Only the book matters, such as it is, far from genres, outside of categories — prose, poetry, novel, testimony — under which it refuses to be classed, and to which it denies the ability to assign its place & determine its form. A book no longer belongs to a genre; every book belongs to literature alone, as if literature possessed beforehand, in their generality, the secrets and formulæ that alone allow what is written to assume the reality of a book. It seems as if genres have vanished, and literature alone asserted itself, gleamed solitary in the mysterious clarity that it propagates, and which each literary creation reflects by multiplying it — as if there were, in short, an “essence” of literature. But the essence of literature is precisely to escape any essential determination, any assertion that stabilizes it or even realizes it: it is never already there; it always has to be rediscovered or reinvented.

— Maurice Blanchot, The Book to Come
Composed over 2,500 years, lost in the deserts of Iraq for 2,000 more, *Gilgamesh* presents a palimpsest of ancient Middle Eastern cultic and courtly lyrics and lore. The story of a visionary journey beyond the limits of human experience, *Gilgamesh* is a tale of friendship, adventure, mortality, and loss. The legends it collects ultimately informed Greek and Egyptian myths, Hebrew Scriptures, and Islamic literature.

Scholarly translations of *Gilgamesh* often dilute the expressive force of the material through overzealous erudition. Popular versions of the poem frequently gloss over gaps in the text with accessible and comforting, but ultimately falsely ecumenical language.

In this new version, Stuart Kendall animates the latest scholarship with a contemporary poetic sensibility, inspired by the pagan worldview of the ancient work. Transcriptions of all of the available tablets and tales have been harnessed to present a fluid and holistic *Gilgamesh*, true to the archaic mind.

This *Gilgamesh* is a poem of environmental encounter and, ultimately, ecological disaster.
Self-Shadowing Prey, one of the final texts by the Romanian poet Ghérasim Luca (1913–1994), is clearly constructed around the sought complications of language. Embodying the surrealist operation of play with considerable exactitude and rigor, Self-Shadowing Prey is rich with neologistic stupors, nouns made verbs, and compelling repetitions and linguistic expansions. Language is not merely put into play but made to participate in an erotic act, and words become the locus of an exploding self.

This linguistically-joyous text reveals the arresting syntactic creation and creative stammering which Deleuze and Guattari both saw in Luca and what led Deleuze to call him a great poet among the greatest. “If Ghérasim Luca’s speech is eminently poetic,” Deleuze pronounced, “it is because he makes stuttering an affect of language and not an affectation of speech. The entire language spins and varies in order to disengage a final block of sound, a single breath at the limit of the cry, JE T’AIME PASSIONNÉMENT.”

Encomiums

Ghérasim Luca is a great poet among the greatest: he invented a prodigious stammering, his own.
— Deleuze

Mary Ann Caws’ passionate translations render deft, delightful facets of the formidable Ghérasim Luca: virile servings of refreshment and tumult, liberating language from the yoke of Duty. Self-Shadowing Prey calls for vertiginous reading, in exhilarating reflection of the sonorous scintillations of Luca’s own reading performances.
— Julian & Laura Semilian, translators of Ghérasim Luca’s The Inventor of Love & Other Works

Bilingual French-English edition
Spring 2032: an enigmatic bandleader named Triboulet arrives by helicopter in Rome, where his carnivalesque troupe awaits with a legion of animals and unruly kids. When provoking states of joyous panic through their ritualistic frenzies, the troupe’s arrival proves restorative, for the world is beset with famines, plagues, and religious conflicts, which Triboulet seeks to neutralize with freeing laughter. As he and his troupe begin constructing strange edifices in the Eternal City, sacred sites around the world suffer terrible, often beguiling forms of vandalism, and rumors abound that the Christ has actually finally returned.

Although radical Islamic sects claim responsibility for the vandalism, the culprits remain unknown: is it the Jihadists, anarcho-atheist intellectuals, or eco-terrorists? Religious & political authorities grow leery of the troupe and suspicious of Triboulet, whose true identity remains a mystery. The very future of the world is at stake, and while touring Israel during Christmas, Triboulet and his raucous band of pranksters bear witness to the world’s pivotal crossing into a new reality.

Albert Camus noted that ‘the metaphysics of the worst’ expresses itself in a literature of damnation and argued that ‘we have still not yet found the exit’ from such literature. With his second novel, Hanshe has found the way out, offering in fact something not only promising, but astounding, a pathway that is into a new reality, into a ‘physics of the best.’

The Abdication is a true eroticomic epic.
Marginalia on Casanova, the first book of Szentkuthy’s St. Orpheus Breviary, has been translated into English for the very first time. Originally published in Hungary in 1939, as Csaba Sík noted, St. Orpheus Breviary “represents the greatest enterprise in scope, in worth? — undertaken in the Hungarian novel.”

Marginalia on Casanova is the first volume of the St. Orpheus Breviary, Miklós Szentkuthy’s synthesis of 2,000 years of European culture. As Szentkuthy’s Virgil, St. Orpheus is an omniscient poet who guides us not through hell, but through all of recorded history, myth, religion, and literature, albeit reimagined as St. Orpheus metamorphosizes himself into kings, popes, saints, tyrants, & artists. At once pagan and Christian, Greek and Hebrew, Asian and European, St. Orpheus is a mosaic of history and mankind in one supra-person and veil, an endless series of masks and personæ, humanity in its protean, futural shape, an always changing function of discourse, text, myth, and mentalité.

Title: Miklós Szentkuthy, Marginalia on Casanova
Introduction by Zéno Bianu; afterword by Mária Tompa
ISBN: 9780983697244. $20, 16£, 14€
Pub. Date: September 2012
Through St. Orpheus’ method, disparate moments of history become synchronic, are juggled to reveal, paradoxically, mutual difference and essential similarity. “Orpheus wandering in the infernal regions,” says Szentkuthy, “is the perennial symbol of the mind lost amid the enigmas of reality. The aim of the work is, on the one hand, to represent the reality of history with the utmost possible precision, and on the other, to show, through the mutations of the European spirit, all the uncertainties of contemplative man, the transiency of emotions, & the sterility of philosophical systems.”

*Marginalia on Casanova* relives the spiritualization of the main protagonist’s sensual adventures, though it is less his sex life and more his intellectual mission, the sole determinant of his being, which is the focus of this mesmeric book. Through his own glittering associations and broadly spanning array of metaphors, Szentkuthy analyses and views the 18th century and its notion of homogeneity from the vantage point of the 20th century, with the full armor of someone who was, perhaps, one of the last Hungarian Europeans. While a commentary on Casanova’s memoirs, it is also Szentkuthy’s very own philosophy of love.

Passion, playfulness, irony, and a whole gamut of protean metamorphoses are what characterize *Marginalia on Casanova*, a work in which readers will experience both profundity and a taking to wing of essay-writing that is intellectually radiant and as sensual and provocative as a gondola ride with Casanova.

**ENCOMIUMS**

Szentkuthy’s objective is not the sanctioned masterpiece, but the circus where the carnal and material origin & purpose of all art are revealed in their total nakedness. In his circus, the tent arches over all of human history and the whole of existence; Casanova treads the tightrope with Elizabeth of England, and Mozart conducts the orchestra.

— Csaba Sik

A genuine avant-gardist. Just to know that Hungary has such a writer is, in itself, enriching for ourselves and for Hungarian literature as a whole.

— István Vas

Szentkuthy is a poet to the core: this is evidenced in the vibrating emotional tension of every sentence, the high sensitivity of the inner recorder, the novel, often daring, but always suggestive images, comparisons, and associations in which his recitation moves. His attention turns to all manifestations of life with the same intensity and offers the reader stimulation & immersion and deserves to be regarded as one of the values of the new Hungarian literature.

— Maria Herz, *Pester Lloyd*

**Original cover design by István Orosz**

**Finalist for the Da Vinci Eye Award, 2012**

**Voted one of the Best Paperback Books of 2013 by The Guardian**
Title: Walter Jackson Bate, Negative Capability
Introduction by Maura Del Serra
ISBN: 9780983697237. $18, 14£, 12€
Pub.Date: June 2012

Walter Jackson Bate’s canonical 1939 study of Keats’s concept of Negative Capability is a genealogical treatise that elucidates the socio-political, aesthetic, and intellectual composition of Keats’s most famous poetic idea. He discloses its relation to Hazlitt’s idea of gusto and to Shakespearean notions of impersonality and intensity while also demonstrating how Negative Capability presages Bergson’s notions of intellect & intuition.

Bate reveals how the key elements of Keats’s poetic concept are disinterestedness, sympathy, impersonality, and dramatic poetry, defining Negative Capability as ‘the ability to negate or lose one’s identity in something larger than oneself — a sympathetic openness to the concrete reality without, an imaginative identification, a relishing and understanding of it.’

With Negative Capability, Keats railed against the rampant egotism of his epoch and challenged the certainty of its claims to knowledge. While embracing reality, Keats urged the necessity of abiding in uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts.

This new edition brings back into print Bate’s indispensable work, and features an introduction by the distinguished Italian poet, playwright, & literary critic Maura Del Serra. With its re-publication, Eliot’s proclamation on Keats is given new force: that ‘there is hardly one statement of Keats about poetry which … will not be found to be true …’

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Bate sees the creative process as an imaginative penetration or vitalization of the concrete and the actual. Following his broader study of the backgrounds of the Romantic imagination in the philosophy and aesthetic theorizing of an earlier age, Bate interprets the nature of creative apprehension, as Keats describes and conceives it, as a harmonious coalescence of the perceiving mind and its objects within a common ground they share between them.

— Stuart M. Sperry
Fernando Pessoa claimed to be inhabited by “thousands of philosophies,” all of which he intended to develop in his unfinished project of English-language Philosophical Essays. The resulting fragments were never published by Pessoa himself and almost the entirety of them are presented in this edition for the very first time in history.

This volume exhibits Pessoa’s musings and wild insights on the history of philosophy, the failures of subjectivity, the structure of the universe to reveal an unexpectedly scholarly, facetious, and vigorous theoretical mind. Written under the pre-heteronyms of Charles Robert Anon and Alexander Search, these texts constitute the foundation for the fabrication of Pessoa’s future heteronyms. They are the testimony of a writer who referred to himself as a “poet animated by philosophy.”

Through editor Nuno Ribeiro’s careful critical efforts, a new and fundamental facet of the work of one of modernity’s most seminal geniuses has now been brought to light in a remarkably reliable and clear fashion.

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Beautifully edited and presented with a spirited afterword, these essays abound in arresting and surprising insights and this book will be of absorbing interest not only to those who love Pessoa but also anyone who wants philosophy to be more than the dull rehearsal of commonplace pieties. It is a cause for celebration that more of his writings are coming into print.

— John Gray, The New Statesman

WORLD PREMIERE PUBLICATION!

Original cover design by István Orosz
Italian writer/director Elio Petri (1929–1982) is of the cinematic era of Bertolucci, Bellocchio, and Pasolini, and although recognized by film scholars as one of the major figures of Italian cinema, his work remains largely unknown and unavailable outside of Italy. Hardly a marginal figure, Petri began as an assistant to Giuseppe De Santis and his future collaborators would include many of the most renowned film artists of the 20th century: Marcello Mastroianni, Gian Maria Volonté, Dante Ferretti, Ennio Morricone, Ugo Pirro, and Tonino Guerra, amongst others.

Due to Petri’s belief that culture is inextricable from political struggle, he was a central figure in the fervent debates of his time on both Italian cinema and culture that arose from the aftermath of World War II to the
1980s. However, while generally characterized as a political filmmaker, that view is limited and reductive, for Petri’s films are polemical interrogations of social, religious, and political phenomena as well as acute analyses of moral, psychological, and existential crises. His cinema is also informed by a rich and profound understanding of and engagement with literature, philosophy, psychology, and art, evident for instance in his adaptations of Sciascia’s novels, Miller’s *The American Clock* (for the stage), and Sartre’s *Dirty Hands*, as well as in his use of Pop and Abstract Art in *The Tenth Victim, A Quiet Day in the Country*, and other films.

Now available for the first time ever in English, *Writings on Cinema & Life* is a collection of texts Petri originally published mainly in French and Italian journals. Also included are several art reviews, as well as Petri’s essay on Sartre’s *Dirty Hands*, a text forgotten until recently. Petri’s affinity for subtle analysis is evident in his clear and precise writing style, which utilizes concrete concepts and observations, cinematographic references, and ideas drawn from literature, philosophy, and psychoanalysis. There is as well an acute and scathing sense of humor that permeates many of the texts.

Petri was the recipient of the Palme d’Or, an Oscar, and the Edgar Allan Poe award among many others, and in 2005 he was the subject of the documentary *Elio Petri: appunti su un autore*. This collection of Petri’s writings is an important contribution to the history of cinema and offers further insight into the work, thought, and beliefs of one of cinema’s most ambitious and innovative practitioners.

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Through a mixture of expressionism, Brecht, and the bizarre, Petri’s films brought together Marx and Gramsci, but also Freud and Reich. He dove into the world of dreams with Kafkaian lunges and into the maze that divides being and schizophrenia.

— Jean A. Gili

The thing that struck me about *I giorni contati*, in fact, more than one thing. First: it places itself in a strange territory, actually still unexplored in Italy, halfway between realism and existentialism. Second: it risked looking for a cinema that was different from the cinema done in Italy up to that moment. I’m sure that *I giorni contati* influenced me somehow. It influenced me the same way that all the films I loved at that time did. I wanted them to influence me, and I wanted to be influenced by Elio’s films.

— Bernardo Bertolucci

Elio Petri is the greatest Italian director of the past, the only Italian director who made ten films that were completely different from one another.

— Franco Nero

The menace Petri posed doomed him to an ostracism from which he would never recover. In 2007, when Jean A. Gili published the volume *Elio Petri: Scritti di cinema e di vita*, he opened a new chapter in film history. And more than thirty years after Petri’s death, the translation of these writings for the English-speaking public represents an enormous step in the vindication of this director’s life and work. A reading of *Writings on Cinema and Life* obliges one to cast aside the predigested labels furnished by cinema critics and historians.

— Beatriz Leal Riesco, *Asymptote*
The Greek Music Drama marks an intriguing moment in the development of Nietzsche’s thought. Delivered in 1870 at the Basel Museum, it was the first public enunciation of the great themes that would echo throughout Nietzsche’s philosophy: the importance of æsthetic experience for culture, the primacy of the body and physiological drives, and the centrality of music to Greek tragedy. Here we see Nietzsche’s genealogical methodology in embryonic form alongside the anti-humanist æsthetics that will bloom in his later work.

While The Greek Music Drama is a text written on the brink of the insights that inform The Birth of Tragedy, it stands on its own right as a singular text. This work is of considerable importance and is now made available in English for the very first time, with the translation set parallel to the original German in this elegant bilingual edition. Paul Bishop’s preface & informative critical notes and Jill Marsden’s illuminating introduction not only serve to make good the comparative neglect this seminal text has suffered in Nietzsche studies, they also lend the unique expertise of two Nietzsche scholars to the early thought of a philosopher who is crucial not just to philosophy scholars and aficionados, but to anyone interested in theater, performance, & the art of tragedy.
Richard Foreman’s Ontological-Hysteric Theater at St. Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery: Zomboid!, Wake Up Mr. Sleepy! Your Unconscious Mind is Dead!, and Deep Trance Behavior in Potatoland. In these three exhilarating and challenging works, Foreman turns to a meditation on the mechanical and digital reproductions of screen images within the discipline of theater, and thereby recalibrates and expands the potential relationship we can have with theater.

Extending the model of theater as a “reverberating machine,” Foreman’s use of film in these plays is intimately integrated into a new kind of total theater that effectively recharges and redirects the issues of consciousness he has been exploring with indefatigable intensity since the establishment of his theater in 1968. The bodied reality of theatrical experience, and the recognition of unconsciousness within that experience, becomes more fraught with peril in today’s screened world. These plays engage in ways that continue his ambition to upend habitual thinking and may prove transformative for the individual’s ability to interpret and understand the threats of deadening conformity & loss of identity through the new digital culture.

Employing an innovative typographical presentation, Plays with Films demonstrates how America’s most daring theater artist alchemizes reproducible and non-reproducible reality.

**ENCOMIUMS**

Richard Foreman has reinvented dialogue, action, sound, stage design, and philosophical groundwork as no other stage artist in our history.

— From the citation for the PEN / LAURA PELS MASTER AMERICAN DRAMATIST AWARD

Each year, Mr. Foreman, a titan of the American avant-garde, invents remarkably specific interior landscapes that come as close to capturing the geography of dreams as theater can.

— Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*
In a century replete with radical politics, final liberations, ends of history, and dreams of eternity, Louis-Auguste Blanqui, the constant revolutionary, wrote *Eternity by the Stars* in the last months of 1871 while incarcerated in Fort du Taureau, a marine cell of the English Channel.

While contemplating his confinement, Blanqui devised a simple calculation by bringing the infinity of time in confrontation with the finite number of possible events to suggest a most radical conclusion: every chain of events is bound to repeat itself eternally in space and time. For the world is nothing but the play of probabilities on the great stage of time and space. By straddling the boundaries of hyperrealism and hallucinatory thinking, Blanqui’s hypothesis offers a deep, tragic, and heartfelt reflection on the place of the human in the universe, the value of action, and the aching that lies at the heart of every modern soul.

This first critical edition of Blanqui’s incantatory text in English features an extended introduction by Frank Chouraqui. Exploring sources of Blanqui’s thinking in his intellectual context, Chouraqui traces the legacy of the text in critiques of modernity devoting particular attention to the figures of Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, and Borges. It features copious illuminating annotations that bring out the web of connections that interlace the great marginal figure of Blanqui with more than two millennia of European culture.

**ENCOMIUMS**

Here rendered and admirably introduced into English for the first time by Frank Chouraqui, Blanqui’s cosmological prose stands alongside Blake’s later prophecies, Poe’s *Eureka*, & Borges’ *Ficciones* as an homage to the human mind’s capacity “to see the world in a grain of sand” — that is, to imagine the boundless self-sameness of the universe across space & time as a revolutionary opportunity to dissolve the antinomies between the actual and the possible, liberty and fate.

— Richard Sieburth, Prof. of French & Comparative Literature, NYU
Unique in Hungarian literature, at the time of its first appearance in 1935, *Towards the One & Only Metaphor* was greeted with plaudits by many leading Hungarian critics, who declared the writing entirely original.

Szentkuthy referred to this nearly unclassifiable text as a *Catalogus Rerum*, “an index that is of entities and phenomena, a Catalogue of Everything in the Entire World.” In a sequence of 112 shorter & longer passages, Szentkuthy has recorded his experiences and thoughts, reflected on his reading matter as well as political, historical, and erotic events, moving from epic subjectivity to ontological actualities. Szentkuthy conjures up and analyzes spectacle and thought past and present with sensitivity, erudition, and linguistic force. As András Keszthelyi observed, the text is essentially something of a manifesto, “an explicit formulation of the author’s intentions, his scale of values, or, if you wish: his *ars poetica*.”

*Towards the One & Only Metaphor* is also a confessional, a laying bare of the heart, even through masks, and like Montaigne & Rousseau, Szentkuthy is equally revealing, entertaining, and humorous. Now available in English for the first time, *Towards the One & Only Metaphor* is destined to stand as one of the principal works of world literature of the 20th century.
In the years before the Second World War, a man throws a statue of the crucified Christ over a waterfall. Later, in Hitler’s trenches, he loses his arms to an enemy grenade. The blasphemer, screaming in agony, presided over by Satan, who pours a cup of gall into his open mouth, is portrayed amid the flames of Hell in a painting by the parish priest that is mounted on a calvary where the two streets in the cross-shaped village meet.

Thus begins "When the Time Comes," Josef Winkler’s chronicle of life in rural Austria written in the form of a necrology, tracing the benighted destiny of a community through its suicides and the tragic deaths that befall it, punctuated by the invocation of the bone-cooker whose viscous brew is painted on the faces of the work horses and the haunting stanzas of Baudelaire’s “Litanies of Satan.”

In a hypnotic, incantatory prose reminiscent at times of Homer, at times of the Catholic liturgy, at times of the naming of the generations in the book of Genesis, "When the Time Comes" is a ruthless dissection of the pastoral novel, laying bare the corruption that lies in its heart. Writing in the vein of his compatriots Peter Handke and Elfriede Jelinek, but perhaps going further in his relentlessness and aesthetic radicalism, Josef Winkler is one of the most significant European authors working today.

**Winner of the Georg Büchner Prize (2008)**
Title: William Wordsworth, *Fragments*

Featuring an introduction by Alan Vardy

ISBN: 9781940625027. $17, 14£, 16€

Pub. Date: December 2013

Understanding the significance of our affective response to natural objects could not be more central to a Wordsworthian poetics predicated on the internalization of aesthetic sensations into perceptions and ideas, associations of one kind or another, and finally into the very stuff of the poetry. Fragmented or not, this prose treatise on a subject of such centrality to the poet’s project can no longer be ignored. It is this general neglect that the present text hopes to address by publishing these fragments on their own for the very first time.

By placing the prose fragment in a separate appendix, the original editors of Wordsworth’s *Prose Works* removed it from its actual place in *The Unpublished Tour*. New analysis of the manuscripts reveals that “The Sublime & the Beautiful” is actually part of the Tour. In reprinting the “Hawkshead & the Ferry” section of the Tour, our edition restores this original context, lost in the standard Oxford edition. The prose fragment begins in the precise place where “Hawkshead & the Ferry” ends — on the west side of Windermere looking north to the Langdale pikes. Were the missing pages of “The Sublime & the Beautiful” to be recovered, the transition from picturesque viewpoint to speculation on the philosophical status of that view would be apparent.
White peaches, red broom, pomegranates tumbling down the escalator steps: with these delicately rendered details, Josef Winkler’s *Natura Morta* begins. In Stazione Termini in Rome, Piccoletto, the beautiful black-haired boy whose long eyelashes graze his freckle-studded cheeks, steps onto the metro and heads toward his job at a fish stand in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele. The sights and sounds of the market, a mélange of teeming life amid the ever-present avatars of death, is the backdrop for Winkler’s innovative prose, which unfolds in a series of haunting images and baroque, luxuriant digressions with pitch-perfect symmetry and intense visual clarity. Reminiscent of the carnal vitality of Pasolini, and taking inspiration from the play between the sumptuous and fatal in the still lives of the late Renaissance, *Natura Morta* is a unique experiment in writing as stasis, culminating in the beatification of its protagonist. In awarding this book with the 2001 Alfred Döblin Prize, Günter Grass singled out Winkler’s commitment to the writer’s vocation & praised *Natura Morta* as a work of dense poetic rigor.

**Alfred Döblin Prize, 2001**

To read Austrian master Josef Winkler’s *Natura Morta* is to peer into the early days of the fictive universe. … Winkler has fallen victim to our market’s provincialism regarding literature in translation and we owe tremendous thanks to Adrian West and Contra Mundum Press for bringing the text to such vivid life. *Natura Morta* deserves hyperbolic praise. It should be studied, passed among friends, argued over, and stolen from shamelessly and thoroughly. Winkler has stripped fiction bare & approached the line that separates composition from reality itself. Delight and horror contest on every page. … The reader is stricken, as though by the birth of a star.

— William Emery, *The Collagist*

Like Sebald and like his own Austrian compatriots Peter Handke, Elfriede Jelinek, and Thomas Bernhard, Winkler flags memory and history — collective and individual — as inescapable traps that affect present experience.

— K. Thomas Kahn, *Numero Cinq*
Moving between a number of literary forms, including poetry, fiction, and satire as well as essays on politics, philosophy, and psychiatry, *The Transformation Book* marks one of the fundamental stages in Pessoa’s elaboration of a new conception of literary space, one that he came to express as a “drama in people.” Alexander Search, Pantaleão, Jean Seul de Méluret, and Charles James Search are the four “pre-heteronyms” to which the texts of *The Transformation Book* are attributed. These four figures constitute a plural literary microcosm — a world that Pessoa makes, but that is occupied by a multiplicity of authors — and clearly anticipate the emergence of Pessoa’s heteronyms. As the singular result of an intersection of Pessoa’s personal intellectual trajectory with his hopes for fomenting cultural transformation, *The Transformation Book* makes for a unique contribution to Pessoa’s ever-growing published œuvre.

Although some of the texts conceived as part of *The Transformation Book* have previously been published in isolation or as fragments, this is the first complete & critical edition of *The Transformation Book*, and most of the texts in this edition are published here for the first time. Through the critical efforts of Nuno Ribeiro now Cláudia Souza, a fundamental project of Fernando Pessoa’s is now brought from the confines of the archive to the public in its most complete & accurate fashion. *The Transformation Book* should contribute to future studies on the work of one of the most distinctive geniuses of modernist literature.

WORLD PREMIERE PUBLICATION!

*The Transformation Book*, which belongs to Pessoa’s pre-heteronymic period, contains a series of texts written in English, Portuguese, and French, none of which were ever published during Pessoa’s lifetime.

Conceived by Pessoa in 1908, a year of great social and cultural transformation in Portugal, *The Transformation Book* was designed to reflect and advance social and cultural transformation in Portugal and beyond.
From the very beginning, Villa was so advanced that, even today, his initial writings or graphemes appear ahead of the times and even the future, suspended between a polymorphous sixth sense and pure non-sense.

This volume of Villa’s multilingual poetry ranges across his entire writing life and also includes selections from his translation of the Bible, his writings on ancient & modern art, and his visual poetry. Presented in English for the very first time, The Selected Poetry of Emilio Villa also contains material that is rare even to Italian readers. In adhering to the original notion of poetry as making, Villa acts as the poet-faber in tandem with his readers, creating une niche dans un niche for them to enter and create within, as if language itself were an eternal and infinite void in which creation remains an ever possible and continuously new event.

As the universe expands and its galaxies grow further apart with a speed proportionate to their respective distances, so does the linguistic universe of Emilio Villa.

— Adriano Spatola

Emilio Villa’s poetry reveals a movement toward an extremely remote past, prior to the constitution of forms.

— Flavio Ermini, EQUIPeÇO
Just as compelling are the volumes of shorter lyric forms, such as Finding the Measure, Songs I–XXX, Not this Island Music, and Lapis, or his even more experimental work, such as Sentence, The Flowers of Unceasing Coincidence, or his writing-through of Shelley’s poem, Mont Blanc. The deeper unity of the work is unavoidably present in the voice that underlies the multiplicity of forms. As Guy Davenport wrote: “A Kelly poem is a Kelly poem. It dances in his way, sings in his intonations, insisting on its style. No American poet except perhaps Wallace Stevens has his sense of balance in a line. […] Kelly has nothing to hide: the untillable balance is there to begin with.”

Long over-due, the present volume, A Voice Full of Cities, collects for the first time Kelly’s essays, statements, & other writings on poetry & poetics, making available a vast array of difficult to obtain works. The editors’ aim was to insure that — in Robert Kelly’s own words — “the fifty years of thinking around the fifty years of making won’t get lost, and making & thinking will be seen as one thing.”

[A Voice Full of Cities] is a winding labyrinth of wonder; trails of intelligence, attention, desire, and pleasure that curl inward and nest among each other. The overdue assembling of them into a book affords an opportunity to feel how richly and intricately these thoughts coexist, how the roof of one serves as the floor of another, shared walls enlacing to produce a tremendous contemplative cortex, dotted with sancta in which old gods — the oldest gods — still darkly sleep.

— Ian Dreiblatt, drunken boat
Considered an eerie attack on realism, when first published in 1934, Miklós Szentkuthy’s debut novel ‘Prae’ so astonished Hungarian critics that many deemed it monstrous, derogatorily referred to Szentkuthy as cosmopolitan, and classified him alien to Hungarian culture.
Incomparable & unprecedented in Hungarian literature, *Prae* compels recognition as a serious contribution to modernist fiction, as ambitious in its aspirations as *Ulysses* or *À la recherche du temps perdu*. With no traditional narration and no psychologically motivated characters, in playing with voices, temporality, and events, while fiction, *Prae* is more what Northrop Frye calls an anatomy (à la Lucian, Rabelais, & Burton) or Menippean satire: the basic concern of the book is intellectual, its pervading mood is that of a comedy of ideas. As a virtual novel that preempts every possibility for its realization, it is a novel but only virtually so, a book which is actually a praeparation for an unwritten (unwritable) novel. In this, it maintains the freedom and openness of its potentialities, indicative for instance in the Non-Prae diagonals, a series of passages that intercut the novel and continually fracture space and time to engage in what one of the figures of the book calls the culture of wordplay or dogmatic accidentalism. “The book’s title,” said Szendkuthy, “alludes to it being an overture. A multitude of thoughts, emotions, ideas, fantasies, and motifs that mill and churn as chimes, an overture to my subsequent oeuvre.”

By challenging the then prevailing dogmas and conventions of prose writing, Szendkuthy was said to have created a new canon for himself but later derided as insignificant for supposedly not acquiring followers. Largely unread at the time, *Prae* eventually gained cult status and would be reprinted in 1980 & 2004. To some critics, the book is not only one of the representative experimental works of the early 20th century, but in its attempt to bring ‘impossible literature’ into being, it also presages the *nouveau roman* by almost 30 years. And in its rejection of sequentiality and celebration of narrative shuffling, long before Burroughs & Gysin, *Prae* enact what is conceptually akin to the cut-up. Few of Szendkuthy’s contemporaries would reveal with equal bravura & audacity the new horizons that were opened up for narrative forms after the era of realism. In An Interrogator of Life, Szendkuthy said that his goal with *Prae* was “to absorb the problems of modern philosophy and mathematics into modern fashion, love, & every manifestation of life.”

Translated for the first time since its original publication in 1934, upon its 80th anniversary, this legendary and controversial Hungarian modernist novel is now at last available in English.

**Encomiums**

As far as Szendkuthy is concerned, the question may be posed as to whether a country, or a culture, can be rendered a more significant ‘service’ than to have a masterpiece written in that country’s language, raising said culture to hitherto unseen heights? *Prae* is one of the most important experimental novels because virtually all of the problems of the old & the 20th-century experimental novel can be found in it, and there are some elements (e.g., the theory of the novel, the theory of architectural wordplay) that are to be found solely in Szendkuthy’s novel… The role of language grows tremendously: *language is the home of being.*

— Pál Nagy

There is no other Hungarian book as intelligent as *Prae*. It skips lightly, playfully, ironically, & in consummately individual fashion around the highest intellectual peaks of the European mind. It will become one of the great documents of Hungarian culture that this book was written in Hungarian.

— Antal Szerb
The Divine Mimesis
Pier Paolo Pasolini
Translated with an introduction by Thomas E. Peterson
ISBN: 9781940625072. $16, 12.50£, 15.50€
Pub. Date: November 2014

Written between 1963 & 1967, The ‘Divine Mimesis, Pasolini’s imitation of the early cantos of the Inferno, offers a searing critique of Italian society and the intelligentsia of the 1960s. It is also a self-critique by the author of The Ashes of Gramsci (1957) who saw the civic world evoked by that book fading absolutely from view. By the mid-1960s, Pasolini theorized, the Italian language had sacrificed its connotative expressiveness for the sake of a denuded technological language of pure communication. In this context, he projects a ‘rewrite’ of Dante’s Commedia in which two historical embodiments of Pasolini himself occupy the roles of the pilgrim and guide in their underworld journey.

Densely layered with poetic and philological allusions, and illuminated by a parallel text of photographs that juxtapose the world of the Italian literati to the simple reality of rural Italian life, The ‘Divine Mimesis has a kinship to these filmic works as Pasolini himself ruled it ‘complete’ though still in a partial form.

Written at a turning point in his life when he was wrestling with his poetic ‘demons,’ the true center of gravity of Pasolini’s Dantean project is the potential of poetry to teach and probe, ethically and aesthetically, in reality.

In this first English translation of Pasolini’s La divina mimesis, Italianist Thomas E. Peterson offers historical, linguistic, and cultural analyses that aim to expand the discourse about an enigmatic author considered by many to be the greatest Italian poet after Montale. Published by Contra Mundum Press one year in advance of the 40th anniversary of Pasolini’s death.

In the history of twentieth-century poetry, there is no other poet besides Pasolini who has more tenaciously interrogated his own ‘I,’ more persistently contemplated it, admired it, examined it, analyzed it and dissected it in order then to show its suffering entrails to the world, as they beg for understanding, affection, & pity.

— Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti
Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini (1920–1993) is one of the most renowned figures in world cinema. Director of a long list of critically acclaimed motion pictures, including La strada, La dolce vita, 8½, and Amarcord, Fellini’s success helped strengthen the international prestige of Italian cinema from the 1950s onward. Often remembered as an eccentric auteur with a vivid imagination and a penchant for autobiographical works, the carnivalesque, and Rubenesque women, Fellini’s inimitable films celebrate the creative potential of cinema as a medium and also provide thought-provoking evocations of various periods in Italian history, from the years of fascism to the age of Silvio Berlusconi’s media empire.

In Making a Film Fellini discusses his childhood and adolescence in the coastal town of Rimini, the time he spent as a cartoonist, journalist, and screenwriter in Rome, the decisive encounter with Roberto Rossellini, and his own movies, from Variety Lights to Fellini’s Casanova. The director explains the importance of drawing to his creative process, the mysterious ways in which ideas for films arise, his collaborations with his wife, Giulietta Masina, his thoughts on fascism, Jung, and the relationship between cinema and television. Often comic, sometimes tragic, and rife with insightful comments on his craft, Making a Film sheds light on Fellini’s life and reveals the motivations behind many of his most fascinating movies.

Available for the first time in its entirety in English, this volume contains the complete translation of Fare un film, the authoritative collection of writings edited and reworked by Fellini and initially published by Giulio Einaudi in 1980. The text includes a new translation of the Italo Calvino essay “A Spectator’s Autobiography,” an introduction by Italian film scholar Christopher B. White, and an afterward by Fellini’s longtime friend & collaborator Liliana Betti.
EX LIBRIS
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ON THE FUTURE
OF AESTHETICS
Hyperion is concerned with æsthetics, with the value of art and the ways in which art can be transformed & renewed. We are looking for applied criticism — philosophically oriented essays that are evaluative of specific artists & specific works of art.

Although broad æsthetic theorization should enter into the assessment of the artist and works under examination, we are not interested in purely abstract speculations. In addition, we are not looking for strictly art-historical or merely descriptive essays. What is of interest to us is a proposing of the worth, either intrinsic or conditional, of the art being considered & the principles that underlie the estimation of value. Further, we are also concerned with the way in which discoveries in the sciences alter our understanding of and perception of reality & thereby the making of art, forcing us to consider whether the art of our epoch is congruent with such discoveries or anachronistic.

Hyperion is devoted to criticism of all the arts: visual art, literature, music, theatre, dance, cinema, or any other form of art that contributors wish to argue possesses æsthetic legitimacy. Essays on work in any of these fields are welcomed.

From its inception in 2006 till 2011, Hyperion was edited by its founders Mark Daniel Cohen & Rainer J. Hanshe and published by the Nietzsche Circle. It is now published by Contra Mundum Press and edited by Rainer J. Hanshe & Erika Mihálycsa. Cohen remains a contributing editor.

Visit: contramundum.net/hyperion
ACCOLADES

0. Dominic Siracusa receives the 2011 Raiziss/de Palchi Fellowship for his translation of Emilio Villa.


2. Petőfi Literary Museum & Hungarian Book Foundation Grant (2013) Subvention for Tim Wilkinson’s translation of Miklós Szentkuthy’s *Prae*

3. Da Vinci Eye Award Finalist (2013) for István Orosz’s original cover design for *Marginalia on Casanova*

4. Austrian Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Education Grant (2013) awarded to aid our publication of Josef Winkler’s *Natura Morta*, translated by Adrian West.

Elio Petri’s *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* released on DVD by Criterion (December 2013) with a host of extras, including a video-essay on Petri by our translator, Camilla Zamboni.

Austrian Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Education grant (2014) awarded to aid our publication of Robert Musil’s *Thought Flights*, which is to be translated by Genese Grill.

Petőfi Literary Museum & Hungarian Book Foundation (2014) awards us a grant to aid Judith Sollosy’s translation of Sándor Tar’s *Our Street*.

Rainer J. Hanshe invited to the 49th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival to speak on Elio Petri for their retrospective of Petri’s films. Other guests included Franco Nero, Paola Petri, and Federico Bacci.
ENCOMIUMS

GILGAMESH

The strikingly handsome Contra Mundum edition of *Gilgamesh* has the feel of picking up a fragment of the cuneiform tablet, miraculously lucid, magically set. This is an exemplary translation that recovers the time of listening.
— Robert Kelly, *Nomadics*

SELF-SHADOWING PREY

*Self-Shadowing Prey*, just published by the new and promising Contra Mundum Press, is a book that is a tremendously difficult volume to translate since, unlike the image, wordplay is far less understandable across languages. This is a revelatory poetry by way of a lexical Kabala. And as there are unavoidable losses in translation here, Caws gives us a tremendous recovery.
— Michæl Leong, *Hyperallergic*

THE ABDICATION

*The Abdication* is a visionary novel of dangerous ideas, a novel of revolt that can at times be revolting in its relentless push to break the mold of idealist thought. Both experimental and assured, *The Abdication* is a comedy of high seriousness and gospel of the flesh that our winded civilization has needed for 2,000 years.
— Stuart Kendall, author of *Georges Bataille*

*The Abdication* is so perfectly consistent in its apocalyptic, visionary crescendo of the whole. What is admirable is the almost 360° bulk of Hanshe’s mythological and theological (that is, meta-geological) sources, his learned but burning quotations and his sharp meditations, as well as his Rabelaisian, Nietzschean, and Orwellian grotesque use of ancient paganism and of heretical Christian currents: a massive, widespread *recherche* indeed to build his chaos cathedral, and a true, bitter *monumentum* to his
sublimated agonies, a labyrinth-shaped one, against Western Religions of the Book: a true erotic comic sequel to Nietzsche. The Abdication, with its very intellectual pathos (much more intellectual and raisonné than Hanshë’s first novel, The Acolytes) requires a chosen audience or brotherhood of refined and ‘strong’ readers.

— Maura Del Serra

Among Anglophone readers, Miklós Széntkuthy was a relatively little-known (though highly prolific) Hungarian writer. Thanks to the recent efforts of Contra Mundum Press and translator Tim Wilkinson, who has done an admirable job in translating Szentkuthy’s ornate Rococo prose, this unfortunate situation now looks to be in a state of happy reversal. It is to be hoped that the other volumes in the series St. Orpheus Breviary will themselves see the light of day. At the same time, the publication of a work such as this helps to fill in the inevitable huge gaps in the availability of important Hungarian works of literature in English translation.

— Ottilie Mulzet, Hungarian Literature Online

What we have here is thought turned into something so sensuous it almost becomes erotic: this is the clever point that the book makes, that Casanova was not at all just the serial seducer we have decided he is, but a philosopher, in whose every action we see a principle of thought. This is a proposition we assent to at once, because of the style, which induces in me the feeling that any minute I am actually going to groan with pleasure. A huge salute to the translator here; Tim Wilkinson’s capture and then retransmission of nuance is awe-inspiring. This could not have been translated by someone with anything less than a brilliant English prose style. Let’s hope the remaining nine volumes, and indeed the rest of Szentkuthy’s oeuvre, get translated soon.

— Nicolas Lezard, The Guardian

Szentkuthy’s Marginalia on Casanova is truly a seminal work, both because of the breadth of its range and the nuance and slyness with which it traverses this breadth. Szentkuthy reminds us that to be intellectually omnivorous is a wasted asset without a sense of irony; he is, in a sense, Arnold Toynbee as written by Henry James. He writes of the rise & fall of civilizations as if they were extended drawing-room
conversations — that is to say in what James would consider a civilized way. Szentkuthy will unquestionably enter and alter the canon of twentieth-century literature as we know it.

— Nicholas Birns, Tropes of Tenth Street

*Marginalia on Casanova* is a dazzling English rendering by Tim Wilkinson and also Szentkuthy’s English debut. (The other volumes of the *Breviary* — with titles like *Black Renaissance*, *Europa Minor*, and *In the Footsteps of Eurydice* — will, I hope, be forthcoming from Contra Mundum Press soon.) Szentkuthy is still referred to as the sacred monster of Hungarian letters, and the expression is apt. His huge output is at once speculative and manneristic, hyper-erotic and hyper-religious, bleary eyed and clear-sighted. His syntax and affect are irreverently modernist, yet there is nothing programmatic about his avant-gardism, and what he wrote of Casanova holds true of him as well: the muck of literary program is not allowed to dirty his white cuffs. The *Marginalia*, it must be said, is uneven, and sections 38 to 57 are comparatively weak. But these 19 sections only make up a matter of 20 pages (which, nonetheless, include gorgeous lines like: every stealthy agitation of the age is there in Casanova’s nights), while section 73 alone is a 19-page triumph. Wilkinson’s prose, on the whole, is shapely, tangy, and precise.

— David Van Dusen, Los Angeles Review of Books

**PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS**

Beautifully edited and presented with a spirited afterword, these essays abound in arresting and surprising insights and this book will be of absorbing interest not only to those who love Pessoa but also anyone who wants philosophy to be more than the dull rehearsal of commonplace pieties. It is a cause for celebration that more of his writings are coming into print.

— John Gray, The New Statesman

The essays will unlikely appeal to Anglo-American philosophers who eschew literary writing in favor of formal logic and linguistic analysis. Pessoa’s meditations are impressionistic and fragmentary, not rigorously argumentative. Thereby, he provides no deductive proofs or formulae. Rather, he provides notebook entries that show a brilliant mind at work — profound insights without logical apparatus.

— Michael Colson, Portuguese American Journal
I cannot but believe that behind Pessoa’s ‘pre-heteronyms,’ which feed the current volume [discovered recently and published as written for the first time], and his ‘heteronyms,’ which feed the books he is celebrated for, that play carried the day, and that all else to follow for their author would come because of his mastery in playing. Pessoa’s *Philosophical Essays* are part and parcel of this sensibility, which left me wanting more from the aforesaid Charles Robert Anon and Alexander Search.

— Allan Graubard, *Leonardo*

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**Writings on Cinema & Life**

Petri was so alive, and inside the cinema, *inside* the images, so inside the strength of a vision. He should not be forgotten.

— Tonino Guerra

Elio Petri was a great artist, a great director, a very great man of the cinema.

— Dante Ferretti

A seemingly eclectic but actually very helpful selection of such hard-to-find Petri pieces, the aptly titled *Writings on Cinema & Life* is posited in Gili’s introduction as homage to a man that was like a big brother to me, a brother who had a lot to teach and pass down. The result definitely serves as a touching tribute, showing Petri as an enormously educated and gifted writer graced with a remarkable sense of humor, but just as capable of well-reasoned and sound analysis as of occasional *bon mots*.

— Christoph Huber, *Cineaste*

In 2007, when Jean A. Gili published *Scritti di cinema e di vita*, he opened a new chapter in film history. And more than thirty years after Petri’s death, the translation of these writings for the English-speaking public represents an enormous step in the vindication of this director’s life and work. A reading of *Writings on Cinema & Life* obliges one to cast aside the pre-digested labels furnished by cinema critics & historians in order to recuperate one of the most original and interesting directors of the twentieth century. Organized chronologically, with a selection of photographs and a meticulous typography that recollects the books of the era, this work is an ideal introduction for the Anglophone reader, particularly when examined alongside Petri’s films.

— Beatriz Leal Riesco, *Rebelión*
PLAYS WITH FILMS

Richard Foreman’s theater represents an extraordinary, mental, spiritual, and æsthetic adventure. It’s a theater that questions, probes, and challenges the frontier of art & being.
— Jonas Mekas

As with all of Foreman’s published work, this collection [Plays With Films] documents visceral, physical events. Fortunately, these events are well worth capturing for the written record. The plays show a very experienced artist simultaneously staying innovative and true-to-himself, and in presenting these texts as written documents, Foreman sets us up for his difficult theater. These plays demand focus — lots of it — and we’re lucky for that. These are plays for people who believe they deserve good art instead of mere entertainment. Hopefully, the documentation will lead to new stagings of these plays, since the collection is a de facto template for other ambitious directors to pick up the work and make it their own.
— Justin Maxwell, Rain Taxi

Each Richard Foreman’s work gives a resonance and a disturbance not felt from any other company. [He is] a pioneer in end-of-millennium controlled chaos.
— David Bowie

ETERNITY BY THE STARS

Students of nineteenth-century thought will be grateful for this eloquent new translation. Frank Chouraqui’s superb introduction locates Eternity by the Stars in the trajectory of Blanqui’s thought and life and builds toward a crescendo that links the book to ruminations on the condition of modernity by the likes of Baudelaire, Nietzsche, Benjamin and Borges.
— Warren Breckman, Professor of History, University of Pennsylvania

Blanqui’s Eternity by the Stars is a must read for anyone who has been enthralled by Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, or Borges. Chouraqui’s perceptive and erudite introduction and notes clarify the logic of the argument, Blanqui’s reception by major thinkers, and the context of the essay’s composition in solitary confinement following the Paris Commune. This book should certainly be in the canon of philosophical prison literature, alongside writers like Boethius & Gramsci.
— Gary Shapiro, Prof. of Philosophy, Emeritus, University of Richmond
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CONTRA MUNDUM PROJECTS

0 In collaboration with the Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Contra Mundum Press staged an Elio Petri retrospective at Arsenal in Berlin from 6–21 November 2013. See the respective websites for complete details, including talks with film & literature scholars.

http://www.arsenal-berlin.de
http://www.iicberlino.esteri.it

1 Sándor Vály & Éva Polgár, Gilgamesh, a composition based on our edition of Stuart Kendall’s translation of Gilgamesh, now available. Vály & Polgár’s composition premiered on Finnish Radio at the end of 2013. For further updates, visit the news section of our site.

Sándor Vály
http://sandorvaly.info

Éva Polgár
http://polgareva.hu

2 Forthcoming cd from László Kreutz, Marginalia on Casanova, a composition based on various sections of our edition of Tim Wilkinson’s translation of Miklos Szentkuthy’s book of the same name. Featuring an original cover by István Orosz.

László Kreutz
http://kreutz.hu

István Orosz
http://utisz.blogspot.de
An event on Miklós Szentkuthy sponsored by Sinn und Form and the Collegium Hungaricum of Berlin (CHB) will take place in the spring of 2015 at CHB. Further details to be announced on our website.

SINN UND FORM

The Italian Cultural Center of New York is hosting an event on April 9, 2015 to celebrate the publication of Fellini’s Making a Film, the first ever translation of the book published by Contra Mundum Press. Participants include Antonio Monda, Wendy Keys, & translator Christopher Burton White.

Rainer J. Hanshe & Agnes Orzoy will curate an exhibition on Miklós Szentkuthy and Imre Szemethy at FUGA, the Budapest Center of Architecture, in December of 2015.
Dedicated to the value & the indispensable importance of the individual voice, to testing the boundaries of thought and experience.

Contra Mundum Press is a New York based independent publishing house with a global outlook. Our principal interest is in Modernism and the principles developed by the Modernists, though we also publish challenging and visionary works from other eras.

Our catalog consists of poetry, fiction, drama, philosophy, film criticism and essays. In the future, we intend on expanding it to include works on architecture, music, & other genres. While we have published bilingual and multilingual books, in accordance with our global outlook, we intend on publishing works in languages other than English. Our free online magazine, Hyperion: On the Future of Æsthetics, is published biannually and features essays, translations, interviews and reviews.

The primary aim of Contra Mundum is to publish translations of writers who in their use of form & style are à rebours, or who deviate significantly from the more programmatic and spurious forms of experimentation. Such writing attests to the volatile nature of modernism. Our preference is for works that have not yet been translated into English, are out of print, or are poorly translated, for writers whose thinking & aesthetics are in opposition to timely or mainstream currents of thought, value systems, or moralities. We also reprint obscure and out-of-print works we consider significant but which have been forgotten, neglected, or overshadowed.

There are many works of fundamental significance to Weltliteratur (and Weltkultur) that still remain in relative oblivion, works that alter and disrupt standard circuits of thought — these warrant being encountered by the world at large. It is our aim to render them more visible.
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Robert Musil, *Thought Flights*
Sándor Tar, *Our Street*
Oğuz Atay, *While Waiting For Fear*
Ferit Edgü, *No One*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *Prae, Vol. II*
Josef Winkler, *Graveyard of Bitter Oranges*
*A City Full of Voices: Essays on Robert Kelly*
Maura Del Serra, *Ladder of Oaths*
Remy de Gourmont, *The Problem of Style*
Ahmad Shamlu, *Born Upon the Dark Spear*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *A Chapter on Love*
Emilio Villa, *Writings on Primordial Art*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *Narcissus’ Mirror*
Miklós Szentkuthy, *Black Renaissance*