

# 134 Oh, The Pleasure Of Him Who Longs To Cross The Horizons<sup>1</sup>

By

Ala

Younis

The new world has begun  
and a miracle has saved me.  
But I too may be contaminated  
by the ghastly mechanicalness;  
the death of logic.  
That is why I have written these  
words in this notebook.  
One day they'll be read with  
curiosity.

1. Translation of "NUZHAT AL-MUSHTAQ FĪ IKHTIRĀQ AL-ĀFĀQ", Muhammad al-Idrisi's Arabic compendium of geographic information.

2. IL NUOVO MONDO, Jean-Luc Godard's chapter in RO.GO.PA.G. (1963).

3. FRIENDSHIP'S DEATH (1987), REVIEW/FILM: REPORTER AND THE ROBOT, Caryn James, THE NEW YORK TIMES, March 25, 1988.

4. SITT MARIE ROSE, Etel Adnan, THE POST APOLLO PRESS, P. 79.

5. Steve Jobs interview

5. OPEN FORM: SPACE, INTERACTION, AND THE TRADITION OF OSKAR HANSEN, edited by Axel Wieder and Florian Zeyfang, STERNBERG PRESS, 2014.

6. DARK NIGHTS IN MOSCOW, Ronald Bergan, THE GUARDIAN, 13 January 2006.

7. PEOPLE OF INTENSITY, PEOPLE OF POWER: THE NIETZSCHE ECONOMY, Dierich Diederichsen, E-FLUX JOURNAL #19 - October 2010.

This absurd story described the consequences, both absurd and unpredictable, of an atomic future, which may already have begun. These are the effects we may find without anybody, realizing it. Terrible explosions may transform men insidiously, and from one moment to another we may be contaminated. There will be small changes, which will inevitably destroy us.

The city hadn't changed yet.<sup>2</sup>

There are only two science-fiction touches ... [S]ome brightly colored objects – they look like children's plastic toys encoded with friendship's voice and memories. Magically, they begin to glow and speak. Years later, the [journalist's] daughter transfers one to videotape, and the film ends with friendship's final message, a jumbled, wasted series of words and visual images, including a microscopic view of blood cells.

But most of this pedestrian-looking film is confined to closed rooms, into which the surreal reality of war intrudes when armed guerrillas storm through a hotel room and begin shooting from the balcony.<sup>3</sup>

We're going to the window to look outside. That's always more fun than learning to read on lips things that, most of the time, we'd rather not know, and about which we don't have much to say. But we do have things to say, lots and lots of things, but no one's interested.<sup>4</sup>

And they showed me really three things, but I was so blinded by the first one that I didn't even really see the other two.<sup>5</sup>

No one knows where the new group appeared from, the so-called "actors". They announce their arrival to the two groups by firing popguns and flying red flags. A brutal entry onto the grounds and into the fields of Whites and Blacks. Subtle in general actions. Wacław Antczak's fervent speech imbued with patriotism is their main action. Theatrical activity. Not taking into consideration the mood of the place. Destroying the idyll. They've entered with realism. After a while the Reds left.<sup>6</sup>

But really, the distances we cover, the outside world fading in and out of the theater of our increasingly inebriated perceptions, the glistening pavement, diffuse light, car doors slamming, unexpected music in the cab: these are all part of it, the whole program.<sup>7</sup>

"He simply feels that were he to walk in he will certainly 'hit a wall.' On the spot, he turns to face the rushing crowd and screams: 'Stop. Don't go in. Be careful.' Within seconds, he is removed from the site, severely beaten and sent to a psychiatric facility. These events will take place sometime between 2014 and 2024. We will certainly read in newspapers the following day the headline: Demented Man Disturbs Opening – Claims World Is Flat."<sup>8</sup>

It must first be reiterated that with extraordinary few exceptions no educated person in the history of Western Civilization from the third century B.C. onward believed that the earth was flat.<sup>9</sup>

A different intellectual appeared [amongst] the constant contradiction between universal knowledge and the practical and particular usage of this knowledge that offer the “technical of practical knowledge” the possibility of becoming an intellectual. He is an intellectual from the moment he grasps this contradiction in himself and there he faces a contradiction, which he cannot resolve. It gives him certain lines of behavior/action, he discovers truths he thinks are more and more universal and he constitutes himself as an intellectual. This means, in most cases, he signs petitions. He is very pleased to have an unhappy conscience because that is what allows him to denounce, and so the classical intellectual becomes a great denunciator.<sup>10</sup>

“I deny nothing, and I assert nothing; I only speculate and seek for truth. The spiritual and material atoms are immortal. For everything changes, but nothing dies.”<sup>11</sup>

The evidence of his eyes could not have produced this effect; it needed psychological reinforcement. There were gaps in [life] now that he would never remember, when the very atoms of his simple brain were being twisted into new patterns. If he survived, those patterns would become eternal, for his genes would pass them on to future generations.<sup>12</sup>

I wanted to graft the [science fiction] concepts of the robot and the extra-terrestrial on to a precise and authentic moment of history... This would give me a framework in which to explore questions about the place of machines in human culture, the relation of reason and violence, the nature of evolution and the strangeness of the human body.<sup>13</sup>

It is very exciting because it is going to destroy vast layers of our economy, and it is going to make available a presence in the market place for very small companies that are equal to very large companies. And they can get access to this electronic distribution channel for free. They don't have to build buildings, they don't have to go sign up a thousand distributors and have people to call on them. In essence direct distribution from the manufacturer to the customer via the internet, via the web, direct contacts, direction transactions and then delivery via UPS, that's going to be cheaper than going through all these middle men.<sup>14</sup>

A makeshift command center has been set up in a blasted area of thick ice. The low-ceilinged room is a beehive of activity. Controllers, troopers, and droids move about setting up electronic equipment and monitoring radar signals. “General, there isn't a hint of life in the area. But all the perimeter markers are set, so you'll know if anyone comes calling.”<sup>15</sup>

Oh, the pleasure of him who longs to cross the horizons.

8. VIEWS FROM INNER TO OUTER COMPARTMENTS, Walid Raad, 2012.
9. THE MYTH OF THE FLAT EARTH, Summary by Jeffrey Burton Russell for the AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION CONFERENCE August 4, 1997 at WESTMONT COLLEGE
10. Jean-Paul Sartre, from the documentary "SARTRE BY HIMSELF", directed by Alexandre Astruc and Michel Contat, 1976.
11. SPECULATIONS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE, by Medina, LIPPINCOTT'S PRESS, Philadelphia, Pages 3-4
12. Arthur C. Clarke, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, 1968 and 1982.
13. Peter Wollen, Director, SUNDANCE INSTITUTE, Sundance Festival 1988 Archives.
14. Interview with Steve Jobs, 1995.
15. From the script of "STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK", written by Leige Brackett and Larry Kasdan from the novel by George Lucas, 1979.



ALL IMAGES: Details  
 from an exhibition  
 opening, KUWAIT, 1977.  
 Images found in the  
 SULTAN GALLERY ARCHIVE