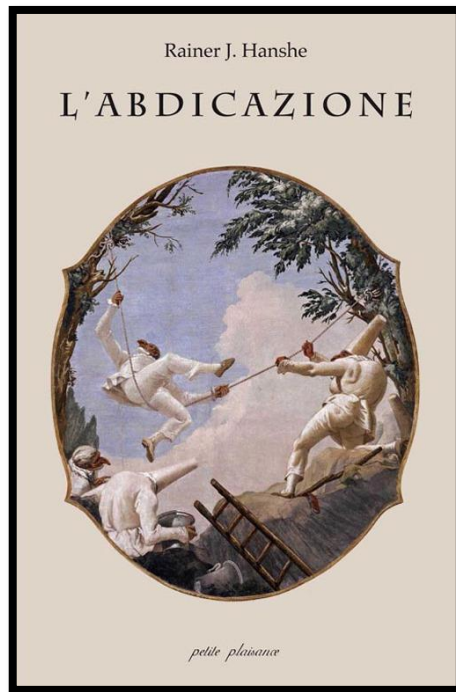


THE ABDICATION: A UTOPIA OF RABELAISIAN PIQUANCY

Alessio Riva for *Corso Italia*



Triboulet, a “fool,” a juggler, a subversive trickster, falls from the sky and arrives meanwhile at Circo di Massenzio in Rome in 2032, where a crowd of his followers (including children and half-wild animals) receive him among wandering fests of Dionysian exaltation, music, and frenetic songs. Triboulet stands as an Anti-Christ and *alter Christus*, mocked, praised, loved and hated, and finally sought after by various police forces, and in particular by the Vatican, which sees him as a threat of mockingly implemented destruction, as well as for his threats against other monotheistic religious institutions. But who really is Triboulet, and what did he come to earth to do? Rainer J. Hanshe answers us with a provocative book (his second novel), which is a blend of philosophy, history, myth, and religion

and is centered on a “Second Coming” anticipated for thousands of years, concretized in a utopia of Rabelaisian piquancy.

The New York writer and European by adoption demonstrates that he knows very well the “hot” topics and destructive *aporias* of contemporary society, as well as the need, and therefore the expectation, of a joyously anarchic diverse society, led by a charismatic and mocking leader, freed from canons and secular beliefs.

Explicit references to Nietzsche and his *Übermensch* as a moral liberator, with virtuosic literary references to Dante’s *Inferno* and the cinematography of Fellini and especially of Pasolini, serve the will of the writer, who succeeds in full, to goad and shock the reader, overturning the canons of institutionalized respectability (in particular of the erotic). However, surprisingly, the multiple anti-religious and anti-institutional barbs, which in the novel have been cast in the direction of Catholicism (conceived only as an institution and not always understood in its real human and cultural problematics), are not accompanied by a similar attention to the tragically active forms of fanaticism in our time and whose lethal connotations can not be unknown to the nations of 2032.

Hanshe’s style is original, tough, strong, ironic, but at the same time classical and noble, witty and never dull, in fact rich with slang and polyglot eruptions.

A utopian and fantastic journey that will surely make readers reflect, engaging them in the intellectual pathos of this abdication. Being a true, singular abdication, it pushes our whole civilization, our traditions, and our values, to be subverted.

Let us emphasize the distinguished work of the Italian publication and of the translator Alessandra Puggelli, who maintains intact the dramatic, and at the same time histrionic and parodic spirit of the novel.

Original article, a review of the Italian translation of *The Abdication*:
<http://www.oliofficina.it/corso-italia-7/1-abdicazione.htm>