



Association Pour la Recherche des Oeuvres de HEINZ HENGHES

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Henghes & Anais Nin
Extracts & correspondence

1937 / 38

Letter from Heinz Henghes to Anais Nin London 11/11/37

Dear Anais – Thank you for your letter. I was very glad to have it - having begun to wonder. Your letter was very sweet and made me feel again just how much you mean to me and how strongly you affect me. There are 2 things tho? One is that your influence is very good for me – since solely to see you does something to me that brings my thoughts on a more worthwhile plane. The second is that I don't think you were right to “close up” if the reason is, as you say, your fears for me. You must let people make their own errors – because even if they are errors they are significant to those who make them. Besides – ours would not have been an error, - this aside from that neither you nor any other person can destroy me. – and besides – we are not at the end of our destinies yet. I still ask nothing and I still wait for nothing, - but I still have a feeling.....

It was not Maya – nor was it clairvoyance. It is meeting myself & so saying the things that are in my memory. I am not this way with anyone else and never have been. At most I can be intuitive with others, feel their difficulties, - but not, as with you, their normalcies. Even if you don't like my saying that we are alike, emotionally twins, say that we swing to the same rhythm somehow. To me the experience you is a very normal thing, the only totally natural thing I have known. A bientot Anais.

If you need to destroy the object we brought into being by calling it Maya, - do, - try, - Do you believe it locked into the vault – by that name?

London will be as good for you as it is for me. You must work here, there is nothing else possible, and work to me means the self coming into play, not the mechanical activity of work. Its being alone, having something to pit myself against that is in the air and comes with the aloneness. I have not seen London. It is a mute background of no distinct shape and all the color and the forms of mountains lie in myself. You will like it and be happy here, - and I think – will – for the first time feel an active, creative freedom. Find an expression from self.

I have met lots of interesting, constructive people who will please you. Ozenfant, Gabo, Nicholson, Calder, Hepworth, John Read etc. etc. This verbal muteness means more than the violent articulation and predatory seeking of –(any name you like)-. Am giving an exhibition in the London Galleries this spring and am now working again, at last, Finished a slate relief and started an abstract composition. Have done no writing nor sent anything out for lack of typewriter and money – being very broke. Life is expensive here and my means are insufficient, so I hope to sell something and am doing my best to fix my studio so that I dare ask people to come see me. It's a small, architecturally depressing room which will look better tho when I have a number of sculptures in it. People are very hospitable here and so I am not alone unless I want to be. If I write anything I'll send it you.

So glad to see “Mon Journal” is coming out. I shall get a copy. When do you think the Maya volume will come out? I am, of course, very curious to see it.

It does not surprise me to hear that Reichel is going mad. He seemed that way to me when I saw him in Paris, unfortunately it is a madness which makes him unhappy. I feel that physical labor in the country would bring him back, but no use trying to

make him do it. He told me a frighteningly disconnected tale one night about the eyes of fish and made me feel so sorry for him that I responded to his plea not to leave him alone and brought him home. There he became suddenly nasty and offensive. He hurt me greatly because I had believed in his loneliness. The only thing I have from Paris is you, Anais. I do hope you come here soon and that we can live things together here, like on the petite isle. I still have the boat tickets, looking like something from Stendhal.

Why don't you give Hugo my address, - if he comes over before you he can get in touch with me if he likes.

Do write to me soon, not as far off as last time, and I will write too and tell you my feelings about things more than I have done this time.

Love

H

7 Wentworth Studios, Manresa Rd, SW3

Letter from Heinz Henghes to Anais Nin London 14/03/38

HENGHES 8 Wentworth Studios, Manresa Road, London S.W.3 Flaxman 5048
14.3.38

My dear Anais, I have not replied to your letter earlier for various reasons, chiefly because my mind has not been very clear since I have a very hard struggle here and am so much taken up with material things. Also I have been thinking about you and trying to discover you further. As you may know, abstract thought is relatively impossible, that is to say- all the thinking one does is in a sense a safety measure. We think in order to know and knowing is a means to an attitude toward the thing we thought about that will permit us to deal thus and thus with it. Although this sounds like a contradiction in terms, I am inclined to believe that we may be able to feel abstractly, but not think.

I permit to my argument my disappointment at your not coming to London. I did not come here because you were going to come here also, - but I felt about your coming here before I left Paris, and in a sense London has for me something to do with you. What I expected, I don't know and do not care to pursue since it would now be fruitless,

You are to me now much more Lillith than I had thought once. I have become an abstraction to you and in that sense there has been a betrayal between us. I do not feel that I, (the enormously personal phantasy that is part of yourself,) exists any longer. How am I to know if you have relegated me alongside with the other, each tremendously self important I's, to the locked safe. Possibly that I has become a volume of neatly typed upon paper. At this moment I do not feel that what remains alive of me in you grips also into my own lifestream. It is as though that had become

matter, like digested food lives on in one, that I am now immortal only in the pragmatic sense in which death does not exist because even a casual motion is immutable. But from this thing, ME which demands its own pragmatism, you have withdrawn the way in which I could continue to eat you.

Were we materialists we would have the right to say to each other that all this is being precious but we are that weird form of mirage,- sensitive people, predatory beasts who gorge on meaning. We have managed to contradict Aristophanes, ("You can't walk into the same river twice.") We walk constantly in new rivers, from second to second, but we do not relinquish the old river, we engulf it and sop it up with our being. We are perpetually pregnant with the rivers, the cities, the continents and worlds we have swallowed,- but I am falling in love with poetry here and so I shall leave this

So we are not being precious. We fulfill ourselves, we live up to our birthright, the promise that you Anais and I Heinz found between us as our monster child, our delightful Humunculus on the afternoon we met. But there is the Liana in our being.... I shall see you again, perhaps soon since I am coming to Paris when K returns there, (she is momentarily in Italy) and when I find the money somehow. I wonder if you will understand this letter also!

Your dead greet you.

Love
Heinz

Extracts from The Journals of Anais Nin

The Sculptor Henghes says to me: 'When I was poor and worked in restaurants, I thought and felt like those I worked with'. I envy him. When I was poor and worked as a model and as a mannequin, I never became like the others. I remained myself. I played roles, but I remained myself." ...
"Hans (sic) Henghes sends me a letter with a rock crystal. 'It is the first time I live something pure, Anais. I feel I can see something new in my work. I was nauseated by the world, and weak, and lost. But not any longer.' He went from his visit to me to the Princess de San Faustino, with my *House of Incest* under his arm. She read the book, bought it, wrote me a letter: 'I want to know you.' She is coming tomorrow.

...

H.H. brings me a green beetle with a gold-rust stomach. Two poems. We were sitting at a café. A group of workmen came in on a picnic. A huge woman unloaded her basket beside us, on our table. I said to H.H., laughing 'why didn't you tell me you had invited another woman for lunch? I feel *de trop*.' 'There is nothing between us' said H.H. 'She is just a very old friend'.

Brief further references in the Journals include a mention of going to the 'Deux Maggots' with Andre Breton and Henghes and again of Henghes visiting in March 1938.