ing feverishly. (And what if GITONE were to express himself solely through gestures, miming things, people, facts in his own obscure language, fascinating and sibylline like Harpo Marx?)

LUPERCALIA.

The statues of Venus with the calamity in her belly and Mars are strongly drawn to one another.

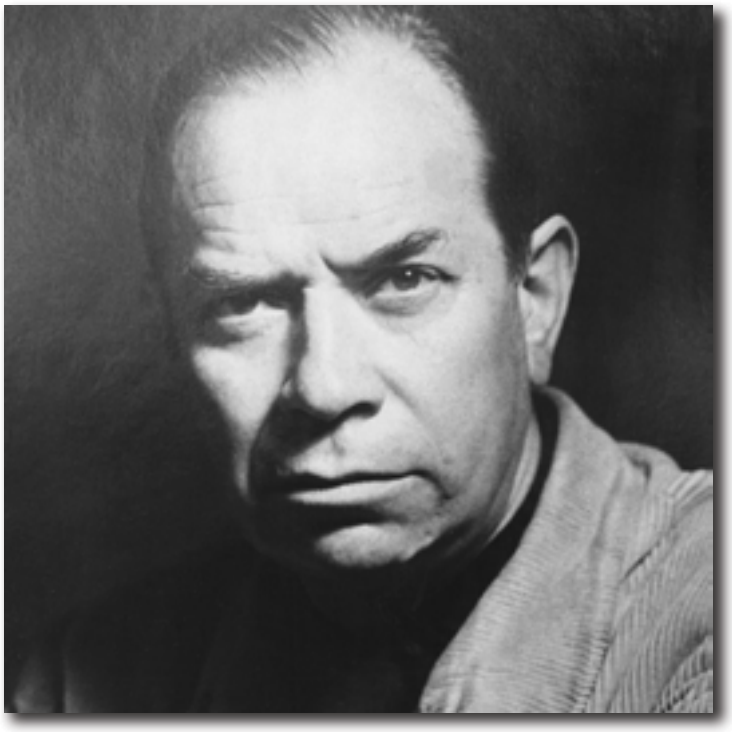
...out loud, “The night is over. The night is over!”

Translator’s Note: This is an excerpt from Fellini’s *Making a Film* (*Fare un film*), which is forthcoming in January of 2015 from Contra Mundum Press. All rights reserved.

HYPERION
On the future of aesthetics

Hans Henny Jahnn

Perrudja (an excerpt)



Translated from the German by Adam Siegel

INTRODUCTION: HANS HENNY JAHNN

According to Klaus Mann, Hans Henny Jahnn (1894–1959) "stood alone. He was part of that secret kingdom of unofficial German literature, a kingdom of unknown and uncrowned royalty." A native of Hamburg, autodidact and polymath (writer, architect, pipe organ restorer, biologist manqué), Jahnn spent the First World War in exile in Norway. Following the war, his career as a German Expressionist dramatist was launched with his Kleist Prize-

winning play Pastor Ephraim Magnus*. Reviled by critics as "a poison-chest of humanity," "the helpless stammering of a profoundly sick individual with a pronounced tendency toward coprolalia," "a yawning chasm of compost," it attracted the attention of Bertolt Brecht, who co-directed (with Arnolt Bronnen) the play's premiere in 1923.*

"As a writer," Jahnn said, "I am preoccupied with the primeval tragedy of how the individual is overwhelmed by his environment." His vivisector's fascination with the facts of the human body anticipates the transgressions of Bataille, Artaud, and even Americans such as William Burroughs, Kathy Acker, and particularly Dennis Cooper.

Man as a creature deeply implicated in the natural world was one his main themes: his novels Perrudja *(1929) and* Fluss ohne Ufer *(1949–1961) illustrate the terror of the sublime as effectively as any work of art in the last two centuries; as the poet Peter Huchel said of him, "One has to go back to the ancient Egyptians and the Greeks to find such a mythic conception of nature." Jahnn himself saw his work as addressing "the problem of death, of decay …"*

Jahnn spent the years between 1933 and 1945 in exile: he chose to leave Germany when Hitler came to power — although he returned to Hamburg a number of times during the thirties and never renounced his German citizenship. He bought a farm on the island of Bornholm in Denmark, where he bred horses, studied the properties of hormones, and wrote.

After the war Jahnn returned to Hamburg with his family; as a German citizen, he was forced by the Danish government to sell his property. Jahnn was an active participant in the cultural politics of Cold War Germany, and his longstanding suspicion of science and civilization blossomed in the 1950s, as he became a leader in the anti-nuclear and animal rights movements in West Germany. After his death, Hans Erich Nossack offered his valedictory: "I've never known anything more worthy of the name 'religion' than your empathy for all creatures, for every drop of water, for every living organism."

Adam Siegel

The Horse

Perrudja ate his supper. Bite by bite. Carefully, almost daintily. His hand constantly at his mouth. His teeth grinding the coarse bread. The steady crunch of snapping bread crust gave him no pleasure. He ate. Better never to have suffered that alluring and incomprehensible compulsion within that made him do so. Even that instinct for self-preservation, that thundering life affirmation of blood, of entrails, which he endeavored to silence. There was however always the possibility that all of it might break through somehow into the realm of his dreams, his heart. It might be worth mentioning that never before had Perrudja been conscious of his hunger. (Something lying in store for him; just as other unforeseen experiences lay in store for him.) His meal times were regulated by a subconscious schedule, which he might have called absurd had he been forced to do so. Never having summoned the patience to give the matter a second thought, a trifle, or nothing at all.

A small lamp stood shining on the table. Like every evening. Revealing the reprehensible, slovenly disorder: dishes, utensils, books, leather bridle straps, a brush, a bottle of oily liquid. The lamp's beam coned steeply downward, sharply illuminating the young man's chest and shanks. His drooping arms. His head in shadow. As though sliding down into another world. Suddenly, as if for no reason, the young man's body jerked backwards, only to be caught by the back of the chair. His torso straightened once more, forced upright as he took a deep breath. A loud sigh. His eyes glazed. The very notion of be-

ing left him. Drifting away from the here and now. Figures of the unreal rose up within him, motivated by non-existent laws. Having never existed. Except in his longings. He dreamed his dream with his senses awakened. Of his desire, of the unattainable. The miracle, reluctant to intrude upon the day, disrupted by the interweaving of all things. During the day, during his sober hours, he knew this: the moon cannot be removed from the firmament and leave the heavens undisturbed. But whence this longing, which had rendered pointless the insights of the great Chinese poet? The one who once said: “Moonlight falls on the white road. Falling like snow. I think of my home.” No magic spell can make us disappear, only the body’s decay. Nothing can withstand death, the number of witnesses to this ever increasing.

But Perrudja the man sailed on, in the face of reason, in the face of tears shed by the Chinese poet when he thought of his home.

For which Perrudja the boy had been scolded. But there was no one to deny Perrudja the man. He slipped into the unseen. Invisible, he transformed the earth itself. Waters bore him, storms bore him away. He saw the deeds of others close at hand. They troubled him, they frightened him. He wanted to cry out from seeing only despotism, injustice, and suffering. But his form had been annihilated, his voice stilled. He crept forward, unnoticed and unimpeded, creeping at the feet of others, even the smallest, they who loomed above him like giants. He saw things fall apart, molder, rust, decay. Water carried mountains into the sea. Blameless flowers scourged the soil. The grain, the grass, the entrails of man and beast. One’s existence meant the other’s destruction.

Unseen, he coiled. He felt his forehead expand and swell. No longer could he stand witnessing creation without morality. He lit his magic ring. He split the water and the rock. He divided the transitory and the permanent. Cyclopean walls emerged from the milk-white quartz as temples rose. He stepped in and walked and walked, touching the columns as round and mighty as mountains. He looked up at the granite domes with their arches and squinches and spandrels. Gray-violet light. From the distance, broken a thousandfold, a sound like that of metal pipes. He took all of it in, and thought: the dance of people laid bare.

In the throes of his ecstasy he sensed his foes gathering.

His temple abstracted to an island. Around the island a mountain range. Steep and smooth like dark glass. Below the mountain range, calm water in pools against rocky ground: a reef. Beyond the reef, very far away, choppy restless seas. It was only him, sailing safe and sound on a sound ship, across an ocean made in accordance to his desires. A ship and other ships, all of them his. One large, three small. A huge ship, then, three large and five small. Then a huge ship. Three heavy, five light, seven nimble. Churning, steaming, clanking, the fleet sailed on. Driven by nothing. Or by something, some inexhaustible power. Something invulnerable. Driven by new physical laws that only he could reveal. In great round slices of bronze — like wheels, shining with oil — he drilled secret caverns and holes where states of tension and motion entwined.

He went forth against his foes, against the foes of his island, against the foes of his temples, against the foes