

# JENS KULL, THE ELECTRIC SLUMBER AND THE AWAKENING OF MAN

Gabriel Santamarina, 2009

*“But this which takes place on the stage of human consciousness is at the same time a cosmic happening, a real event in world-history. Moreover, it is just this event that carries forward towards its fulfilment the world and ourselves within it.”*

Rudolf Steiner, *The Redemption of Thinking*<sup>1</sup>

The spark of man’s fleeting existence, sleeping on his electric bed, is displayed in Jens Kull’s objects for cosmic self exploration.

An empty sky, the luminous void, an infinite sea of softly whispering sparks, appears to the candid visitor... Then, original enlightenment is suddenly disrupted by human thought: the distant noise of an approaching aircraft. Then a second, a third thought. Emptiness became quickly crowded by creation, human being and his illusory machines. Unreal and volatile, contemporary man, vanishing rapidly along with his electric devices, a few moments before his final voyage back into original nothingness.

On a parallel trip of self discovery, I found out –luckily- that practising meditation upon some of Jens Kull’s video sculptures, the beautiful irony and illusion of a permanent self become dramatically evident. In a world fueled and supported by electricity, man was taught to rely and believe in certain kind of artificial individuality, also defined by electric devices. Civilization itself is built upon such tenets of ghostly permanency. But man is under the spell of the Demiurge (electric Lucifer?) and he is in desperate need to free himself from this modern slavery, in order to escape from becoming universal manure.

Again from above, three screens, each one with amplified

cathod rays of green and red and blue. They also seem to come from beyond, but I don't know the name of the force behind such energy. Just the visible display of the Ray of Creation, manifest in the Law of Three, may both enlightens us and keep us doped into contemporary demiurgic unconsciousness.

It is, indeed, as G. I. Gurdjieff explained in the early 20th century: man lives in a state of hypnotic waking sleep. Electricity keeps us hypnotized. However, it also contains the key for human psychic release. He taught, "Without self knowledge, without understanding the working and functions of his machine, man cannot be free, he cannot govern himself and he will always remain a slave"<sup>2</sup>. Keeping this fact in mind, Kull's instruments of meditation become radical in their revealing the hidden irony of images belonging to a world of sleeping machines.

"*Vergangene Gegenwart*" ...Kull's hexagon of screens displays the fleeting self: illusions of ourselves forever vanish from our vision. Like the centre of a future pagan altar, where the six mirrors of momentary life, silently behold the elusive universe... "For now, we see in a mirror (*speculate-speculum*=mirror), dimly, but then, face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known", says Paul of Tarsus.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this is an "*Imperfect Present*", unreal to our vision, the whole world and its electric landscape. Our dearest, homely mirage of untouchable sparks, just a charming reflection of our long-gone existence, performed ages ago, still to be defined.

As Rudolf Steiner quotes Thomas Aquinas, "You Who are called the True Source of Light and Principle of Wisdom, be pleased to cast a beam of Your radiante upon the darkness of sin and ignorance in which I have been born...order the beginning direct the progress and perfect achievement of my work."<sup>4</sup> Can we fathom the sacred beam that spins inside this electric phantasmagoria? Such an unnameable, transcendent entity,

carrying in Its womb the seed of absolute regeneration?

How can an empty “*Corner*” of a room, all of a sudden, a reveal the secret reality of humble insects, brought into life by that sacred electricity? Is it an illusion? Is that corner still real, or does it only live in Kull’s electric dreams? What is the real nature of space, dwelled by ghostly, electric, pseudo-eternal cockroaches?

As these quoted masters have proved, there are ways for overcoming the electric spell of the Demiurge. Is the work of art going to render the awakening of consciousness? Again, we will ponder upon Kull’s video titled “*Sísifo*” and meditate on universal regeneration. Everything is an illusion, created to be destroyed. Such a divine destruction gives us the greatest of lessons; man’s life is eternal only when he stands up from mud, rises up from life, awakens from slumber and becomes Man Divine, according to the original plan of creation.

<sup>1</sup> Steiner, Rudolf. *The Redemption of Thinking*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1956, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Gurdjieff, G.I., *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, Tarcher, New York, 2006, p. 761.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:12.

<sup>4</sup> Steiner, op.cit., p. 20.