

Fata Morgana

Should one attempt to judge what Peter Schreiner's *Fata Morgana* intends to do in a single sentence, then the title of the first division of Martin Heidegger's *Time and Being* would be rather fitting: "The Interpretation of Da-sein in terms of Temporality and the Explication of time as the Transcendental Horizon of the Question of Being." The film's three protagonists are occupied 140-minutes long with no less than the question of the meaning of existence. In other words, they are busy with a question for which the enlightened, secular Modern era has no understanding.

However, not in the sense of an ontological existential analysis, but rather, an experiment whose parameters Schreiner reveals right away in the first take. It shows the protagonists as three figures in a landscape. Awad Elkish rises to speak: "People had to find a point of reference or a foothold, and that, already, is a creative process." The sentence is not directed at the other actors, or at himself; it passes by the camera, to an undefined nowhere, addresses a place where the director could be located, the crew, or simply the continuation of the visible landscape—the desert, whose function in the experiment is clarified by Awad's next statement: "The space is cleared out."

In fact, the cleared-out, deserted, empty spaces of the geological and industrial deserts in *Fata Morgana* could be interpreted as symbols of the search for meaning. In the sense of Heidegger, they would at least identify a spatial turning away from that improper "Dasein's flight before itself," which arises in taking care of everyday business. The interpretation is contradicted by the fact that the camera and microphone persistently emphasize the concrete, material presence of the empty spaces: Perhaps time is the transcendental horizon for the question of being, but in Peter Schreiner's film, it can only be posed in the here and now of the lived moment. (*Vrääth Öhner*)