

Late European Decadence  
4 December 2014 - 7 February 2015

Press Text

1666\*

"So farewell, hope; and with hope farewell, fear;  
Farewell, remorse! all good to me is lost...

-- *Paradise Lost* (1667)

\*note: *at the insistence of certain of the artists, we return to Milton's Satan. We accept that modernism and post-modernism have been included from the beginning in what we know as romanticism. O.k. then Romanticism survives (still in a state of abject horror, no less) as those others fall away. But this is a romanticism shorn of nature, of hope, of extra-capitalist possibility. This is beyond the possibility of an Irish state. We are back at Satan, it seems, brooding over a cliff, looking good silhouetted by flames. England burns. -- mvs*

Against collaboration. For competition. Inheriting not even Darwin, this new race of gods is more beautiful than we were. It is more childlike as well or will present itself that way. It shows advanced regression. These have bathed in the acid of the total critique. These know any dialectics fall from and upon the observer; in fact for them the language of dialectics is simply out of date. Philosophy's casual struggles? Merely to set the unconscious in play works wonders in that regard. This is a new commitment to hesitation. Its cynicism is unabashedly naive. One claw in the uncollectible, it is not site specific and depends on the imagination of everyone concerned. It rediscovers the late seventeenth century and avoids the late eighteenth. For these even salad equals death. There is only one bionormal human; the three others display the genetic flaws of the patriarchy. For them, the final degradation came in the nineties. In the inverse or Satanic post-apocalypse, unlike Endymion their fits of convulsions generate creation. That is not to say nothing prickles. Everything "prickles," when they set out, as in *Hudibras* (1666), "a-coloneling." The revolution has still not even been articulated properly. They will be imbedded in its wall. They walk like half-ghosts through a non-present world in a situation similar to that described by China Miéville in *The City and The City* (2009), and Jack Vance before him in "Ulon Dhor" (1950). In general, it is only the wider city that is at disadvantage in this situation. *We* are forever cut off from *them*. We have no idea what they have achieved in this regard. The self is an alien. A new pre-primitive; certainly, there is no relation at all to modernism. This neo-ancient in fact reaches like the sixteenth

century back at least as far as the domestication of the fox, to volcanoed mosaics and first-documented alien landing-sites. Yet even now the shadow of the Crabber passes over like a scythe. A seriousness that makes it no longer quite safe to maintain the adolescence it calls for. What was once the wide open 3d grid of the model railroad set is now the existential prison of history. But what comes next? even as the oceans downgrade, clear cool water bubbles through their nose. Is it your imagination? Not exactly. Only in this drowned world, some would say (even against adversity of the sort that stalked Mrs. Milton and Aphra Behn), do they encounter the undiscovered countries they were created to misrule.

Mark A. von Schlegell