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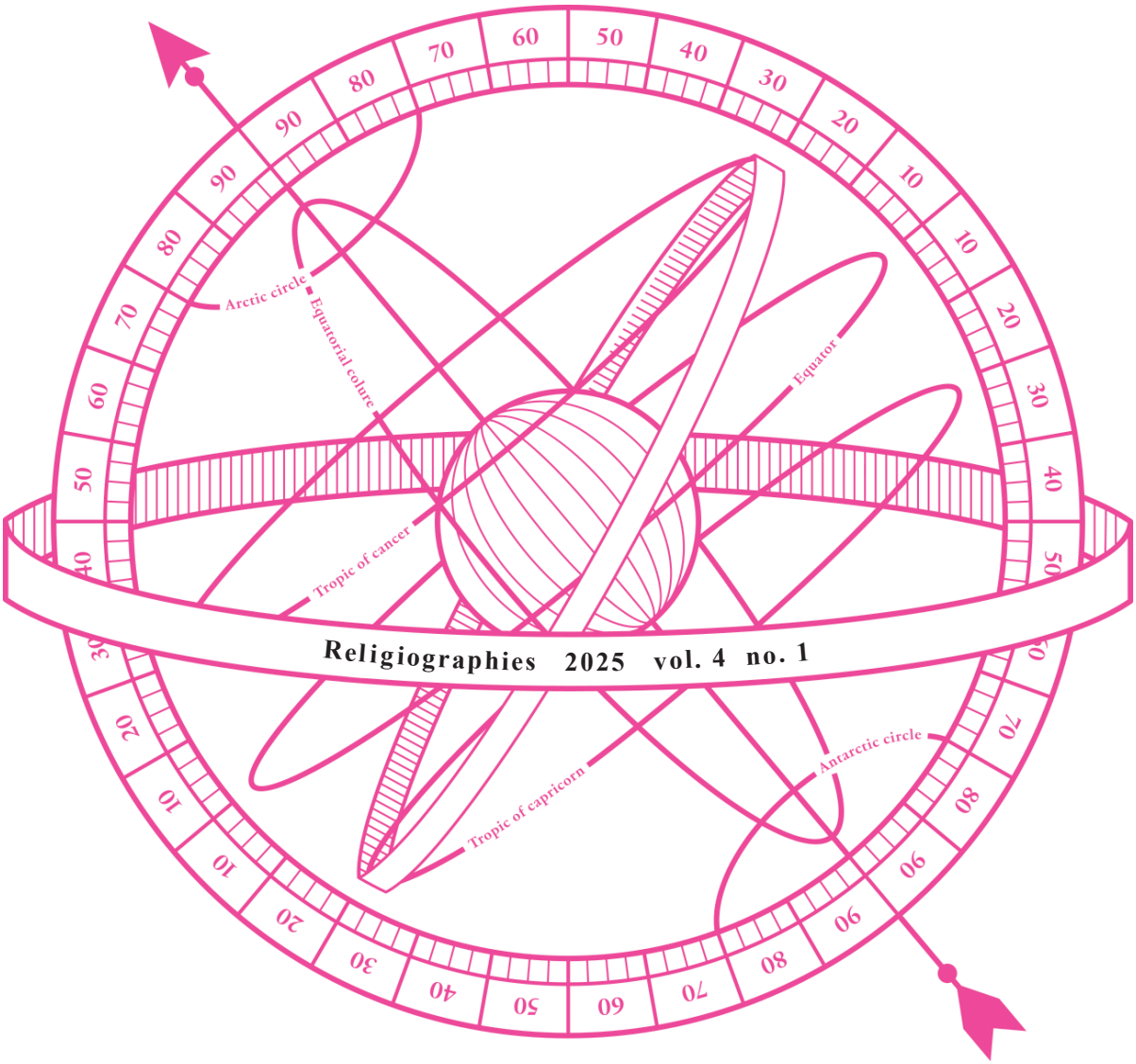

Special Issue
"The Eranos Experience: Spirituality and the Arts
in a Comparative Perspective"
edited by
Wouter J. Hanegraaff

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Editorial board

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Editorial

Eranos and the Arts

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Perhaps we should start thinking about the "study of religion" not as a science but as an art. The foundations for such a distinction can be distilled from the opening pages of Hans-Georg Gadamer's classic study of hermeneutics, *Wahrheit und Methode*:

> The logical self-reflection that accompanied the development of the humanities in the nineteenth century is dominated entirely by the model of the natural sciences. Just a glance at the history of the word *Geisteswissenschaft* [literally: science of spirit] already makes this clear, insofar as only in its plural form does this word acquire the meaning familiar to us. The *Geisteswissenschaften* so clearly understand themselves by analogy to the natural sciences that the idealistic echo implicit in the concept of *Geist* [spirit] fades into the background . . . But the real problem that the *Geisteswissenschaften* pose for our thinking is that one does not adequately capture their nature if one measures them by the yardstick of a progressive knowledge of lawlike regularity [*Gesetzmäßigkeit*].[1]

As can be seen from this passage, the problematics of understanding and misunderstanding—the central topic of hermeneutics—already begins with the translation of key terminology into English. Our common term *humanities* (although it actually does not contain a reference to "sciences") would have to be translated into German as *Menschwissenschaften*, whereas the formulation that is actually used (*Geisteswissenschaften*) would be rendered in English as "sciences of spirit." But the entire point of Gadamer's argument, as announced in the final sentence of the passage above, is precisely that the humanities should *not* be seen as "sciences"—with "explanation" as their objective—but rather as disciplines for cultivating the art of understanding.

If we look at Eranos from such a perspective, we can draw a rather straightforward conclusion. Those famous and less famous scholars who used to gather in Ascona, to discuss the meaning of religious or spiritual symbols and mythologies, should not actually be labeled "scientists." In German (the predominant language at Eranos next to French), they would be called *Wissenschaftler*—a common term for covering practitioners of both the humanities *and* the natural sciences, but one that is actually quite hard to translate. *Wissenschaft* means literally the business of knowing (*wissen*) or, at least, of trying to know. Scholars of religion or spirituality in pursuit of such knowledge were cultivating the art of interpretation. The typical Eranos scholar was expected to provide learned exegetical *commentaries* on specific texts, symbolic systems, or mythological narratives. Those who achieved the greatest fame were precisely those who excelled most brilliantly in the skillful art of making their audiences feel that, behind the external surface of mere historical or cultural artefacts made by human beings, hints or fragments could be glimpsed of a deeper spiritual reality, suggestive of a *gnōsis* concerned with *ta onta*—"the things that really are," often referred to as "the Sacred." No one has expressed this point more eloquently than Gershom Scholem:

> The wondrous concave mirror of philological criticism makes it possible for the people of today first and most purely to receive

1 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1986), 9–10. My translation differs from the standard version by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised ed. (London: Continuum, 1989), 3–4.

> a glimpse, in the legitimate orders of commentary, of that mystical totality of the system, whose existence, however, vanishes in the very act of being projected onto historical time.[2]

Mutatis mutandis, I would like to suggest that these lines also happen to capture what modernist art was largely all about. Perhaps its most central concern was to provide glimpses (through visual artefacts such as painting or sculpture, literary novels, poems, or music) of some enduring "mystical totality" that was believed to be hidden behind the fleeting surface of external events and the natural world. In the very earliest attempt at defining "modernity," published in 1863, Charles Baudelaire defined its essence in terms of a deep tension between the "the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent" and "the eternal and the immovable."[3] Today it seems perfectly evident that such a search for the spiritual in art (I'm obviously referring to Kandinsky's famous treatise),[4] or perhaps for the spiritual perceived *through* art, goes to the heart of the modernist project in literature, music, or painting and sculpture. I want to suggest that this is not just true for artists such as Kandinsky or Mondriaan or Hilma af Klint, who were explicit about their debt to esotericism or occultism. It is even true for many others who did not look to such sources for inspiration—or did not mention them—but were still compelled into similar directions, simply in reaction to the course of modernization itself. Thus in a study of the modern novel, Joseph Bottum points to a development whose impact was felt not just by writers or poets but also, I want to suggest, by scholars connected to the Eranos meetings:

> As modernity progressed . . . the thick inner world of the self increasingly came to seem ill-matched with the impoverished outer world, stripped of all the old enchantments that had made exterior objects seem meaningful and important, significant in themselves. This is what we mean by *the crisis of the self*: Why does anything matter, what could be important, if meaning is invented, coming *from* the self rather than *to* the self? The novel . . . was uniquely positioned as an art form to present a vivid picture of that crisis.[5]

If a sense of inherent enchantment seemed to be vanishing from the external world in an age of rapid acceleration driven by money and machines, then *meaning* would have to reside somehow in the internal world. The external world was now dominated by *science* and its search for technical explanations in terms of lawlike material regularities. Exploration of the internal world would therefore have to be based upon something entirely different—it required the skillful *art* of establishing contact with realities, or dimensions of reality (that is to say, of making their presence perceptible either directly or indirectly) that could not be explained in technical-materialist terms but that could nevertheless be understood by a sensitive audience. *Understanding* (again, as distinct from explanation) means the human act of interpretation by which a message is received or perceived *as* a message;[6] and any message, by definition, must have its source somewhere. Modernist art was based on the gamble that meaning is not just a strictly

2
Gershom Scholem, "A Birthday Letter from Gershom Scholem to Zalman Schocken," in David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 215–16 (my translation).

3
Charles Baudelaire, "Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne," *Le Figaro* (november 26, 29, and december 3, 1863); repr. in Charles Baudelaire, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 3, *L'art romantique* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1885). See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Protecting the Sacred after (Post)Modernity," *Creative Reading* (blog), March 6, 2021, www.wouterjhanegraaff.blogspot.com.

4
Wassily Kandinski, *On the Spiritual in Art* (New York City: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1946).

5
Joseph Bottum, *The Decline of the Novel* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2019), 12.

6
Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Hermes, Hermeneutics & the Humanities: Listening to the Sources in Esotericism Research," *Creative Reading* (blog), August 22, 2024, www.wouterjhanegraaff.blogspot.com.

human construct (as typically assumed by its "post"-modern successors in the age of popular mass culture) but resides in the human act of *re*constructing a reality that, somehow, must be more than just human or other than human.[7]

Artists might speak here of "inspiration," which means literally the reception of a spiritual influx from a source outside themselves that infuses their work with meaning and energy. The Eranos meetings, for their part, were famously concerned with *das Verlangen nach Ergriffenheit*, the longing to be "seized," "grasped," or "captured" (that is, indeed, "inspired") by something from the other side of silence.[8] To be sure: from a hermeneutical perspective as defined by Gadamer (who, interestingly, never seems to have been considered as a speaker at Eranos) there could be no such thing as unfiltered or unmediated understanding. Even if the medium was not the message, still there could be no message without a medium, some type of mediation, whether it took the form of a poem, a piece of music, a painting, a novel, a symbol, a myth—or the lecture of a professor addressing his audience about such topics at the edge of a beautiful lake. Nevertheless, the *desire*, impossible as it might be, for some kind of "immediacy beyond interpretation"[9] (some kind of sign or message coming directly from the beyond) is certainly what animated famous speakers such as Eliade or Corbin and their audiences at Eranos. Even Scholem (who was far more of a historian and philologist than those two friends and colleagues of his) admitted that *all* his scholarly work, "from the first day to the present" was living ultimately from the hope, paradoxical as it might be, for "a true message from the Mountain—for that most trivial, tiniest shift of history that makes truth erupt from the illusion of 'development.' "[10]

At the same time, and very importantly, the famous "spirit of Eranos" turned out to be perfectly resistant against the spiritual dogmatism of those who claimed to *know*. For several years prior to 1933, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn had been inviting modern occultists and theosophists such as Alice Bailey, who claimed to be in direct contact with an Ascended Master called "the Tibetan," and who therefore believed she was in a position to explain with exact precision how everything worked at all visible and invisible levels of reality. If such forms of esoteric fundamentalism were eventually rejected, I suggest this was for a simple reason. Modern forms of occultism such as Theosophy or Anthroposophy are profoundly *explanatory* systems of thought that were trying actively to compete with secular science. By contrast, the classic Eranos approach was never explanatory but always profoundly hermeneutic. As I formulated previously in this journal, "whereas explanatory approaches are driven by a desire for ultimate epistemic closure, Eranos was motivated by hopes and experiences of *disclosure*."[11]

This brings me back to the claim with which I began this short introduction. The typical Eranos professors, with all their learned discourses steeped in historical and philological scholarship, were actually not practicing a "science of religion." Many of them could not even be described precisely as "historians of religion," although that label would become popular in the wake of Eliade's successful tenure at the University of Chicago.[12] But neither were they speaking as esoteric teachers who felt they were in a position to tell their audience or

7
For this way of distinguishing between modernism and "post"-modernism, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Generous Hermeneutics: Hans Thomas Hakl and Eranos," in "Hans Thomas Hakl and His Library," ed. Marco Pasi, special issue, *Religiographies* 2, no. 1 (2023): 59–75; idem, "Protecting the Sacred"; and analogous argumentation in Bottum, *Decline of the Novel*.

8
See also Ricoer's "désir d'être interpellé" (discussion in Hanegraaff, "Generous Hermeneutics," 60–64). As regards "silence," my primary reference here is to the famous statement by Pascal (echoed in a less famous but impressive poem by Nietzsche), ". . . lost in the infinite immensity of those spaces that I do not know and that do not know me, I am afraid . . ." (*Pensées*, vol. 3 [Paris: Port-Royal, 1670], 205; cf. Hanegraaff, "Generous Hermeneutics," 3 note 4).

9
Helmut Zander, "Die 'Ergriffenen' von Eascona: Wissenschaft und Spiritualität im Eranos-Kreis," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 271 (2001): 68.

10
Scholem, "A Birthday Letter," 216.

11
Hanegraaff, "Generous Hermeneutics," 73.

12
For this point, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chap. 4, esp. 277–314.

their readers what they were supposed to believe. Contrary to all these perspectives, their scholarly practice consisted in the hermeneutic *art* of finding meaning in the world and giving expression to it, or finding meaning in the world *by* giving expression to it. Their way of doing so consisted in learned exegetical commentaries on religious or spiritual texts that were held to have some mythical or symbolic dimension. This particular method was specific to their art, the art of Eranos scholarship. It required a mastery of specific techniques (such as philology or psychological analysis), quite similar to the technical methods used by painters or writers or composers. Although they certainly were trying to "explain" all kinds of things to their audience, like all teachers do, their concern was not with explanation in the more specific reductionist sense defined by Gadamer as central to what "science" is all about. Quite similar to visual artists, they were trying to *show* their audience or their readers what they had seen or how they saw it. They were trying to *share* what they had come to understand or how they understood it. They were *inviting* them into meaningful imaginal worlds that they had been exploring in their research and to which they were trying to give expression to the best of their abilities. Some were much better at this than others, for what they were doing required talent, just as with other kinds of artists. They were not teaching an alternative science but, rather, an alternative *to* science.

From this perspective, there is nothing surprising about the convergence between Eranos and the Arts that is the topic of this special issue, based on a conference organized by Francesco Piraino, Marco Pasi, and Andreas Kilcher at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice from November 17–19, 2022. At least since the publication of *The Red Book*, it has been evident that Carl Gustav Jung was not just a psychologist but a visual artist as well, as shown in this issue by Sébastien Mantegari Bertorelli. The founder and organizer of Eranos herself, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, was also a remarkably impressive visual artist. As shown by Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini, she produced a *Blue Book* of her own. As for the most frequent speaker at Eranos, Adolf Portmann (who spoke no fewer than thirty-six times), he was a biologist with a strong visual sense who managed to turn the study of living nature from a scientific enterprise into a profoundly hermeneutic art—at least, this is how I would read the contribution by Philipp Kuster. Arguably the most famous among all Eranos speakers, Mircea Eliade, was a writer of initiatic novels who discussed modern art as a possible vehicle for the experience of the sacred. De Maeyer discusses this engagement with special attention to surrealism. Finally, three contributions to this special issue are focused on literature. Agnès Parmentier provides a general and somewhat sobering discussion about all the writers who came to Eranos, whether as speakers or as members of the audience, in her examination of their ambiguous status in this particular context. Gísli Magnússon explores a deeply personal novel by Naja Marie Aidt against the background of Eranos. He shows how her personal process of grieving the death of her son consisted in a search for understanding that was sharply opposed to any esoteric or occultist attempt at "explanation." Charles M. Stang uses concepts from Henry Corbin to interpret the "imaginal geography" of two recent novel trilogies by Philip Pullman, with special attention to the significance of the

North and the Orient. Finally, the Heterography by Martina Mazzotta focuses on two further artists important to Eranos, Luigi Pericle and Herbert Read. These eight contributions are no more than a small tip of the proverbial iceberg. They should be taken as an incentive for further and deeper explorations into the imaginal terrain where Eranos scholarship meets the arts.

The *Blue Book* of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Founder of Eranos[1]

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Abstract

The artworks of Eranos founder Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962) can be traced to two specific styles and periods. The first phase was essential for a series of "Meditation Plates," painted between 1926–1927 and 1934, and particularly during her collaboration with the theosophist and esotericist Alice Ann Bailey (1880–1949) for the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1930–1932), which preceded the creation of the Eranos Conferences in Ascona in 1933. The second phase concerns a collection of "Visions," arranged in twelve blue-bound albums and drawn between 1934 and 1938: these are the crucial years of the beginning of Fröbe-Kapteyn's cultural enterprise, Eranos. They also mark the beginning of her enduring intellectual relationship with psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), who was one of the main sources of inspiration at the Eranos Conferences. That period also coincides with her research on iconographic material for which Jung provided the impetus, which in turn led to the creation of the Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism (now at the Warburg Institute). In this contribution, written from the perspective of the Eranos Foundation, the authors trace the origins of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's interest in symbolism, describe her artistic corpus, which we rubricate under the name "Blue Book," and summarize the exhibition and publishing projects to date devoted to her pictorial work.

Centro Studi di Civiltà e Spiritualità Comparate
fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus

Introduction

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) was one of the main sources of inspiration at the Eranos Conferences. The publication of the *Liber Novus* or *The Red Book*[2] and, more recently, *The Art of C.G. Jung*[3] and the *Black Books*[4] highlighted the conjunction between his personal life path, his imaginative world, and the construction of his scientific thought. Until now, some allusions by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962), the creator of the Eranos symposia,[5] about the connection between existence, fantasy, and creativity seem less comprehensible. For example, she stated, "I beg your pardon if I am speaking through images! This is the way my mind works."[6] And again: "The story of Eranos can be found in an unwritten book, which I often leaf through, read, examine, and compare—I also look at the pictures, since there are many of them in this book—and search for the connections that form the whole in a meaningful and unifying way. The overall figure, the pattern that becomes visible, is so twisted and intertwined with the pattern of my life that it is indeed difficult to separate them"[7] (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn and Carl Gustav Jung near the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, in Ascona-Moscia, in August 1935. Ph. Margarethe Fellerer. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Fröbe-Kapteyn's words have been now clarified by the unpublished anthology of her artworks, which we rubricate under the name "Blue Book," traceable to two distinct styles and periods: the "Meditation Plates" phase (c. 1926–1934) and the "Visions" phase (1934–1938).

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's Interest in Art and Symbolism[8]

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn was born on October 19, 1881, to Dutch parents, who lived at 7 South Villas in Bloomsbury, London.

Her father, Albertus Philippus Kapteyn (or Kapteijn, 1848–1927),

1
An early version of this contribution, expanded and updated here, was previously published as Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini, "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962): A Woman's Individuation Process through Images at the Origins of the Eranos Conferences," *ARAS Connections: Image and Archetype* 4 (2020): 1–18. A further version of that study was then released, in Italian, as Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini, "L'arte di Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, fondatrice di Eranos," *Rivista di Psicologia Analitica* 108, no. 56 (2024): 281–303 and as "L'arte di Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, fondatrice di Eranos," in Veronica Caciolli, ed., *Arte, mistica, comunità 2*, 2nd ed. (Milan: Postmedia Srl, 2024), 34–44 (Atti del convegno tenuto al Museo delle Culture, Lugano, 11 e 12 febbraio 2022); a revised Italian/English bilingual edition was then reissued as Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini, "The *Blue Book* of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Founder of Eranos," in *Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artista-ricercatrice*, ed. Raphael Gygax (Locarno: Museo Casa Rusca; Ascona: Fondazione Eranos; Bellinzona: Casagrande, in collaboration with Kunsthalle Mainz, 2024), 44–51, volume published at the occasion of the exhibition *Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artista-ricercatrice*, Museo Casa Rusca, Locarno, 8 agosto 2024-12 gennaio 2025; the current version, which originated from these earlier contributions and now significantly expanded, will be republished in the volume by Riccardo Bernardini, *The Art of the Self: The* Blue Book *of Eranos Founder Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn*, foreword by Fabio Merlini, preface by Murray Stein, afterword by Her Royal Highness Irene of The Netherlands, Princess of Orange-Nassau and Lippe-Biesterfeld, Zurich Lecture Series 2025 (Asheville, NC: Chiron, 2025).

2
Carl Gustav Jung, *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2009).

3
Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Ulrich Hoerni, Thomas Fischer, and Bettina Kaufmann, eds., *The Art of C. G. Jung* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018).

4
Carl Gustav Jung, *The Black Books*, ed. Sonu Shamdasani, 7 vols. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2020).

5
For a panoramic view of Eranos, see Hans Thomas Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos: Unbekannte Begegnungen von Wissenschaft und Esoterik; Eine alternative Geistesgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Bretten: Scientia nova-Neue Wissenschaft, 2001), later revised and expanded as *Eranos: An Alternative Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013). On Jung's involvement in the Eranos project and a bibliography on the subject (updated 2011), see more specifically, Riccardo Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos: Il progetto della psicologia complessa* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2011). For a list of Eranos Foundation

in addition to being an avid photographer and friend of entrepreneur and photography pioneer George Eastman (1854–1932),[9] was a mechanical engineer and worked as a director of the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company in London from 1880 to 1900. He was in charge of supervising the installation of Westinghouse materials for the Trans-Siberian Railway, later becoming vice-president of Westinghouse's activities for the entire European area. Son of Gerrit Jacobus Kapteijn (1812–1879), boarding school owner, and Elisabeth Cornelia Koomans (1814–1896), among his fifteen brothers were theologians, engineers, scientists, and also the famous astronomer Jacobus Cornelius Kapteyn (1851–1922).[10] In 1909, Albertus Kapteyn was also the first chairman of the aviation department of the Royal Dutch Aviation Association.[11]

Fröbe-Kapteyn's mother, Geertruida (Truus) Agneta Kapteyn-Muysken (1855–1920), was instead involved in various movements for women's emancipation and social renewal.[12] Daughter of Antoine Charles Muysken (1803–1868), notary and mayor of Hillegom, and Constantia Susanna Commelin (1810–1864), she was the youngest in a large family in Hillegom: twelve children were born before her, six of whom died in infancy. She grew up with two brothers and four sisters. Her mother died when she was nine, her father when she was thirteen.[13] She was friends with Dutch pacifist and anarchist Bartholomeus (Bart) de Ligt (1883–1938);[14] anarchist communist theorist Pyotr Alekseevič Kropotkin (1842–1921), who, based on her writings and personality, told her: "You are a great anarchist without knowing it";[15] socialist politician and later anarchist Ferdinand Jacobus Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846–1919);[16] lawyer and anarchist feminist activist Clara Gertrud Wichmann (1885–1922);[17] and playwright and socialist George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950).[18] Through family connections, Fröbe-Kapteyn in her younger years had the opportunity to spend time with Ellen Key (1849–1926),[19] the Swedish writer and feminist whom she deeply admired: "She is a great woman—Kapteyn wrote at the age of 20 to her friend Marie Charlotte Carmichael Stopes (1880–1958),—the greatest of our time."[20]

Fröbe-Kapteyn's parents were married in Haarlem on December 21, 1880. In 1881, the young couple moved to London, where Kapteyn was appointed general manager of the Westinghouse Brake & Signal Company. Olga ("Olly") Kapteyn was the eldest of three children. The second child, May (1883–1972), lived in Holland and—after her amicable separation from art historian Jan Kalf (1873–1954), Chief Restorer of Dutch churches—in Paris, where she was active in the resistance during World War II. She had no children.[21] The third son, Albert (1886–1964), graduated in mechanical engineering in Zurich; enamored with the United States, he moved there soon after marrying. Beyond a temporary move to The Hague (where their parents owned a house, later sold) from 1937 to December 1939 for professional reasons (he was the European representative for United Aircraft, conducting business at Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, mostly with KLM), Albert remained in the US permanently. He had two children, Polly Kapteyn Brown and James Kapteyn.[22]

If we wanted to pinpoint the origins of Olga Kapteyn's interest in art, we would probably have to turn our gaze far back to the very beginnings of her personal history. She herself acknowledged in fact

publications over the years, see Nancy Cater and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., "Eranos: Its Magical Past and Alluring Future; The Spirit of a Wondrous Place," *Spring: A Journal of Archetype and Culture* 92 (2015). For a list of the Eranos *Yearbooks*, lecturers, and contents, see Fabio Merlini and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., *Eranos in the Mirror: Views on a Moving Heritage/Eranos allo specchio: Sguardi su una eredità in movimento* (Ascona: Aragno*Eranos Ascona, 2019) and, further updated, in *Eranos Yearbook* 76 (2022, 2023, 2024).

6
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "An Attempt at Definition and Description of Eranos and of the *Eranos-Jahrbücher*" (unpublished typescript, 1953; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

7
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag" (unpublished typescript, 1939; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

8
The main biographical information on Fröbe-Kapteyn is contained to date in the unpublished works by Gerhard Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte" (unpublished typescript, 1995–1996; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), and Catherine Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn" (unpublished typescript, undated; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), as well as in the aforementioned works by Hakl and Bernardini. Information about her early years comes from the correspondence with Marie Stopes (now at the British Library), which we were able to access thanks to the transcripts kindly provided by Maite Karssenberg in April 2024, based on her research for her forthcoming work on the life and work of Geertruida Kapteyn-Muysken.

9
Albertus Kapteyn wrote a number of articles for various trade journals such as *Lux* in 1914 and 1915 and *Focus* in 1917. (Augustus J. Veenendaal, Jr., "Kapteijn, Albertus Philippus [1848-1927]," in *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland*, http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn2/kapteijnap).

10
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 1–4.

11
Veenendaal, "Kapteijn, Albertus Philippus (1848-1927)."

12
Veenendaal, "Kapteijn, Albertus Philippus (1848-1927)," 4–6. Geertruida Agneta Kapteyn-Muysken suffered from psychological problems and went through a number of hospitalizations; she lived in a time before the advent of Psychology and, for this reason, as Fröbe-Kapteyn recognized, she could not receive proper treatment. (See Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vision Meine Mutter" [unpublished typescript, February 15–27, 1957; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia], 5). Kapteyn-Muysken

that her predisposition for iconography and symbolism could be traced back to her childhood years, when her father Albertus was processing photographic film in the darkroom of their in their Bloomsbury home, under the curious gaze of his daughter.[23]

Every Sunday evening, moreover, Albertus used to read to his three children large, richly illustrated volumes: in particular, Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and a voluminous edition of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Olly, May, and Albert listened spellbound as he read to them aloud and recounted the characters. This custom went on for years and years. They grew up with these two books, fascinated and "filled" by the fantastic and compelling illustrations in them: "They were our inner world of images," Fröbe-Kapteyn still vividly recalled in the last years of her life.[24]

Fröbe-Kapteyn's predisposition for symbolic art can also be traced back to her schooling and, in general, to the cultural environment in which she lived. She attended the North London Collegiate, a renowned girls' school open to children from the age of 4. Even at a very young age, she also had the opportunity to visit important European museums with her family: for example, in Paris, in 1899, the Louvre (she was particularly impressed by the works of Rubens and Rembrandt), and Notre-Dame. A portrait by Willem Witsen (1860–1923), the famous Dutch painter and photographer associated with the Amsterdam Impressionism movement, depicts a teenage Olly and is still on display at Eranos today.

Beginning in 1901, after moving to Zurich with her family because of Albert's work on January 18, 1900,[25] Kapteyn began working every morning in the studio of the chief draughtsman at the Kunstgewerbeschule (School of Arts and Crafts or School of Applied Arts), from 9 a.m. to noon, also taking violin lessons. In addition, she devoted herself weekly to botanical drawing sessions. She was then Admitted to the Gewerbeschule (Drawing School) in early May 1901 and practiced intensive training in drawing for many hours a day, from 7 a.m. (with wake-up at 5:30 a.m.) to noon and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Alongside her training in drawing and tailoring, she also had the opportunity to listen to some university lectures on theoretical and clinical psychology. In 1904, she also worked four days a week in the metalworking department of a school of applied arts in Haarlem, where she learned everything she needed to know about metalworking—chiseling, hammering, firing, design, and welding—for her field. She became very skilled at sewing, embroidery, and jewelry making.

Among her many trips to Europe in those years, the trip to Florence helped imprint on her memory the magnificence of the art galleries, incomparable with anything else she had seen up to that time. During this period, she also traveled to the Swiss mountains with her father and brothers for strenuous mountaineering led by mountain guides. She was impressed by the majesty of the glaciers, with their peaks, crevasses, and seracs.[26] She also enjoyed the contemplative quiet of Lake Zurich, which she would experience again years later, on the shores of Lake Maggiore.

From 1906 to 1909, Kapteyn continued her education in art history at the University of Zurich. In 1908 she purportedly worked as a horsewoman in a circus[27] and, a skilled and trained skier,[28] she may

died on 5 September 1920 in a psychiatric institution in Arnhem. (Maite Karssenberg, "Muysken, Geertruida Agneta," in *Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland*, https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/Muysken).

13
Karssenberg, "Muysken, Geertruida Agneta."

14
Bart de Ligt and his wife Catharina Lydia (Ina) de Ligt-van Rossem—who signed the Eranos Guestbook in 1935—were portrayed by Margarethe Fellerer in a series of photographs, still held by the Eranos Foundation Archives.

15
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 5; Kropotkin spent some months in Cannobio, Ascona, and Locarno in 1908, 1909, 1911, and 1913. Cf. Hans Manfred Bock and Florian Tennstedt, "Raphael Friedeberg: Medico e anarchico ad Ascona," in *Monte Verità: Antropologia locale come contributo alla riscoperta di una topografia sacrale moderna*, Harald Szeemann, ed., (Locarno: Armando Dadò; Milano: Electa, 1978), 43.

16
Tjeu van den Berk, *In de ban van Jung: Nederlanders ontdekken de analytische psychologie* (Alblasserdam: Meinema, 2014), § 6: "De grote moeder en haar held. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881-1962)."

17
van den Berk, *In de ban van Jung.*

18
George Bernard Shaw visited Ascona in the 1920s, staying with the writer Emil Ludwig (1881–1948) (cfr. Theo Kneubühler, "Gli artisti, gli scrittori e il Canton Ticino (dal 1900 ad oggi)," in *Monte Verità*, ed. Szeemann, 176), who owned a property adjacent to Fröbe-Kapteyn's land.

19
See, e.g., Luisa Ceccarelli, "Ellen Key e la rete delle scuole nuove in europa (1899–1914)," (PhD diss., Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, 2020), 73.

20
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, July 26, 1901 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg). Stopes became a paleontologist and paleobotanist.

21
It seems that Fröbe-Kapteyn was never on particularly good terms with her sister May, whom she used to dismiss bluntly as a "communist" (Rudolf Ritsema, personal communication to Riccardo Bernardini, September 5, 2003, Ascona-Moscia). According to Fröbe-Kapteyn, the hatred that had always existed between the two was an expression of deep jealousy, since May was always their father's favorite, who had instead oppressed and underestimated Olga. May also acted as a barrier

have been among the first women to climb Mont Blanc.[29] In 1908, her parents returned to the Netherlands and Scheveningen became their home.[30]

On May 13, 1909, Kapteyn married flutist and conductor Iwan Fröbe (1880–1915), an Austro-Hungarian citizen but Slovenian by birth. The couple had met in Zurich while enjoying the winter sports they both loved.[31] Their wedding took place in London in a Dutch Reformed Church ceremony.[32]

After a brief stay in Munich, the Fröbe couple moved to Berlin in 1914.[33] Their acquaintance with writer André Jolles (1874–1946) was facilitated by their shared residence in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. Jolles had known the Kapteyn-Muysken family for a long time. One of his best friends, Jan Kalf, would marry Fröbe-Kapteyn's sister, May.[34] Jolles was a philologist and scholar of classical literature, an art lover, and a devotee of Italian culture: between 1894 and 1900, he resided in Florence, making the acquaintance of Aby Warburg (1866–1929). Jolles had created a cultural circle in Berlin that brought together writers, painters, and musicians. In their small wooden house on Hohenzollernstrasse, Iwan Fröbe used to delight those present with excellent chamber music.[35] In 1911, Jolles also founded a sewing circle, "The Needle." Fröbe-Kapteyn participated in this circle together with her close friend Annemarie Pallat (1875–1972), who like her lived in Wannsee with her husband, the archaeologist and educationalist Ludwig Pallat (1867–1946), co-founder and director of the Berlin Center for Education and Teaching and one of the leading reformers of art education in secondary schools.[36] Jolles loved to make women's dresses inspired by the fashion of ancient Greece: cuts were kept to a minimum and their beauty came almost exclusively from the play of the fabric's natural folds. Fröbe-Kapteyn embellished her sartorial creations with refined embroidery: one of her silk blouses with colorful embroidery was exhibited in 1916 as part of a textile exhibition at the Museum of Applied Arts in Zurich.[37]

Returning to Switzerland in April 1914, the Fröbe couple lived for about nine months in Gersau am Vierwaldstättersee, then moved to Zurich in December of that year.

With the declaration of war in July 1914, Iwan Fröbe, who had trained as a pilot, was enlisted as a military pilot in the Austro-Hungarian army. When he left home in May 1915, Fröbe-Kapteyn was convinced that she would not see him again until the end of the war. He passed away on September 11, 1915, during a training flight in a military plane,[38] but not without giving his wife twin daughters, Bettina Gertrude, dark-haired with her mother's dark eyes, and Jngeborg Helene, blonde with blue eyes, born in Zurich on May 3, 1915.[39]

After her husband's death, Fröbe-Kapteyn created in Zurich her own cultural circle, "La Table ronde."[40] Among others, she rubbed shoulders with Baron Hanns Henning von Voigt (1887–1969). Von Voigt, better known as Alastair, was an artist and esotericist with whom Fröbe-Kapteyn cultivated a lasting friendship.[41]

Fröbe-Kapteyn knew the Ticino area from her youth: she had already vacationed with her family in Bellagio, Como, and Pallanza by 1899.[42] On April 1, 1920, she returned to Ticino and spent her vacations first in Lugano and then in Porto Ronco, on the Swiss shores of Lake

between Olga and their father until his death (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Drei Zeichnungen" (unpublished typescript and drawings, March 23, 1934; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

22
Polly Kapteyn Brown, letter to William McGuire, undated (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). A few notes on Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn are included in the book by Polly Kapteyn Brown's son, Peter Falkenberg Brown, *Waking Up Dead and Confused is a Terrible Thing—Stories of Love, Life, Death & Redemption* (Gray, ME: World Community, 2020), 197 f.

23
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 7; William McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collecting the Past* (Princeton, NJ: Bollingen Series, Princeton University Press, 1982), 21; and Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 34.

24
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Mein Vater: Albertus Philippus Kapteyn; Vision" (unpublished typescript, February 1 and 5, 1957; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 8. The library of Casa Gabriella still holds the splendid edition of Jules Verne's *Vingt Mille Lieues sous les Mers*, illustrated with 111 drawings by Alphonse de Neuville and Édouard Riou (a pupil of Gustave Doré) (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, 1889); from the same series, i.e., the "Voyages extraordinaires par Jules Verne," are also held at Eranos *Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, undated); *Les enfants du Capitaine Grant: Voyage autour du monde* (Paris: Libraire Hachette, undated); *L'Île mystérieuse* (Paris: Libraire Hachette, undated); *Cinq Semaines en Ballon: Voyage de découverte en Afrique* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, undated [1890]; and *Les Indes-Noires* (Paris: J. Hetzel et Cie, undated).

25
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by Catherine McGilvray in June 2025); and Id., letter to Marie Stopes, January 24, 1901 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg).

26
See, e.g., Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, July 22, 1901. In August 1901, during a family holiday in the Blausee area of Kandersteg in the Canton of Bern, Kapteyn went on a series of glacier excursions that made a deep impression on her. "From the top of the mountain—she recalled—we slept in a shelter, got up at 2:30 in the morning, and left at 3:10, because 'if you leave later, the snow becomes too soft.' After two hours, we were at the foot of the glacier . . . and we started climbing, after tying ourselves together with ropes. How can you describe a glacier? It's a mass of ice that in some places looks like frozen waves, with huge cracks and crevasses, often seemingly bottomless,

Maggiore, a few kilometers from Ascona.[43] In 1920, Fröbe-Kapteyn was treated—perhaps with her father—at the Sanatorium Monte Verità with natural remedies for her gastritis, probably caused by poor nutrition during World War I, as the food available was not always of the best quality. She stayed at Casa Semiramis and boarded at Casa Anatta.[44]

In 1920 Fröbe-Kapteyn lived for a time at Casa Monte Tabor in Porto Ronco. She described to Stopes its garden full of mimosas, eucalyptus trees, camellias, and other tropical plants. About the area, she wrote to Stopes, "It is not as lonely as one would think, for Ascona is full of artists—poets, painters, philosophers—many of whom I know."[45] Although it had a large atelier of about 65 m², probably used by the previous tenants as a music room, Casa Tabor did not satisfy the new tenant, who soon set out to find a new home.[46]

In December 1921, Fröbe-Kapteyn moved to Villa Gabriella with her daughter Bettina in the hamlet of Moscia, near Ascona.[47] The old farm building had been purchased on October 12, 1920 by her father (at the time retired and residing in Scheveningen, The Hague) from the German ophthalmologist Ugo von Hoffmann (with whom he shared a passion for chess).[48] Hoffmann had probably lived there without practicing since about 1905. He had in turn bought Villa Gabriella one of Monte Verità's first settlers, Karl Vester (1879–1963), who had purchased "Villa Gabriella" in 1904 and left it in 1919 to move to a farm on Monte Verità.[49] The French writer André Germain (1882–1971), a former guest of Fröbe-Kapteyn's Zurich literary salon, for several years her "closest and most precious friend,"[50] and a friend of the Baron and banker Eduard von der Heydt (1882–1964),[51] had also lived there in the 1920s.[52] "To live in Casa Gabriella, yes; to live there with you, no," was Fröbe-Kapteyn's reply to her father when he asked her if she wished to share her new residence with him. She loved him very much, but with two strong personalities like theirs, it was also easy for them to clash frequently.[53]

The property of Villa Gabriella purchased by Albertus Kapteyn and Olga Fröbe was immense: it covered about four and a half hectares of mainly wooded land, which stretched towards the hills, in the direction of Arcegno and Monte Verità on the right and Ronco sopra Ascona on the left. The estate stretched out on both sides of the current cantonal road, with grounds in the areas of Moscia and Rive Belle (in the municipality of Ascona) and of Curafora and Gruppaldo (in the municipality of Ronco). The four-story Villa Gabriella stood directly on the lake, with a well-kept garden that still extends over three terraces sloping down from the road to the water. Olga Fröbe and Bettina lived on the lower floor of the house, which had a large kitchen and veranda, and on the first floor, which had bedrooms and a study, which is still the center of the building. The second and third floors, with bedrooms and mansard rooms, were reserved for their guests.[54]

Fröbe-Kapteyn obtained a residence permit in the municipality of Ronco sopra Ascona, issued by the Central Police Directorate in Bellinzona, on November 5, 1920.[55] She and her daughter Bettina became citizens of the Republic and Canton of Ticino, in the municipality of Ascona, fourteen years later, on January 10, 1934. She swore allegiance to her new homeland on January 30, 1934.[56]

of an intense blue. These waves and elevations are often raised by sharp, white peaks and folds, which are wonderful to see; the crevasses are often covered with a light layer of snow, so it is absolutely necessary to be tied together. On the way back to Kandersteg, "they saw many avalanches, similar to tremendous waterfalls." In the following days, they also reached Zermatt via the Gemmipass. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, August 1, 1901). On 31 March 1907, she wrote a postcard to her friend Johanna Westerdijk (1883–1961), who became a botanist and plant pathologist, from the San Gottardo Hospice (the letters were kindly provided to us by Karssenberg in April 2024).

27
As a young girl, during stays in Vienna, Kapteyn had arranged with the director of a circus to come every morning at 6 a.m. to practice as a horsewoman with a teacher; all this, of course, without her father's knowledge, who would not have appreciated such fantasies. (Cf. Ritsema-Gris, "*L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn*," 8; and Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Erster Abend . . ." (unpublished typescript, undated [prob. 1957–1958 ca.]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia, 6).

28
In the Eranos Foundation Archives there was a silver towel holder engraved with her name, as the winner of a ski race, a summer competition held in the Swiss canton of Grisons. (Cf. Ritsema-Gris, *op. cit.*, 8; see also and Sybille Rosenbaum-Kroeber, "Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," in Szeemann, *Monte Verità*, 121.) In the winter of 1906, she skied for several weeks in Engadine. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, January 19, January 31, and November 19, 1906). In 1907, besides skiing in St. Moritz, she has also enjoyed memorable ski touring trips with Norwegian skiers, climbing and descending challenging mountains, such as Piz Lucendro (2964 m) from the San Gottardo Pass (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, Spring 1907 [British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenberg]). In December 1907 and January 1908, she went skiing in Lenzerheide, stopping at the Alphütte Fops; in January 1909, she skied in the Rigi area. Here, together with Iwan, she was able to admire the "Nebelmeer" (sea of fog), which is particularly spectacular from the Rigi, giving the impression that one can walk on the sea, with the mountain peaks rising like islands (Eranos Foundation Archives).

29
McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collecting the Past*, 21.

30
Van den Berk, *In de ban van Jung*.

31
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 9.

32
See Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "My marriage" (unpublished typescript, undated [1945?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

At Casa Gabriella, Fröbe-Kapteyn spent a long period of "concentration discipline" (*siebenjährige Konzentrationsdisziplin*e)[57] lasting seven years, from 1920 to 1926, during which, in almost absolute solitude, she devoted herself—with only the company of Bettina and a servant woman—to studying the *Vedānta* and other classics of Eastern thought, meditation practices, and Eastern and Western paths of spiritual realization.[58] Since the second half of the 1920s, she began her geometrical painting practice, probably strongly influenced by the spiritualist and esoteric readings to which she had so intensely devoted herself in those years.[59]

During this phase, Fröbe-Kapteyn's contact with the outside world was sporadic. In 1924, during the so-called "triumvirate" (from 1923 to 1926), Monte Verità was run by Werner Ackermann (Robert Landmann), Max Bethke, and Hugo Wilkens, later joined by William Werner. The philosopher and Hebraist Martin Buber (1878–1965) held a free course on Lao-Tse and Chuang-Tse at Monte Verità, probably based on two of his earlier works;[60] a series of meetings on *Tao-tê-ching* was also attended by Fröbe-Kapteyn, who, unlike the other listeners, had a chair brought to her in the middle of the lawn so she could listen to the lecture with her torso firmly erect.[61]

Only in 1926 Fröbe-Kapteyn began writing again to her friends to come and visit her in Moscia.[62] Starting in the second half of the 1920s, with the money she inherited from her father, she was also able to invite a relatively small number of people to Casa Gabriella. These included those few Dutch, English, and French artists, those few men of letters, musicians, and spiritualists with whom—despite her skepticism toward the Ascona bohemianism of the 1920s and 1930s—she felt a spiritual affinity.

Leo Kok (1893–1992), a Dutch pianist and bookseller, was one of those visitors to Casa Gabriella. Already a collaborator with the Ascona Puppet Theater, founded in 1937 by Jacob Flach (1894–1982), Mischa Epper Quarles van Ufford (1901–1978), Fritz Pauli Swiss (1891–1968), and Werner Jakob Müller (1899–1986), Kok composed the music for several poems written in the 1920s by Fröbe-Kapteyn, who in 1927 designed the cover of his *Petite chanson pour les enfants qui n'ont pas de Noël* (1926), graphically inspired by the geometric paintings she had recently begun to make as a form of meditative practice[63] (Fig. 2).

In 1927, while she was visiting the *Semaine Européenne* organized in Lausanne by Germain, Fröbe-Kapteyn made the acquaintance also of the Dutch poet Aadrian Roland Holst (1888–1976). She felt particularly in tune with him, probably because of their common interest in myth and dreams. Holst visited her in 1929, staying at Casa Gabriella until the following year and working with her on the English translation of the autobiographical work *De Afspraak*.[64]

The famous perennial breeder and garden philosopher Karl Foerster (1874–1970) and his wife Eva stayed at Casa Gabriella in the late 1920s. In Potsdam-Bornim, in 1912, Foerster had begun creating a display and experimental area for perennials in his garden. He aimed to demonstrate the diversity of perennials and shrubs, treating each plant as an individual entity. He was contacted by Fröbe-Kapteyn, who visited him in Bornim in 1929, and helped his hostess to lay out, at least in part, her wonderful grounds overlooking the shores of the lake[65] (Fig. 3).

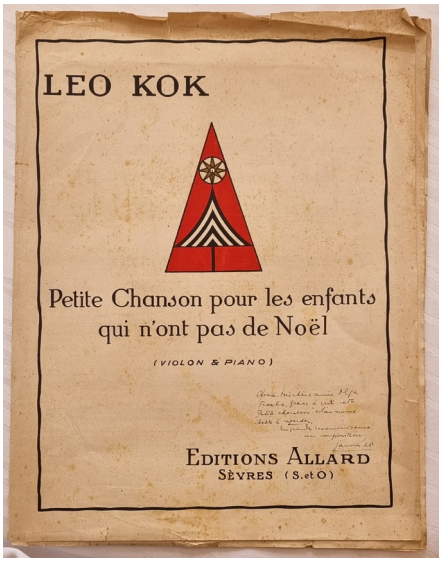

Fig. 2. Leo Kok, *Petite chanson pour les enfants qui n'ont pas de Noël* (1926), composition for violin and piano, with graphic design by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn; the geometric figure seems inspired by the "Meditation Plates." Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Fig. 3. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, founder of Eranos, with landscape architect and garden philosopher Karl Foerster in 1929; behind them, on the walls of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, some "Meditation Plates" are displayed, and in particular, in the center, the larger painting entitled *Gethsemane*. Ph. (probably) Eva Foerster. Courtesy of Archiv Haus Foerster, Marianne Foerster-Stiftung in der Deutschen Stiftung Denkmalschutz, Bonn. All rights reserved.

33
In Berlin, Fröbe-Kapteyn had also the opportunity to meet and spend time with harpsichordist and pianist Wanda Aleksandra Landowska (1879–1959) (Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 9).

34
Cf. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes,

Gardening was indeed Fröbe-Kapteyn's great passion. She planted at Casa Gabriella the most beautiful and rare flowers and shrubs of all kinds. She was also proud to offer her guests delicacies from her lush vegetable garden.[66] On the top terrace close to the house stood a magnificent large cedar tree, under which one could enjoy the view of the lake from the upper terrace in front of the guest room. For her friends, Casa Gabriella was the most beautiful place to relax every year. "When I am reborn, let it be in Olga's flower soil!" ("*Wenn wieder ich geboren werde, So sei's in Olgas Blumenerde!*"), her friend Ludwig Pallat wrote in her guest book. Annemarie Pallat recalled that, besides gardening, at that time Fröbe-Kapteyn's "favorite pastime was painting, and she used a very unique technique to create fantastic images out of colors and line ornaments, all of which had deep symbolic meanings. She had become a theosophist.[67] To us as laymen, they appeared as pure, wonderfully beautiful symphonies of color, which she sometimes also executed as embroidery with bright silk threads on a black background."[68]

Fröbe-Kapteyn was also in contact with Rudolf Maria Holzapfel (1874–1930), psychologist, philosopher, and "prophet of Pan."[69]

A photograph of Fröbe-Kapteyn with Anton (Rudolf) Mauve Jr. (1876–1962), a Dutch naturalist painter, was probably taken in Moscia in the late 1920s.

The scholar Ludwig Derleth (1870–1948) who, although not directly involved in the Eranos adventure, would significantly influence its birth. He provided stimulus for Fröbe-Kapteyn's journey into the symbolic realm.[70] A poet and mystic, Derleth was close to the Kosmiker ("Cosmic" circle) of Munich, the group led by Alfred Schuler (1865–1923) that sought salvation from the corruption of contemporary civilization through the revival of a pagan-style religiosity.[71] Derleth was also an advocate of a militant and archaic Christianity and was in some ways close to Jung in noting how the individual soul had impersonal forces capable of being awakened under certain historical circumstances and at particular moments of cultural crisis.[72] Countess Franziska zu Reventlow (1871–1918), the queen of the Munich bohème who had settled in Ascona in 1909,[73] was an admirer of Derleth: she made a portrait of him and the "Cosmic" group in her novel *Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen*.[74] Derleth, whom Fröbe-Kapteyn had known since at least 1916,[75] had a considerable influence on her, not only by shaping her interest in symbolism but also by helping to initiate the Eranos project.[76]

Lothar Helbing (Wolfgang Frommel, 1902–1986), a student of the poet Stefan George (1868–1933), recalled: "Once, [Derleth] confirmed to me what I had already learned from Mrs. Olga Fröbe, namely that a hidden thread led from the 'Cosmics' in Munich to the founding of Eranos in Ascona, and that it was Derleth himself who brought the first news about Creuzer, Bachofen, and various mysteries involving Baalbeck, Eleusis, and Samothrace to the then still silent house on Lake Maggiore."[77] There could be "secret threads" that linked the "Cosmic" group to the "prehistory"[78] of Eranos and its birth;[79] Fröbe-Kapteyn would probably have wanted Derleth to take part in the founding of Eranos—something that, for unknown reasons, never happened.[80] Derleth, for whom Fröbe-Kapteyn had a long-standing affection,[81] of-

December 2, 2019 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg).

35
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 10.

36
Walter Tyhs, ed., *André Jolles (1874-1946),* "*Gebildeter Vagant:*" *Brieven en documenten* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press; Leipzig: Leipziger Universität GmbH, 2000), 994 ff.

37
See VV.AA., *1875–1975: 100 Jahre Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich*, ed. Elisabeth Grossmann, Hansjörg Budliger, and Urs Stahel, texts by O. Birkner, K. Akeret, E. Grossmann, E. Billeter, and P. Obermüller (Zurich: Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Kunstgewerbemuseum der Stadt Zürich, 1975); the image is reproduced in Szeemann, *Monte Verità*, 120); when she moved to Ascona, she also learned the gobelin stitch from Russian Anna ("Mama") Kessa (1880–1967): see Giorgio Vacchini, ed., *Ascona: Verdetti popolari e documenti* (Ascona: Comune di Ascona, 1996), par. 2034; Curt Riess, *Ascona: Die Geschichte des seltsamsten Dorfes der Welt* (Zurich: Buchclub Ex Libris, 1964), 111; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 249. The sewing and embroidery work, which also included meticulously applying pearls to the dresses she created, was an occupation that kept Fröbe-Kapteyn busy during the winters at Casa Gabriella, since the 1920s: see Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 10.

38
Iwan Fröbe entered service in September 1915, assigned to Vienna, where he was to carry out tests with aerial photography at Fischamend airport before leaving for the front. The plane crashed, killing both the pilot and him. See Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by McGilvray); and Id., letter to Marie Stopes, September 20, 1915 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenberg).

39
Little Jngeborg was born with severe mental retardation due to medical complications during a difficult birth. Fröbe-Kapteyn consulted numerous doctors in Switzerland, Germany, and Vienna, but to no avail. In 1922, she decided to take Ingeborg to a pediatric clinic near Berlin: she could no longer afford to keep her in Switzerland, while Germany was much cheaper. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, March 23, 1922 and October 4, 1923 [British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenberg]). She thus finally decided to have her admitted to a Berling institution, where she tried to ensure she received the best care available and visited her regularly. After being moved from a nursing home near Bremen (where Fröbe-Kapteyn had last seen her) to Gunzburg, in the South Germany, Jngeborg died in 1941, probably

ten visited in fact her and her daughter Bettina at Casa Tabor, but never at Casa Gabriella.[82] In October 1922, Fröbe-Kapteyn and Derleth went together to Rome,[83] a city to which she would return on several occasions during the 1930s and 1940s for her iconographic research.

On August 23, 1921, Fröbe-Kapteyn wrote to Derleth, "You have brought me into relation, for the first time, with antiquity, and for this I am deeply grateful. It is strange how vivid and familiar these things are to me. I learn quickly and am far richer than in the Spring. Symbols are something that have become near and obvious to me. Now I look for them, and find them, in all things. In the Romanesque church of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan, [André] Jolles suddenly said, 'Here you find magic in its highest form.' I am sending you today a photograph of a bas-relief of Dionysus in London, which I have carried with me for many years. Jolles was telling the beautiful story of Ariadne and the Labyrinth yesterday."[84] Philosopher of religions Alfons Rosenberg (1902–1985) recalled the episode in which Derleth invited Fröbe-Kapteyn to Munich: meeting at midnight sharp at Marienplatz, they walked together until dawn. Derleth described to her the symbolism of Munich, transfigured the city into a "carpet woven with symbols."[85] Christine Derleth, who used to address Fröbe-Kapteyn amicably with the expression "Liebe Symbolistin!" wrote: "Olga, with sparkling eyes, sat on the Marienplatz opposite Ludwig, and absorbed the jumble of mythological images that formed the theme of the conversation. They expanded her inner life and transformed her into what she was to become in a decade: the founder of Eranos."[86]

From 1926–1935, Paul Zillmann, founder of the Metaphysische Hauptquartier and editor of the *Metaphysische Rundschau*, created in 1896, also played a decisive role in Fröbe-Kapteyn's life; she described him as "present in the spirit at the laying of the foundation stone of Eranos" and felt him to be Jung's "forerunner" in influencing her. He gave her a copy of *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (1929)[87] and the journal *Yoga*. In 1926, at a time when she "was feeling about for something to undertake, and did not yet know what," he told her, "[t]he work will be found" (*das Werk wird sich schon finden*). Zillmann, whom Fröbe-Kapteyn considered an alchemist (he used homeopathic remedies, based on the studies of Paracelsus), gave her "distant treatment" (*Fernbehandlung*) for seven years. For her, he was nothing more than a voice throughout this period; they spoke by phone once a week and met once or twice a year for a few hours. He was her "directing Voice from beyond, or from within."[88]

In September 1927, (her father had died in January of that year), Fröbe-Kapteyn had the "sudden idea" (*Einfall*) of building a Lecture Hall and organizing conferences on topics she had been interested in for years.[89] The idea came to her when she was intent on making a "geometric drawing," belonging to the "Meditation Plates" which she had begun painting in the mid-1920s. In that geometric drawing—inspired by the daily view from the windows of Casa Gabriella on the Brissago Islands, which played a significant role in her imagination—she recognized the "first manifestation of the Temple plan" (*Erstes Aufkommen des Templergrundrisses*),[90] from which the plan of Casa Eranos took shape. According to her, the highly geometrized style of the basic structure of the building harkened back to the "mathematical

as a result of the Nazi euthanasia program (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "History of a Symptom: Rhinitis vasomotoris" (unpublished typescript, 1949; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); Fröbe-Kapteyn, "7 November 1950" [belonging to the "Arbeit mit Dr. Szondi"] (unpublished typescript, November 7, 1950; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); and Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The Lapis Exilis and the Grail MSS" (unpublished typescript, February 20, 1952; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); see also Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 11 f.; Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 20; Hakl, *Eranos*, 14; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 249.)

40
Cf. Robert Faesi, *Erlebnisse, Ergebnisse, Erinnerungen* (Zurich: Atlantis, 1963), 224 ff., and van der Berk, *In de ban van Jung*.

41
Cf. Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 36 f.

42
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, April 2 and 15, 1899 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenberg).

43
Cf. Rosenbaum-Kroeber, "Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 119 ff.

44
Vacchini, *Ascona*, par. 2034.

45
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, April 21, 1920, written from Monte Verità, Ascona (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg).

46
In 1931, Casa Monte Tabor became the property of Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970) and, upon his passing, that of his wife Paulette Remarque Goddard (1910–1990), actress and former first wife of Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977). (See Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 14.) Swiss painter Eduard Rüdisühli (1875–1938) was relatively certainly the previous owner of Casa Monte Tabor before Remarque, from 1905 to 1931, and used the villa as a summer residence from 1905 to 1915.

47
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by McGilvray). Although older, Casa Gabriella appears on the 1861 cadastral map of the Ascona area, drawn up by engineer Giuseppe Roncajoli. The letters sent to Stopes on December 25, 1920, and November 16, 1921 are still sent from "Porto Ronco." The first letter sent to Stopes from "Villa Gabriella" is dated March 23, 1922 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenberg). Further information also come from

Animus" she inherited through the long line of mathematical geniuses in her father's family.[91] (Fig. 4). Jung wrote: "Anticipatory dreams, telepathic phenomena, and all that kind of thing are intuitions . . . It is always something that is unconscious until the moment it appears . . . The Germans call it *Einfall*, which means a thing which falls into your head from nowhere."[92] Casa Eranos was thus built in the Bauhaus style in 1928, before its purpose was known[93] (Fig. 5). The third house on her property, together with Casa Gabriella and Casa Eranos, was probably built between 1928 and 1929 and named Casa Shanti (Sanskrit for "peace") in 1932;[94] the ceremony was presided over by a young Telugu-speaking Brahmin, Venkatesa (Venkatesh) Narayana Sharma (1897–1986), who had come to Europe from India through the Theosophical movement.[95]

Fig. 5. A view of Casa Eranos, Casa Gabriella, and Casa Shanti in a 1929 photograph. Ph. Margarethe Fellerer (?). Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Before the creation of the actual Eranos project in 1933, Fröbe-Kapteyn made a first attempt at a congressional experience, with a more markedly esoteric imprint. In the late 1920s, while visiting her brother Albert in Long Island, United States, she got to know the works of the theosophist Alice Ann Bailey (1880–1949) and her Arcane School, which arose from a split of the Theosophical Society of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891).[96] During her stay in the United States, Fröbe-Kapteyn went to Bailey with a proposal to collaborate in the creation, in Ascona, of a "nondenominational spiritual center open to all scholars of esotericism of any geographical origin and religious faith," offering hospitality to Alice and Forster Bailey (1888–1977) and their three young daughters, Mildred, Dorothy, and Ellison.[97]

In 1929, Fröbe-Kapteyn devoted herself to preparing the first symposium[98] and on August 3, 1930, courses began at the International Centre for Spiritual Research.[99] There were eighty chairs in the conference room and fifteen nationalities were represented: the register of the congeess collected the signatures of ninety-four participants. The sessions lasted for three weeks, from Monday to Saturday, with three lectures per day, while a fourth week was made available for private meetings with the speakers.

In this "prehistory" of Eranos, in addition to Fröbe-Kapteyn and

an extract from the census records of the Municipality of Ronco/A, "Purchase and sale between Ugo von Hoffmann (formerly Ermano da Lippedetmold) and Alberto Kapteyn (formerly Gerardo di Barneveld)," deed drawn up by Notary Vittorio Pedrotta on October 12, 1920. We would like to thank the Land Registry Office in Locarno for the kind cooperation.

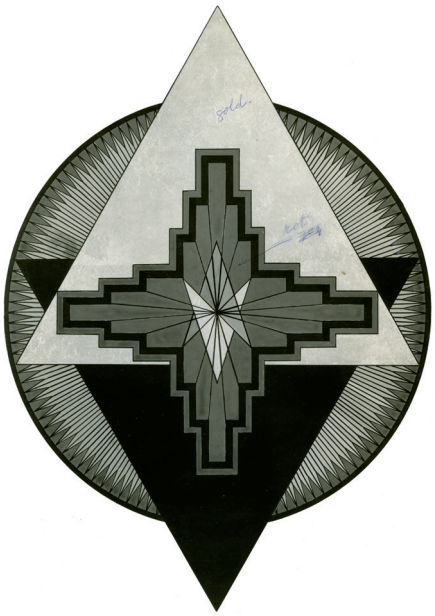

Fig. 4. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, 1st "Eranos Mandala." "Eranos Mandalas," 1927. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. It inspired the floor plan of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, built in 1928. The same painting, in color, is part of the "Meditation Plates" series with the title *Duality* [5]. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

48
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 15.

49
Vacchini, *Ascona*, par. 2631. Karl Vester arrived at Monte Verità in 1902, before leaving for Samoa and returning to Ascona in 1904. Although he shared in the project, he always maintained a certain distance and independence from the Monte Verità community. A baker in the community, he inherited the Ascona property of financier Henri Oedenkoven when the latter left Ascona in 1920 to set up another vegetarian colony, first in Spain and then in Brazil (Monte Sol) (see the television report entitled "L'ultimo naturista del Monte Verità," broadcast on October 4, 1963, as part of the program "Il Regionale" of Radiotelevisione della Svizzera Italiana [RSI]). Vester was in contact with Hermann Joseph Metzger "Paragranus" (1919–1990) from Ticino, who was also a baker; the latter was initiated in 1943 into the lodge of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) "Verità Mistica" in Ascona. Upon his death on September 24, 1963, Metzger remembered Vester in a short obituary (Peter-Rober König, *Das OTO-Phänomen. 100 Jahre Magische Geheimbünde und ihre Protagonisten von 1895-1994* (Munich: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für

the Baileys, the following lecturers were involved between 1930 and 1932: Frederick Kettner; Shri Vishwanath Keskar, author in 1931, together with James Graham Phelps Stokes, of *Pillars of Life*; Alexander, Grand Duke of Russia; Violet Tweedale, disciple of Blavatsky; the Irish writer James H. Cousins, whose first lecture was accompanied by an exhibition of modern art; Agnes Johanna Elisabeth van Stolk; Stephen Annett; Count Kuno von Hardenberg, formerly active in Hermann Keyserling's "School of Wisdom"; astronomer Robert Henseling; J. L. Schmitt; astrologer Paul S. Bendix, from Ascona; Hebraist Leo Baeck; Mírzá Aḥmad Sohráb, founder of the New History Society and the Caravan of East and West; Gerald Reynolds, director of the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau; J. C. Demarquette, who authored *Vers l'Australie. Notes d'un naturiste européen* in 1930; Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein-Wertheim-Freudenberg, later decorated by John XXIII for his work in reconciling the Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church; Nikolaj Konstantinovič (Nicholas) Roerich, painter, theosophist, and expert on Tibet, who contributed to fueling the Blavatskian myth of Shambhala in the collective imagination of the West; Jean Emile Marcault, who authored *Psychology of Intuition* (1927) and *The Evolution of Man. Being an Outline of the Development of Human Consciousness as Illustrated by the Pre-Aryan and Arian Races* (1931) and translated the *Bhagavadgītā* commented by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan; novelist Raja Rao, among the fathers of Anglo-Indian literature; Eugen Georg; the scholar of Celtic religions F. C. J. Los; Helmut Palmié, first publisher of the journal *Yoga*; orientalist Erwin Rousselle; Roberto Assagioli, founder of Psychosynthesis;[100] and finally Vittorino Vezzani, professor of General Zootechnics at the University of Turin since 1938, director of the Institute of Animal Husbandry and Dairy Farming of Piedmont, and since 1955 vice president of the Italian Society of Metapsychics, who continued to nurture an interest in Eranos in the years that followed.[101] According to William McGuire, Bailey would probably have liked to involve Jung in their project, but Fröbe-Kapteyn thought that the time was not right.[102]

The International Centre for Spiritual Research remained operational for three years, from 1930 to 1932, a period generally referred to as the "Shadow" (*Schatten*) of Eranos, its "roots" (*Wurzeln*), or rather—as Jung used to call it—its "dark spirit" (*dunkler Geist*)[103] (Fig. 6). When this enterprise came to an end after the third session, in 1932, due to both Fröbe-Kapteyn's intellectual maturation and certain personal differences with Bailey that had become irreconcilable,[104] the Eranos project was finally ready to start.[105]

The name "Eranos" (from Greek "banquet") was suggested to Fröbe-Kapteyn by historian of religions Rudolf Otto (1869–1937), who led the Marburg ecumenical group and wrote *The Holy* (1917), the groundbreaking essay on phenomenological analysis of religious experience.[106] Another of Otto's works, *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism* (1926)—a comparative study of Śankara and Meister Eckhart—inspired Fröbe-Kapteyn in her choice of subtitle for her project: *Begegnungsstätte für Ost und West* ("Meeting Place for East and West").[107] Fröbe-Kapteyn had approached Otto in 1931. The Marburg ecumenical group, which emerged from liberal evangelical theology, took its name from the German uni-

Religions- und Weltanschauungsfragen, 1994), 49 (cf. Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, pp. 251 f.).

50
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Marie Stopes, October 4, 1918; see also the letters of February 18, 1919, December 25, 1920, and 1922 (British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenberg).

51
Baron Eduard von der Heydt purchased Monte Verità hill in 1926, at the suggestion of then-owner William Werner. He was enticed by the painter Marianne von Werefkin (1860–1938) and Fröbe-Kapteyn herself. (Cf. Hetty Rogantini-de Beauclair, *Dal Monte Verità di Ascona . . . a Berzona in Onsernone: Hetty De Beauclair racconta il meraviglioso mondo della sua infanzia*, ed. Yvonne Bölt and Gian Pietro Milani (Losone: Serodine, 2004), 21, fn. 23; and Hetty Rogantini-de Beauclair, personal communication to Riccardo Bernardini, October 1, 2010, Ascona-Monte Verità; on the extremely difficult relationship between Eduard von der Heydt and Fröbe-Kapteyn, see instead Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 3, passim.)

Fig. 6. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (seated, right) and Alice Ann Bailey on the terrace of Casa Gabriella in August (probably) 1930, during the period of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1930–1932), which preceded the birth of the Eranos Conferences (1933). Standing, from left: theosophist Foster Bailey; Vittorino Vezzani, professor of General Zootechnics at the University of Turin and metapsychic scholar; psychologist Roberto Assagioli, founder of Psychosynthesis; Frederick Kettner, founder of Biosynthesis; Shri Vishwanath Keskar, author, with James Graham Phelps Stokes, of Pillars of Life (1931); and writer and poet James H. Cousins. Ph. unknown. Courtesy of the Institute of Psychosynthesis, Assagioli Archives, Casa Assagioli, Florence. All rights reserved.

52
On October 8, 1920 from Ronco, Albertus Kapteyn wrote to Germain (who was staying at that time at the Grand Hotel in Brissago) who was about to meet Hoffmann: the latter was already close to finalizing the sale with another buyer, but he would wait to meet Albertus Kapteyn before deciding to whom to sell the property; Albertus Kapteyn saw Casa Gabriella for the first time, together with the then owner, on October 9, 1920, at 3 p.m. (Albertus Kapteyn, letter to André Germain, October 8, 1920 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); more in general, see André Germain, *Florence et*

versity where its most prominent representatives taught. Among them were the historians of religion Friedrich Heiler and Ernst Benz, who were later involved in Eranos as lecturers. This circle allowed Fröbe-Kapteyn to encounter for the first time a conception of religiosity that went beyond the study of religions as codified systems: this approach shifted the focus of the religious phenomenon towards a religiosity understood as a universal phenomenon of the human soul, namely the individual experience of the "numinous" (*numinosum*).

Fröbe-Kapteyn recalled her meeting with Otto as follows: "When, on that memorable evening in November 1932, I rang the doorbell of the great religious scholar Rudolf Otto, a creative moment began for me and, as if on a stage, the curtain rose. Otto himself came to open the door and everything about him welcomed me, Eranos, and the moment itself. It was both an inner and outer encounter, and he himself realized the significance of the situation."[108] Otto welcomed Fröbe-Kapteyn's proposal with particular enthusiasm, exclaiming, "I'm leaving for Locarno the day after tomorrow!" He thus visited her in Ascona the following December.[109] It was on that occasion, at Fröbe-Kapteyn's request to suggest a name for her project, that Otto proposed the Greek lemma "*Eranos*" ("banquet").[110] He also gave her a long list of names of scholars who might be of interest to her program, thus "sponsoring" an initiative that he had not been able to realize until then with his Religiöser Menschheitsbund ("Interreligious league of mankind"), founded in 1921. Although he was too ill to take part in this new venture, Otto was considered by Fröbe-Kapteyn to be the "godfather" (*Pate*) of Eranos.[111]

Sinologist Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930), who presented his translation of the ancient oracular Chinese text, the *I Ching*, in 1923,[112] was another important influence on Fröbe-Kapteyn. His work marked a turning point in the academic interpretation of the religious testimonies of extra-European cultures: they were no longer merely ethnological material, but expressions of subjectivity endowed with their own existential and spiritual reality.[113]

At the "School of Wisdom" (Schule der Weisheit), led by Count Hermann Keyserling (1880–1946), Fröbe-Kapteyn found a group of researchers devoted to the search for the "common roots of all religions" and encountered for the first time Wilhelm's edition of the *I Ching*. Jung himself gave some lectures within this circle.[114] Among the intellectuals close to the "School of Wisdom," brought together by their interest in promoting Eastern spiritual thought,[115] were psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Alfred Adler, ethnologist and Africanist Leo Frobenius, Thomas Mann, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929, philosopher Max Scheler, Rabindranath Tagore, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, theologian Ernst Troeltsch, and the philosopher of history Leopold Ziegler. Some, such as Count Kuno von Hardenberg, artist, critic and writer,[116] Sigrid Strauß-Kloebe, psychotherapist and astrology scholar, the Jewish scholar Leo Baeck, and the historian of religions Gerardus van der Leeuw, would later reappear at Eranos as lecturers.[117]

In August 1933, Fröbe-Kapteyn started the Eranos Conferences (*Eranos Tagungen*), which attracted some of the most influential scholars of the twentieth century: among them, beyond Jung himself, the

Ascona [Paris: Sun, 1952]).

53
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 15.

54
"L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 16.

55
No. 38561/2438.

56
Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 252.

57
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Die Geschichte von Eranos" (Ascona: unpublished typescript, 1952–1958; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), and specifically "Eranos, Fortsetzung" (unpublished typescript, 1952; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1; and Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Shadow of my Dedication to Eranos" (unpublished typescript, February 11, 1954; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), where she wrote about "the concentration training of 8 years. That kept me on the singleminded track of Eranos."

58
On the "concentration discipline" period, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 95, 252.

59
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 17 f.

60
See Ron Margolin, "Tre approcci allo studio della religione a Eranos," in *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, ed. Elisabetta Barone, Adriano Fabris, and Flavia Monceri (Pisa: ETS, 2003), 190. Buber had learned about Monte Verità from two friends, Gustav Landauer (1870–1919) and Erich Mühsam (1878–1934), a German writer and anarchist. The latter had arrived in Ascona in 1904, after the failure of the suburban commune Die neue Gemeinschaft ("The New Community") in Schlachtensee, near Berlin, founded in 1899 by the brothers Julius and Heinrich Hart: Buber himself had placed great hopes in this project (Ulrich Linse, "Il ribelle e la 'Madre terra': Il monte sacro di Ascona nell'interpretazione dell'anarchico bohémien Erich Mühsam," in: Szeemann, *Monte Verità*, 31; and Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth: The Counterculture begins; Ascona 1900–1920* [Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986], 126), who had joined it in the year of its foundation: it was in this context that he had met Landauer (Margolin, "Tre approcci allo studio della religione a Eranos," 189, fn. 1). A revolutionary and anti-Marxist anarchist, Landauer was in close contact with various anarchists who gravitated around Monte Verità; he had a profound influence on Buber's life and the formation of his political thought—Buber edited the posthumous publication of his *Die Revolution* in 1923—as well as on that of Gershom Scholem (Michael Lowy, *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe—A Study*

psychologists, Erich Neumann, Marie-Louise von Franz, James Hillman, Ira Progoff, Hayao Kawai, and Wolfgang Giegerich; the historians of religion, Raffaele Pettazzoni, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade, and Ernst Benz; the historians of Christianity, Ernesto Buonaiuti and Jean Daniélou; the historians of the religions of the classical world, Walter Friedrich Otto and Károly Kerényi; the orientalists, Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids, Paul Masson-Oursel, Heinrich Zimmer, Erwin Rousselle, and Giuseppe Tucci; the Hebraists, Leo Baeck, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem; the theologians, Paul Tillich, Hugo Rahner, Pierre-Jean de Menasce, Victor White, and David L. Miller; the scholars of Islam, Louis Massignon, Henry Corbin, and Toshihiko Izutsu; the Egyptologists, Georges Hermann Nagel and Erik Hornung; the Sinologists, Paul Pelliot and Hellmut Wilhelm; the scholars of Gnosis, Henri-Charles Puech and Gilles Quispel; the scholar of Zen Buddhism, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki; the anthropologists, Paul Radin, John Layard, Laurens van der Post, and Gilbert Durand; the ethnologists, Theodor-Wilhelm Danzel, Richard Thurnwald, and Jean Servier; the archeologists, Charles Virolleaud, Vera Christina Chute Collum, and Charles Picard; the philosophers, Helmuth Plessner, Karl Löwith, Jean Brun, and Pierre Hadot; the art historian, Julius Baum; the literary critic, Herbert Edward Read; the physicists, Friedrich Dessauer, Erwin Schrödinger, Hans Leisegang, and Shmuel Sambursky; the electronic engineer, Max Knoll; the mathematicians, Andreas Speiser and Hermann Weyl; the musicologists, Victor Zuckerkandl and Hildemarie Streich; the scholar of Chinese medicine, Manfred Porkert; and many other thinkers. In the following years, Fröbe-Kapteyn focused on further enriching the annual symposia, which were becoming a "ritual," a "dance," which started anew each year, but always with different "dancers." For a long time, Eranos was the sole venue for gathering together experts and lay people who were inspired by different cultural and spiritual interests and unfettered by their fields of specialization. As the only European conference center to remain active during World War II, Eranos has made an extraordinary contribution to European intellectual history.

Right in the early years of her congressional project, Fröbe-Kapteyn received further decisive impetus in her research into the world of symbols from Jung himself, who, beyond being a guiding spirit in the first twenty years of symposia, around 1934 commissioned her to search for iconographic material for his studies on alchemy and the concept of archetypes.[118] She recalled a conversation they had in Zurich, in which Jung said to her: "I have a job here. So far, no one has wanted to do it. Perhaps you are the only one who can. I am looking for images [*Ich suche Bilder*]." Jung took an old illuminated parchment from his bookcase and showed her some woodcuts. They were symbolic representations of alchemy, completely unknown to her. Jung reiterated: "Images of this kind. There must be many images of this kind in the world, only I don't know where. Someone has to look for them." Fröbe-Kapteyn replied without hesitation: "I am willing to do this work." Although she knew nothing about alchemy at the time, she threw herself into this adventure without a moment's hesitation.[119]

Fröbe-Kapteyn thus began collecting a series of images illustrating the various archetypes "as a complement to Jung's theoretical

in Elective Affinity [Stanford, NJ: Stanford University Press, 1992], 203 ff.).

61
Rosenbaum-Kroeber, "Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 119; see also Kneubühler, Kneubühler, "Gli artisti, gli scrittori e il Canton Ticino (dal 1900 ad oggi)," 176; and McGuire, *Bollingen—An Adventure in Collecting the Past*, 21. During the days of the course, Buber resided at Casa Semiramis (Hetty Rogantini-de Beauclair, personal communication to Riccardo Bernardini, August 22, 2003, Ascona; cf. Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 252). Martin Buber was later a lecturer at Eranos in 1934 and returned as a listener in 1947 (Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 226).

62
Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 16.

63
Leo Kok, *Petit Chanson pour les enfants qui n'ont pas de Noël (violon & piano)* (Sèvres: Allard, 1927), dessin de la couverture de Olga Froebe-Kapteyn; see Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 17.

64
Cf. Jan van der Vegt, *A. Roland Holst: Biografie* (Baarn: de Prom, 2000), 282 ff. Holst revisited Fröbe-Kapteyn in later years. (Cf. Hakl, *Eranos*, 17.)

65
Annemarie Pallat, "Olga Fröbe" (unpublished typescript, April 29, 1962; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). The relationship between Fröbe-Kapteyn and Karl Foerster has yet to be properly reconstructed, but it is nevertheless documented in the accurate study by Clemens Wimmer, *Gärtner der Nation. Die vier Leben des Karl Foerster* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaften, 2024).

66
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 12.

67
As Karssenberg pointed out, Geertruida Kapteyn-Muysken accompanied Frederik Willem van Eeden (1860–1932) in London to see Helena Blavatsky, who was living with Annie Besant in their theosophical headquarters, in October 1890, when Olga was nine years old (from the Kapteyn-Muysken diaries); therefore, she had probably heard about Blavatsky already at that age. Also, in her correspondence with Marie Stopes, she refers to Blavatsky's readings and William Crookes's (1832–1919) spiritualism. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, April 4, 1901 [British Library, London; transcripts kindly provided by Karssenberg]).

68
Pallat, "Olga Fröbe"

69
Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 54 f.

treatises on alchemy."[120] Between 1935 and 1938, she carried out this iconographic research exclusively for Jung.[121] She later recalled that this iconographic research was very hard work for her. Not only did Jung never pay her a proper fee, he also gave her very little money, which was often not even enough to cover her accommodation expenses during her research trips or the cost of the images that had to be photographed. However, she never rebelled. This task gradually became increasingly important to her; for at least ten years, this work, together with organizing conferences, became her main occupation.[122] The photographs she obtained from the various archives were gradually placed in Casa Gabriella. However, "living" with all this "archetypal" material caused Fröbe-Kapteyn serious insomnia. At a certain point, Jung suggested that she take a vacation "anywhere," in order to get a clear break from her work: "Archetypes never sleep, because they are identical to the river of life that flows within us, even when we are asleep" (*Archetypen schlafen nie, denn sie sind identisch mit dem Strom des Lebens, der in uns fliesst, auch wenn wir schlafen*).[123]

The Eranos Archive, as envisioned by Fröbe-Kapteyn herself[124] over the years and especially starting in 1941, became extremely important for the research of many scholars.[125] She constantly emphasized the link between the Eranos Archive and Jung's work: "The recurrence of these archetypal images through the centuries and their frequently simultaneous appearance in widely countries show how their derivation from a common source or reservoir in the unconscious of mankind. C. G. Jung's conception of archetypes is hereby fully confirmed."[126] Jung, for his part, recognized its scientific value on several occasions.[127] Many illustrations featured in his works, particularly those depicting alchemy, came from the Eranos Archive or from iconographic research carried out on his behalf by Fröbe-Kapteyn.[128]

The iconographical research that Fröbe-Kapteyn did between 1938 and 1941 was funded by Mary Elizabeth Conover Mellon (1904–1946) and Paul Mellon (1907–1999), who for more than twenty years (1947–1967) were the main sponsors of Eranos, personally and later through the Bollingen Foundation.[129] In the spring of 1943, Fröbe-Kapteyn transformed Eranos into a legally recognized Foundation, which could qualify for public and private funding. Thanks to Jung's intervention, the new foundation obtained the support of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, from 1936 to 1956, and of the Pro Helvetia Foundation, which contributed funds from 1943. Once again, thanks to Jung, the Bollingen Foundation placed Eranos within its Program of Contributions to Institutions (General Humanities) beginning in 1947.[130] In 1949, the Bollingen Foundation acquired a duplicate of the Eranos Archive. A further copy of the approximately 6500 images was subsequently sent by Fröbe-Kapteyn to Jung, who, shortly before his death, transferred this material to the C. G. Jung-Institut in Zurich. The Bollingen Foundation also supported the project of cataloguing and expanding the Eranos Archive, beginning in 1959. The original Eranos collection was donated to the Warburg Institute (University of London) in 1954. The New York archive was renamed in 1960 to Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS): from then on, the history of the two archives continued along independent paths.[131]

Fröbe-Kapteyn devoted her entire life to cultivating her cultural

70
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 17 f.; Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 30 ff.

71
On the Munich Cosmic circle, see Richard Faber, "Der Schwabinger Imperatorenstreit, (k)ein Sturm im Wasserglas. Über die Münchener Bohème im allgemeinen und die ‚Kosmiker Runde' insbesondere," in Richard Faber and Christine Holste, eds., *Kreise, Gruppen, Bünde: Zur Soziologie moderner Intellektuellenassoziation* (Würzburg: Könighausen + Neumann, 2000), 37–64; on the connection between the Kosmiker circle and Eranos, see Barbara von Reibnitz, "Der Eranos-Kreis: Religionswissenschaft und Weltanschauung oder der Gelehrte als Laien-Priester," in Renate Schleiser and Roberto Sanchiño Martinez, eds., *Neuhumanismus und Anthropologie des griechischen Mythos. Karl Kerényi im europäischen Kontext des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Locarno: Rezzonico, 2006), 427; Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 38–51; and Georg Dörr, "Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona: prossimità tipologica e umana (con lettere di Olga Fröbe a Ludwig Derleth)," in Barone, Fabris, and Monceri, *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, 105–21.

72
Barone, Fabris, and Monceri, *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, 114 f.

73
See Franziska zu Reventlow, *Der Geldkomplex* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1916).

74
Franziska zu Reventlow, *Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen- oder Begebenheiten aus einem merkwürdigen Stadtteil* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1913); see also Richard Faber, *Männerrunde mit Gräfin: Die "Kosmiker" Derleth, George, Klages, Schuler, Wolfskehl und Franziska zu Reventlow* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994) and Alexandra Tischel, "Tra i profeti: I romanzi di Franziska zu Reventlow e le 'tensioni' di fine secolo," in Barone, Fabris, and Monceri, *Eranos, Monte Verità, Ascona*, 253–67.

75
See Dominik Jost, *Ludwig Derleth: Gestalt und Leistung* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1965), 74.

76
Ludwig Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, with texts by Lothar Helbing, Stefan George, Dominik Jost, Christine Derleth, and Anna Maria Derleth (Amsterdam: Castrum Peregrini, 1958), 70; Jost, *Ludwig Derleth*, 99 ff.; and Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 40.

77
Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, 70.

78
Jost, *Ludwig Derleth*, 99 ff.

enterprise, Eranos, and personally edited the first thirty *Eranos-Jahrbücher* (1933–1961). She passed away in Casa Gabriella, at the age of 81, on April 25, 1962.[132].

Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's Artistic Corpus

The first phase of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's artistic production, with a strongly geometric imprint, is recorded in a series a series of about 127 "Meditation Plates,"[133] painted between 1926 and 1934[134] (Fig. 7). These images, some of which were originally displayed in the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos (Fig. 8), express a rigor eschewing any naturalism of form and a choice of predominantly cold colors.

Fig. 7. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, *The Central Spiritual Sun*. "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Fig. 8. An article that appeared in the *Tessiner Illustrierte* concerning Fröbe-Kapteyn's project of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1930–1932), which preceded the start of the Eranos Conferences (1933); the walls of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos display some "Meditation Plates" painted by Fröbe-Kapteyn; the largest painting, in the center, is currently on display at the Hotel Tamaro in Ascona. Courtesy of the Fondazione Monte Verità, from the permanent exhibition at Casa Anatta, Ascona-Monte Verità.

There is a basic color contrast between black (nocturnal, unconscious, and destructive energy; deathly and disintegrative vibration; *Yin* principle in Taoism and *I Ching*) and gold (diurnal, conscious, and constructive energy; vital and integrative vibration; the *Yang* principle)[135] with the constant presence of red, almost always on a blue background. These paintings, created using mixed media on paper or cardboard and employing tempera, India ink, and gold leaf, document an obvious recurrence of certain stylized symbols: the cross, the chalice, the tao, the crystal, the lotus, the rays, the portal, the sword, the ladder, and "mandalic" shapes.[136] The overall result is an abstract figure, in which a spirituality purified of all corporality is staged.[137]

Alice Ann Bailey made use of the "Meditation Plates" during the

79
Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, 70.

80
Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 40.

81
Hakl, 42 ff.

82
Christine Derleth, *Das Fleischlich-Geistige: Meine Erinnerungen an Ludwig Derleth* (Hessen: Hinder + Deelmann, Bellnhausen über Gladenbach, 1973), 96 f.

83
Jost, *Ludwig Derleth*, 103; James Webb, *Il sistema occulto: La fuga dalla ragione nella politica e nella società del XX secolo* (Milan: SugarCo, 1989 [1976]), 277; Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 46; and Dörr, "Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona," 106, fn. 3.

84
Quoted in Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 43 f., and Dörr, "Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona," 119 f. When he was back from his Italian travels, André Jolles used to stop for a few days at Casa Gabriella to catch up with his great friend, often in the company of his second wife, Grittli Boecklen, a drawing teacher with whom Fröbe-Kapteyn delighted in building puppets and other handicrafts (Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 44, fn. 60). She reached him in Venice in August 1937 and they returned together to Casa Gabriella in September of the same year. (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, October 4, 2023 [British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg]).

85
Quoted in Hakl, *Eranos*, 22. A testimony by Rosenberg regarding the importance of Fröbe-Kapteyn's iconographic research can be found in Alfons Rosenberg, "Eranos oder Der Geist am Wasser," *Flugblätter für Freunde* 80 (1977): 7–8.

86
Derleth, *Gedenkbuch*, 96; also quoted in Dörr, "Archetipo e storia ovvero Monaco-Ascona," 106.

87
Das Geheimnis der Goldenen Blüte: Ein Chinesisches Lebensbuch, ed. Richard Wilhelm (Munich: Dornverlag, 1929).

88
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan" (unpublished typescript, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 10. Zillmann "possessed my deep affection, which Jung has never done," Fröbe-Kapteyn recalled (Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan"). In a series of reflections on her inner visions, Fröbe-Kapteyn associated Zillmann with a "white magician" and Derleth with a "black magician" (Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Drei Zeichnungen," cit., 2) Zillmann is also mentioned by Alice Bailey in a letter sent on February 5, 1931 to Fröbe-Kapteyn, concerning

congress activities of the International Centre for Spiritual Research in Ascona. In its first session, on August 20, 1930, Fröbe-Kapteyn and Bailey gave a "Talk on Symbolism, and demonstration of a series of Occult Symbols,"[138] using eighty images from the "Meditation Plates." Fröbe-Kapteyn exhibited some of the paintings and gave a short lecture on them. Bailey, on the other hand, offered an interpretation of a series of eighteen of these figures, which had been selected by Fröbe-Kapteyn, Bailey herself, and her husband Foster Bailey and were scheduled to be published shortly thereafter in New York; Bailey wrote some commentaries about each "Plate."[139] The complete series, which at the time consisted of about eighty paintings, "represents the path of evolution from the dawn of the great creative process to the consummation of the age, including the path of discipleship and the path of initiation, as trodden by the human being."[140] Also in the second session of the "School," in August 1931, several "Lectures on Symbology" were given and some "Teachings through Symbols" were imparted. They delved into the use of "Geometric Symbols" in the context of "occult training" and meditation.[141]

Between the late 1920s and early 1930s, Fröbe-Kapteyn composed a series of writings for her daughter Bettina[142] and her friends. In these works, she sought to empathize with the existential questions and difficulties of others, recognizing that these themes were, in essence, her own. In the preface to one of these writings, *Gleichnisse* ("Parables"), she acknowledged that "[t]he deepest things in human life . . . can only be expressed in images."[143] She used to give a copy of "Parables" to a very small circle of friends and correspondents, including reproductions of her "Meditation Plates." Among those recipients was the painter Sophie Della Valle di Casanova Browne (1866–1960), who, together with her husband, Marquis Silvio Della Valle di Casanova—a musicologist, scholar of German literature, and poet with a taste for symbolism—hosted numerous artistic personalities at Villa San Remigio in Pallanza, including Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938), Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916), and Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924).

Today, we know the names of other recipients of Fröbe-Kapteyn's geometric works and, in some cases, their reactions and comments. The "Meditation Plates," some of which in those years were displayed on the walls of the Lecture Hall, often revolved around the Grail theme, as in the case of the painting donated to psychologist Roberto Assagioli (1888–1974), who was among the scholars involved in this "prehistory" of Eranos[144] (Fig. 9). Philosopher of religions Alfons Rosenberg, who had worked for weeks in Fröbe-Kapteyn's private graphic archive, recalled the "Plates" as "severe, mysterious, and solemn. But they exuded an atmosphere of frightening coldness. They were painted with the intellect and not with the heart; they were effective, but unsympathetic."[145] Magda Kerényi believes that Fröbe-Kapteyn brought some "Meditation Plates" with her to show Ludwig Derleth during their meetings.[146] Rudolf Otto had some examples of these on display in his home[147] (Fig. 10); Fröbe-Kapteyn dedicated a "Plate" made in 1933 to him (Fig. 11). Friedrich Heiler (1892-1967) appreciated their symbolic meaning and color rendering.[148]

The first letters exchanged between Jung and Fröbe-Kapteyn concerned precisely these images. In June 1932, for example, Jung wrote

the second meeting of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

89
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Institute for Research into Religious Symbolism (Archetypal Images)" (unpublished typescript, 1947; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 4; and Id., "Eranos Institut für Symbolforschung" (unpublished typescript, September 28, 1947; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

90
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Die Eranos Mandala" (unpublished typescript, 1927–1949; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

91
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag," 1; cf. also Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Die Geschichte von Eranos," and specifically "Notes for the Story of Eranos" (unpublished typescript, undated [1957?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

92
Carl Gustav Jung, "The Tavistock Lectures: On the Theory and Practice of Analytical Psychology" [1935], in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 18, *The Symbolic Life: Miscellaneous Writings*, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), par. 26.

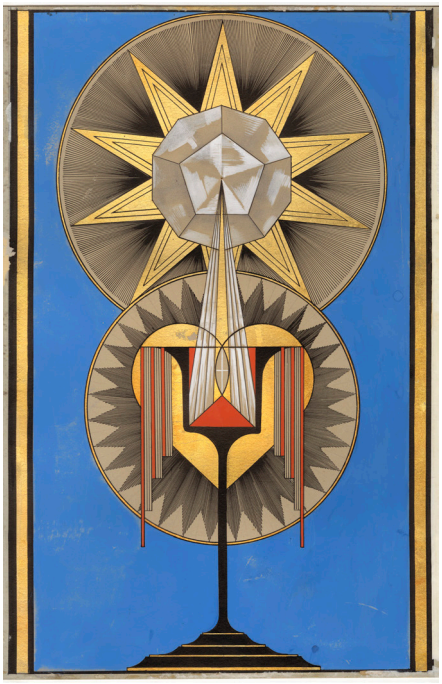

Fig. 9. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Courtesy of the Institute of Psychosynthesis, Assagioli Archives, Casa Assagioli, Florence. All rights reserved.

Fig. 11. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Meditation Plates," 1933. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. The painting is dedicated to Rudolf Otto. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

to her: "Dear Madam, receive my best thanks for kindly sending me your images. According to your description, you draw your images in exactly the same way as my patients draw theirs. These images originate from conscious perception, they arise in the unconscious, i.e., in the unknown. This unknown seems to have a collective character and not an individual one. The way in which these images are represented, however, is very different, but the underlying thoughts are of a general nature, and therefore such expressions can be subjected to psychological criticism. They have the value of *yantras*, which are intended to support a certain path of self-development as an instrument, and should therefore be examined for their psychological significance."[149] In May 1933, Jung noted the extreme technical perfection of these geometric images and asked Fröbe-Kapteyn how she could bring the content of these figures back to a broader spiritual structure and how she interpreted them from an intellectual point of view.[150]

Despite Jung's initial appreciation of the "Meditation Plates,"

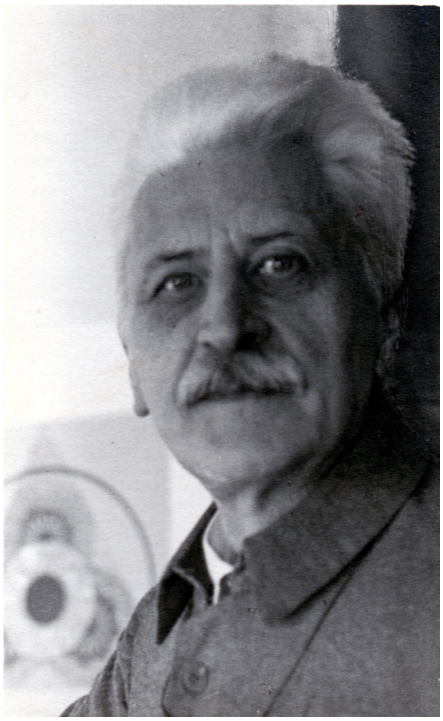

Fig. 10. Historian of religions Rudolf Otto, regarded by Fröbe-Kapteyn as the "godfather" (Pate) of Eranos; behind him is the painting *Consumation*, part of the "Meditation Plates" series. Ph. unknown. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

93
The first documented cadastral change (no. 86) relating to the construction of Casa Eranos is dated December 29, 1928. Construction work began in fact in December of that year: see Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letters to Ernst Bernhard with biographical information, September 1 and September 2, 1954 (Ernst and Dora Bernhard Collection, Historical Archive of Italian Psychology (ASPI), University of Milan-Bicocca; kindly provided by McGilvray).

94
Cf. Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 19. The first documented cadastral change (no. 736) relating to the construction of Casa Shanti is dated July 27, 1932. Casa Shanti was sold by Fröbe-Kapteyn in 1937 to Emma Hélène-von Pelet-Narbonne (1892–1967), who was joined in the same year by Alwina (Alwine) von Keller (1878–1965) (cadastral mutation no. 1253 of August 14, 1937).

95
William McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School," *Spring* (1980), 152; and Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 81. In 1931, Sharma married Ellen Teichmüller (1898–1978), daughter of Alwine von Keller. He was also among the audience at the 1933 symposium. (See Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano, "Appendix II: Alwine von Keller (1878-1965); A Biographical Memoir," in Carl Gustav Jung, *The Solar Myths and Opicinus de Canistris: Notes of the Seminar Given at Era-*

Fröbe-Kapteyn also told Rosenberg how Jung had helped lessen the influence theosophy had on her, just as Zillmann had done regarding the Arcane School as early as 1931 by giving her the journal *Yoga*.[151] She admitted that she had been very shaken when Jung, on his first visit to Eranos in August 1933, harshly criticized the "Meditation Plates," when he saw them arranged on the walls of the Lecture Hall. This led to a breakthrough in her research. The problem was not primarily the geometric aspect of the images. The members of Jung's Zurich circle who were with him were in fact particularly shocked to have saw (whether consciously or not), among the eighty images, the symbol of the "Curse" (Fig. 12).

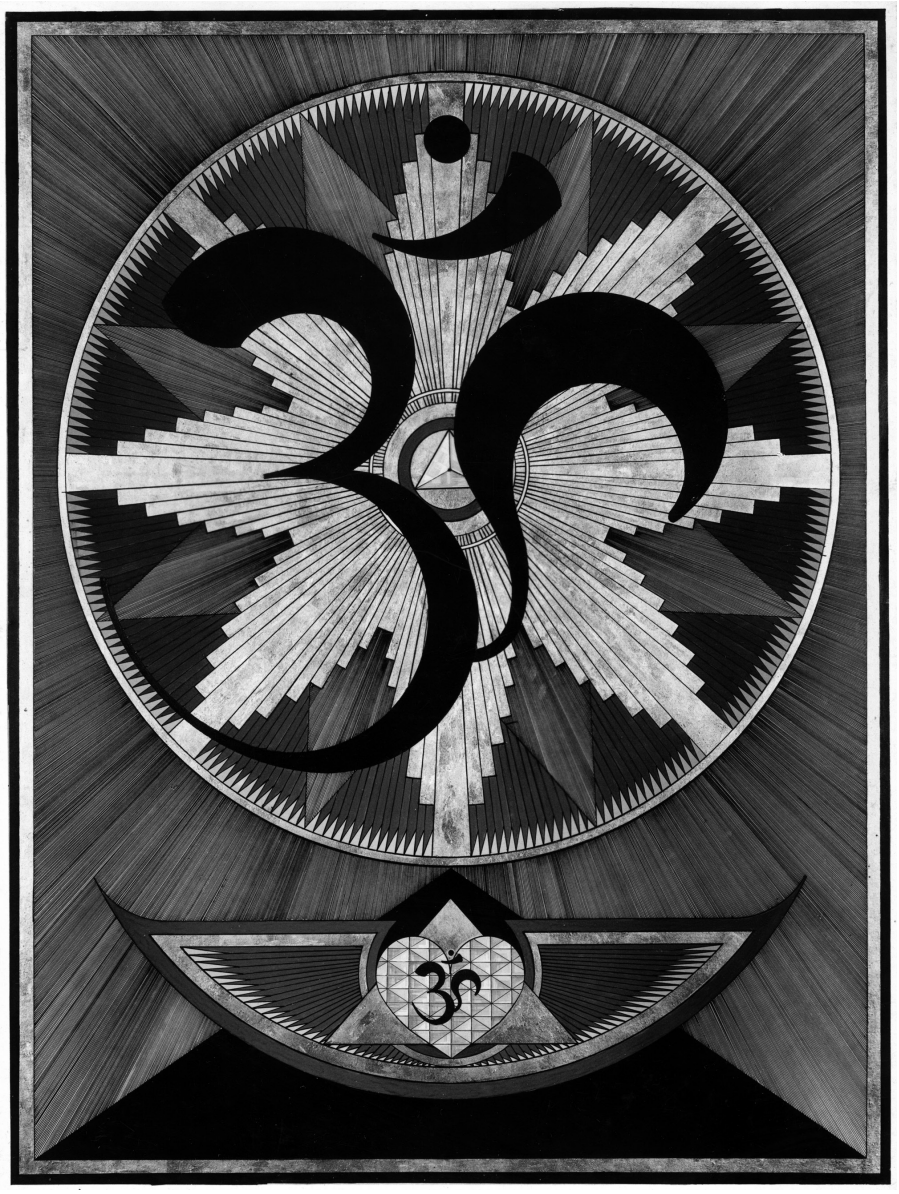

Fig. 12. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Pointing to that depiction of the "black *Om* [ॐ]," Jung even exclaimed, "This is the devil!" ("*Das ist der Teufel!*"). Curiously, the artist herself would later note that, among the many "Meditation Plates," it was precisely this painting with which she had always most identified.[152]

The *Om*, the most sacred and representative *mantra* in various

nos in 1943, ed. Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano (Einsiedeln: Daimon, 2015), 130, fn. 20; and Riccardo Bernardini, "In analisi con Jung: I diari di Emma von Pelet," *Rivista di Psicologia Analitica* 91, no. 39 (2015): 219–36.

96

In May 1929, in New York, Fröbe-Kapteyn was initiated into the Arcane School at the rank of "Disciple." She was active in the school for about two years; she would disaffiliate from this group four years later, in June 1933. Cf. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "19 Mai 44" (unpublished typescript, May 19, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

97

See Alice Ann Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography of Alice A. Bailey* (New York: Lucis Publishing Co., 1951), 217 ff.; Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 17 f.; and Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 35 ff. The Baileys stayed at Casa Gabriella for their first year, then moved to Casa Shanti in 1931. The rest of the participants stayed at the Hotel Monte Verità or the Hotel Collinetta (McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School," 154). In Ascona, a friendship developed between the Bailey family and Baron Eduard von der Heydt, owner of Monte Verità since 1926 (Alice Ann Bailey, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, November 12, 1930 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); see also the "Gästebuch Monte Verità", ed. Alexandra Barbian, in *Eduard von der Heydt: Kunstsammler, Bankier, Mäzen*, ed. Eberhard Illner (Munich: Prestel, 2013), 239; Fröbe-Kapteyn's signature appears in the "Gästebuch" on August 18, 1930 – "Gästebuch Monte Verità". However, the girls were involved in alleged erotic adventures that caused quite a scandal in Ascona: there is even mention of a little "getaway" to France, accompanied by Fröbe-Kapteyn's driver, Mario Nigra: an episode that she did not appreciate at all (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Alice Ann Bailey, March 22, 1933 [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

98

Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Vortrag," 1.

99

The original name, "Summer School," was replaced that same year with "International Centre for Spiritual Research."

100

Present at the sessions of 1930, 1931, and 1932, Roberto Assagioli (1888–1974) had met Jung in 1907, while he was at Burghölzli preparing his thesis on the subject of psychoanalysis. Fröbe-Kapteyn had already mentioned Assagioli to Derleth in a postcard sent from Italy on May 23, 1928 (Eranos Foundation Archives). During the symposiums of the International Centre for Spiritual Research, Assagioli stayed at the Hotel Monte Verità. In a letter dated July 31, 1963, Assagioli informed Rudolf Ritsema that he would be unable to speak at that year's Eranos Conference because he was busy with the International Meeting for the Education of the Supergifted (Capolona and Arezzo, August

Far Eastern traditions, from Hinduism to Buddhism, from Jainism to Sikhism, is a sacred sound, a vibration, and an invocation. It refers to the Absolute, to consciousness, to Ātman, and to Brahman. In Fröbe-Kapteyn's "Meditation Plates," the "Golden *Om*" or "Sacred Word," corresponding to the "golden swastika" (right-handed) and a "symbol of solar energy and power," is contrasted with the "Black *Om*" or "Cursed, Damned Word," corresponding to the "black or left-handed swastika, as it is [used] in Germany [i.e., as] a symbol of dark power [and] destruction . . . Both of these black symbols [the "black *Om*" and the "black swastika"] of highest but destructive power mean possession by the Devil. Just as Germany is possessed by him, the dark aspect of the Self. Or by Kālī the Destroyer."[153]

In 1942, regarding the role of Eranos in the context of the war catastrophe, Fröbe-Kapteyn explained: "The commencement of Eranos in the year 1933, at the same time that Hitler came into power, is a fact that must not be overlooked. It is clear to me, and perhaps to a few others, that Eranos belongs to the *army of constructive forces*, as over against the destructive ones which seem to be ruling the world, and that it is one of the first visible signs that the former are beginning to stir."[154]

Such a "dark aspect of the Self," which in all later "Meditation Plates" manifests itself as "black radiation," identified for Fröbe-Kapteyn not only her own personal Shadow, that "black occultism" that lived in her (over twelve years, Jung helped her with the difficult task of disidentification from it) but also the "dark spirit of Eranos." That dark spirit was connected with the "complex of the Arcane School, sunk in the unconscious," the reversal to the negative of the positive figure of the Tibetan, who, as spiritual master for Bailey (Master Koot Humi, believed to live at Shi-ga-tse in Tibet),[155] the followers of the Arcane School, and a small group of scholars involved in the International Centre for Spiritual Research, became instead the "black, the Super Dugpa [black magician or sorcerer, in theosophical literature], the Devil,"[156] or "his dark form."[157] More specifically, Fröbe-Kapteyn had covered that image with a black gable (*Giebel*), consisting of the dark *Om*. In the background stood the golden temple, even if separated from the viewer by the black pattern formed by the *Om* symbol. Jung, who had harsh words for that composition, claimed that Fröbe-Kapteyn had placed the devil between herself and the sanctuary, symbol of the divine. And that she had sided with the devil. This analysis deeply disturbed Fröbe-Kapteyn to such an extent that she could no longer look at the painting.[158]

As a result of Jung's criticism—which was therefore a powerfully transformative occasion for Fröbe-Kapteyn's existence—she removed all the geometrical paintings from the Eranos Lecture Hall and showed them only rarely and to only a few people, while continuing to work on them, almost in secret, for a few more years.

Fröbe-Kapteyn sent some reproductions of the new figures that he began to create in March 1934 to occultist Dion Fortune (Violet Mary Firth, 1890–1946), explaining to her in this way the inner and artistic change that was taking place within her, partly as a result of Jung's decisive and harsh comments the previous Summer: "Since I last wrote, I have been working hard at the correspondences between Psychoanaly-

3–6, 1963); nevertheless, he expressed his interest in the work of Eranos and sent his best wishes for the success of the conferences. On Assagioli's participation in the activities of the International Centre for Spiritual Research, see Roberto Assagioli, *Educare l'uomo domani: Appunti e note di lavoro* (Florence: Istituto di Psicosintesi, 1988), 29 ff.; McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School," 151 ff.; Alessandro Berti, *Roberto Assagioli 1888–1988* (Florence: Centro Studi di Psicosintesi "R. Assagioli," 1988), 33; Paola Giovetti, *Roberto Assagioli: La vita e l'opera del fondatore della Psicosintesi* (Rome: Mediterranee, 1995), 45.

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In 1930, Vittorino Vezzani (1885–1955) gave a series of lectures in English at the International Centre for Spiritual Research on "Yoga and the Education of the Soul," "Our Individual Place in Life and Our Mission," "The Fundamental Psychological Laws in Relation to the Education of the Soul," and "The Practical Application of These Laws." In 1931, in French, he spoke on "What is Mysticism," "Mysticism in Relation to Psychology, Philosophy, Art, and Science," "The Characteristics of Modern Mysticism," and, in English, "Common Sense and Spiritual Life" and "Profile of a Modern Mysticism"; in 1932, he dealt with topics such as "The Goal of Man" and "The Path of Attainment." Some of these essays later appeared in English in the *Hibbert Journal* and in *The Beacon* (Alice Ann Bailey, "August 1930" [unpublished typescript; Eranos Foundation Archive, Ascona-Moscia], 10), where also Fröbe-Kapteyn published an article (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Know Thy Self," *The Beacon: A Periodical devoted to Occultism* 8 (May 2, 1929): 31–35; we would like to thank Johanna Schade for bringing this text to our attention; Schade is working on a Dissertation project at the University of Halle on the topic "Eranos Conferences, science, and religion. Case studies from a study of religion perspective." Vezzani, who was also among the listeners at the Eranos Conferences in 1934, 1938, and 1952, published two contributions on Eranos in the parapsychology magazine *Luce e ombra* (see Gian Piero Quaglino, Augusto Romano, and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., *Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933-1952* [Turin: Antigone, 2007], 15). The magazine, founded in 1901 and suppressed in 1939 by the fascist regime, was edited in those years by Gastone de Boni (1908–1986), founder of the Archivio di Documentazione Storica della Ricerca Psichica (Archive of Historical Documentation of Psychic Research) in Bologna, who had a personal interest in Jung's work (Gastone de Boni, "Una visita a Carl Gustav Jung," *Luce e Ombra* 49, no. 4 [1949]: 212–19). The correspondence between Fröbe-Kapteyn and the Vezzani couple, Letizia and Vittorino, testifies to a sincere and deep bond. Contact was temporarily interrupted due to the war, but resumed in 1945 (Vittorino Vezzani, letters to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, November 5, 1945 and December 31, 1945, both from Rialmosso di Balma Biellese, [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]). In 1938, his signature in the conference register was followed by that of Pietro Ubaldi (1886–1972), a teacher, philosopher, and scholar of metaphysics who lived in Gubbio.

sis, the Kabbalah and ancient cults. Something seems to be happening to my subconscious regions, for suddenly after drawing geometrical symbols for about 8 years, and being quite incapable of drawing realistically,—suddenly mythical pictures have begun to appear, when I am meditating. Perhaps one should not call this meditation, but rather a condition of waking trance. The pictures are perceived inwardly, and I am sending you photos of this first series, which seem to me to be a definite set, all on the same background, all connected with the Cult of the Great Mother. It is like a mystery play, and also like some initiation through an ancient rite (Fig. 13).

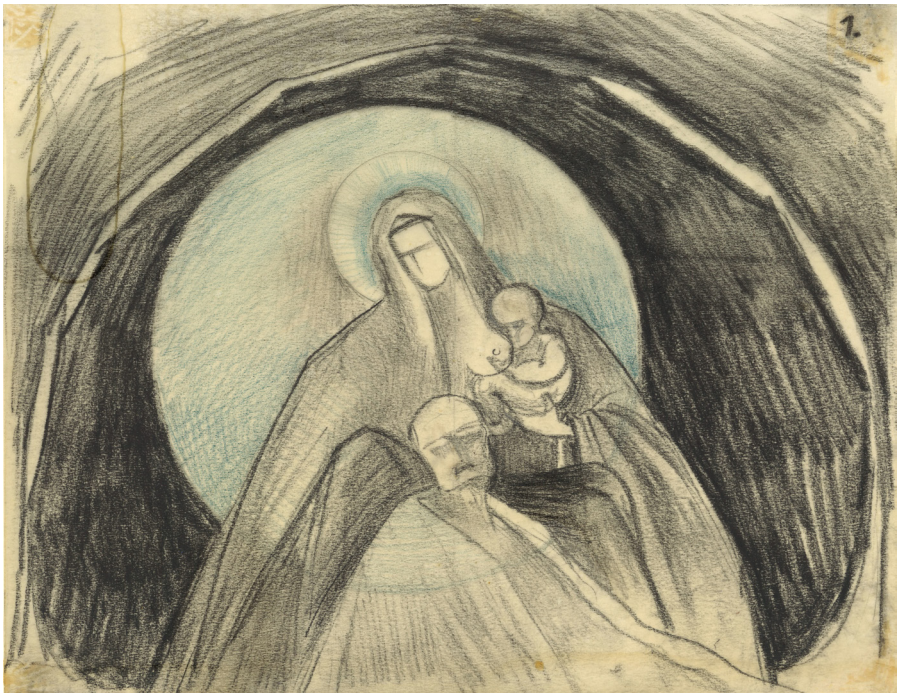

Fig. 13. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 1, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

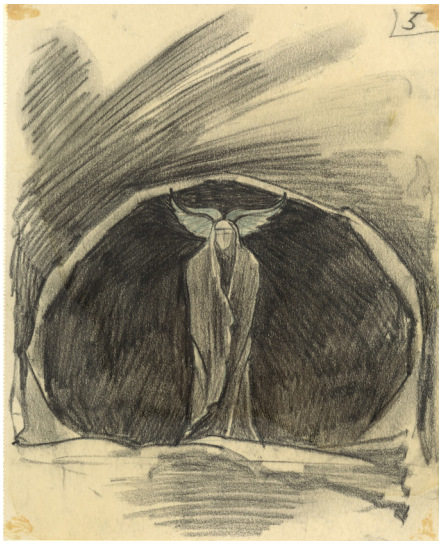

Fig. 14. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 5, March 1934. Pencil on paper. In her commentary on this vision, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn traces this figure back to a passage from *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1912), in which Carl Gustav Jung refers to the Koranic figure of al-Khiḍr, known as "the Verdant One." He appears in the 18th sura, entitled "The Cave." The divine angel Al-Khiḍr (Helios), in his form as Dhulqarnein (Mithra), is an emblem of the Immortal, the Wise One in divine matters; his two-horned appearance, with his head veiled, refers to his power of divine solar wisdom, born from the depths of his mother. See Carl Gustav Jung, *Rebirth—Text and Notes of the Lecture held at Eranos in 1939 / Rinascere. Testo e appunti della conferenza tenuta a Eranos nel 1939*, eds. Fabio Merlini and Riccardo Bernardini (Ascona: Eranos Classics 1, Aragno * Eranos Ascona, 2020). Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

The symbols seem to rise from what Jung calls the Collective Subconsciousness. They might be connected with a Mithras Ritual or Cybele cult. Some of the symbols are not familiar to me, for ex. the horned and winged male figure in the cave (Fig. 14), and also the second horned figure, in which snakes curl round the horns (Fig. 15). This last picture as well as two others seem to be connected with the process of Kuṇḍalinī (Fig. 16). At any rate it may interest you to see them. Probably many other others will follow, now the channel for symbols of this level is free."[159]

On the subject of the realism of spontaneously experienced images, also with reference to our mind's ability to cyclically return to functioning in a creatively archaic way, Jung had already written in *Psychological Types* (1921): "Among primitives . . . the imago, the psychic reverberation of the sense-perception, is so strong and so sensuously coloured that when it is reproduced as a spontaneous memory-image it sometimes even has the quality of an hallucination . . . We only 'think' of the dead, but the primitive actually perceives them because of the extraordinary sensuousness of his mental images . . . When the primitive 'thinks,' he literally has visions, whose reality is so great that

Fig. 15. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 7, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

Fig. 16. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 12, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

he constantly mistakes the psychic for the real. How easily the primitive reality of the psychic image reappears is shown by the dreams of normal people and the hallucinations that accompany mental derangement. The mystics even endeavour to recapture the primitive reality of the imago by means of an artificial introversion, in order to counterbalance extraversion."[160]

In April 1934, when he also received copies of those "ritual scenes"—which constitute the drawings contained in the first album of the "Visions"—Jung wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn that he had the impression that the figures were reminiscent of a sort of initiation into the kingdom of the "Great Mother," leading him to wonder what, in general, an entrance into the cult of the Goddess consisted of (Fig. 17). It was a cult that actually existed, he specified, in parallel to that of Mithra: in the latter, however, women were not allowed and thus came to the cult of the Goddess[161] (Fig. 18).

Some "Meditation Plates" and perhaps the same early "Visions" were sent to esotericist Arthur Edward Waite (1857–1942), who in 1935 wrote to Fröbe-Kapteyn that he was interested in her symbolic images, some reproductions of which she had sent him a long time ago;

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McGuire, *Bollingen*, 22. In a letter written by Fröbe-Kapteyn to Jung on January 30, 1931, she invited him to give a lecture on "The Secret of the Golden Flower" (which he had received from Richard Wilhelm in 1928) during the second session of the International Centre for Spiritual Research. The letterhead, of course, did not yet bear the name "Eranos" (the Conferences would begin in 1933), but rather "Casa Gabriella." In a letter dated June 15, 1932, Jung replied to her: "If I should ever be in your area, I would like to visit you. I would prefer not to talk about the 'Secret of the Golden Flower,' as this would require psychological preparation that would be too demanding." (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung). Jung did not participate in the three sessions of the International Centre, but he did attend the first edition of the Eranos Conferences in August 1933.

103
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Arcane School: Positive Values, Negative Values" (unpublished typescript, undated [second half of the 1940s?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2; and Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan," 5 and 9.

104
In Fröbe-Kapteyn's memory, Bailey directed everything in the early meetings of the International Centre. As head of the Arcane School, she wrote her books under the dictation of a Tibetan lama, Master Koot Humi—a bit like Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888),—had an air of superiority, and was a brilliant speaker, always surrounded by the mysterious aura of her Tibetan master, who was inaccessible to anyone else (he lived in Tibet, remained anonymous, and dictated telepathically). Fröbe-Kapteyn had read Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* in 1908, and, although she did not understand it, she considered it the most important book on theosophy (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Marie Stopes, July 28, 1908 [British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg]). In the third year of the Centre's activity, Bailey's leadership and power became unbearable to Fröbe-Kapteyn, who realized that Eranos' work would end up in a dead end if it continued in that way. She fell seriously ill just before the third symposium with the same Neuropathic pains in her back and head, with a fever of 40°. In the end, she opened the conference with enormous effort and in the Fall she severed her working relationship with Bailey (Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Drei Zeichnungen," 2; see also Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Alice Ann Bailey, March 22, 1933 [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

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On the project of the International Centre for Spiritual Research, see McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School," and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 259–64.

Fig. 17. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 9, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

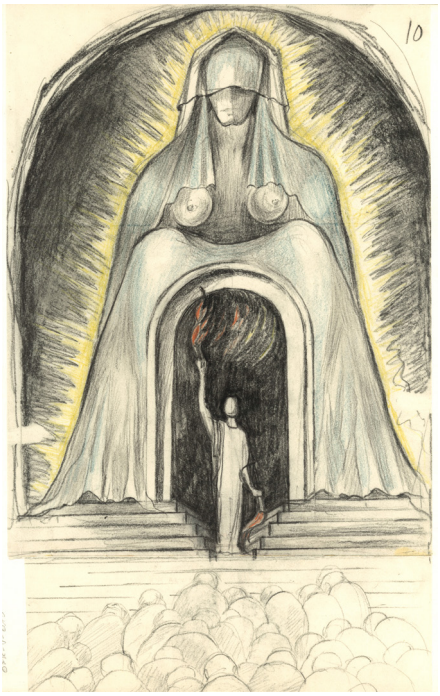

Fig. 18. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," Series I, no. 10, March 1934. Pencil on paper. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

he noted how they had now shifted from a geometric stage to one of "ritual scenes," acknowledging that her interpretation of them was also most suggestive to him.[162] In 1936, Waite wrote to her that he was particularly interested in the "flowering of the Grail"—one of the most recurring themes in both the "Plates" and the "Visions"—in her representations.[163]

As a result of delving more deeply into Analytical Psychology and the maturation of her intellectual relationship with Jung, Fröbe-Kapteyn's production thus increasingly turned toward a figurative style that recalled the active imagination, i.e., the psychological practice of dialoguing with the unconscious that Jung learned through his self-experimentation described in the "Red Book" and that became a "working model" his patients were invited to use.[164] A collection of 315 "Visions,"[165] arranged in twelve blue-bound albums, drawn between 1934 and 1938, can be traced at least in part to that technique.[166] These are the crucial years of the beginning of Fröbe-Kapteyn's cultural enterprise, Eranos; of her enduring intellectual relationship with Jung, who was among the main sources of inspiration for the Eranos Conferences; and of her search for iconographic material, for which Jung provided the impetus, which led to the creation of the Eranos Archive for Research on Symbolism.

In her artistic-therapeutic productions, Fröbe-Kapteyn abandoned the geometries and symmetries of the "Meditation Plates" and, over the course of about five years, created numerous small-format figurative drawings using oil pastels or wax crayons. As Rosenberg notes, she kept these images carefully hidden from the eyes of the public, in contrast to the "Plates." This means that these drawings, although laden with symbolism like the geometric paintings, had a completely different function: the "Visions" were not intended to have a suggestive effect on viewers, but rather to articulate the painter's inner life

106
Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee zum Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1922).

107
Rudolf Otto, *West-Östliche Mystik: Vergleich und Unterscheidung zur Wesensdeutung* (Gotha: Leopold Klotz, 1926).

108
Quoted in Aniela Jaffé, "C. G. Jung und die Eranostagungen" (1975), Italian translation: "Carlo Gustav Jung e i convegni di Eranos," in *Saggi sulla psicologia di Carl Gustav Jung*, Aniela Jaffé (1975; Roma: Paoline, 1984), 113.

109
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos, Fortsetzung," in "Die Geschichte von Eranos," 1.

110
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos, Fortsetzung," 2. In 1933, Otto also said he would call her "Erana" (Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Mary and Eranos" (unpublished typescript, November 23, 1942; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). On the Greek meaning of the word and its use throughout history, up to Fröbe-Kapteyn's Eranos, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 1.1: "La parola *eranos*," 29–39.

111
Rudolf Otto pointed out to Fröbe-Kapteyn how the palindrome of the noun *eranos* was a Latin and Italian verb: *sonare* (see Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 21; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 42 f. and 56). On the influence of Rudolf Otto on the work of Eranos, see

in the sense of an artistic-therapeutic activity.[167] Among the "negative values" of the Arcane School, Fröbe-Kapteyn had in fact recognized in retrospect the "suppression of all dark things, including the *shadow*" and the "direction of all work 'upwards'! never into the depths";[168] she had the impression she was instead being led by the new images, which she began to make spontaneously in March 1934.

The "Visions" show a visionary reinterpretation of the nature, landscape, and architecture of the place where the author lived: they include real details—Lake Maggiore, the Alps, the Brissago Islands, and the Bauhaus style Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos—"transfigured" into symbolic and imaginative elements, in which reality and fantasy, outer environment and inner world, intertwine, permeate, and mingle in a stunning way. Some "initiatory" motifs also appear in the "Visions": the somatic experience (breathing, lactating, bleeding) and physical transformation (into plant, animal, or divine being) of the female body. There are also the identification with a deity, the cosmic journey, and the complementary union of opposites.[169] Fröbe-Kapteyn recalled: "Jung once told me that all orders, such as that of St. John, the Templars, Freemasonry, and all others, are merely an outer expression of the *One Order of Brotherhood* in the unconscious (the White Lodge in Theosophy comes near to that). He also told me that any real initiation is only in the unconscious, for ex. the rites I used to draw of such visions, in which I was initiated. He also said: *Sie brauchen nicht mehr getauft zu werden, Sie sind schon mit allen Wässern getauft!!* [You no longer need to be baptized, you have already been baptized with all waters!] meaning these visions. Therefore, any ritual or initiation or degree on the outer plane puts us in touch with the *Inner Rite*. And *that* is the irrevocable thing. A brother who deserts his order, or a priest who leaves the church cannot *have his power taken from him*. He can only be excommunicated."[170]

Despite the absence of a proper analytical relationship, from 1934 until Jung died in 1961, Fröbe-Kapteyn continued to turn to him, not only to discuss issues concerning her cultural project, but also to ask him for advice on personal issues—as she did later with other analysts, such as Erich Neumann (1905–1960) in 1948 and Léopold Szondi (1893–1986) in Zurich in 1950, the father of "destiny analysis" (*Schicksalsanalyse*). Jung suggested that she write down her dreams and try to interpret their meaning, telling her to visit him from time to time, when she no longer knew how to deal with the material of her unconscious. As he instructed, she should devote herself every day for four hours to reflecting on her dreams, to drawing her inner images, and to carry out therapeutic work related to her own personal development.[171] Jung provided her with particular assistance when she was conducting iconographic research for the Eranos Archive, during which she often had intense psychic experiences, also recorded in her "Visions."

Fröbe-Kapteyn documented in her "Blue Book" the forms of imagination of a creative and independent subjectivity, capable of holding together the identities of woman, mother, scholar, artist, and spiritualist. Because of the care she had taken to draw, collect, and preserve, Fröbe-Kapteyn perhaps hoped that her "Blue Book" would survive her and allow future generations to rediscover and make it their own, as a special testament to that endless search for self, at once personal and

Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, eds., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1959), vol. 3, 954 ff.; Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 92–99; Hakl, *Eranos*, 39–43; Henry Corbin, "De l'Iran à Eranos," *Du* 15, no. 4 (1955), 29; and Gerard Wiegers, "Henry Corbin and the *Gospel of Barnabas*," in *Henry Corbin: Philosophies et sagesses des Religions du Livre; Actes du Colloque "Henry Corbin;" Sorbonne, November 6-8, 2003; Colloquium organized by the École Pratique des Hautes Études and the Centre d'Études des Religions du Livre*, ed. Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Christian Jambet, and Pierre Lory (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 189.

112

I Ging: Das Buch der Wandlungen, ed. Richard Wilhelm (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1924).

113

See Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 47 f., and Rudolf Ritsema, "Encompassing Versatility: Keystone of the Eranos Project / Allumfassende Wendigkeit: Schlußstein des Eranos-Projekts / Versatilité englobante: Clef de voûte du projet Eranos," *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, 57 (1988), VII–LVII. On the significance of the *I Ching* throughout the history of Eranos, see also the recent work by Matteo Sgorbati, *L'I Ching a Eranos: Wilhelm, Jung e la ricezione del classico dei mutamenti* (Naples, Orientexpress, 2021), and also the work by Cruz Mañas Palaver, *El oráculo del I Ching: Un capitulo de la historia de la psicología profunda* (PhD diss., Escuela Internacional de Doctorado, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid, 2021.

114

Fröbe-Kapteyn and Jung are believed to have met in Darmstadt in 1930, on the occasion of the last conference organized at the "School of Wisdom." (See Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Erster Abend . . . ," 15; Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 20; Jaffé, Jaffé, "C. G. Jung und die Eranostagungen," 113; McGuire, *Bollingen*, 24; Rosenbaum-Kroeber, "Eranos e Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn," 119 f.; Nadia Neri, *Oltre l'Ombra: Donne intorno a Jung* (Roma: Borla, 1995), 187; Hakl, *Eranos*, 26; and von Reibnitz, "Der Eranos-Kreis," 110; in a private document, Fröbe-Kapteyn recalls instead that her first meeting with Jung took place in May 1933: cf. Fröbe-Kapteyn, "19 Mai 44," 4.)

115

Sonu Shamdasani, "Jung's Journey to the East" (1996), Italian translation: "Il viaggio di Jung verso l'Oriente," in Carl Gustav Jung, *La psicologia del Kundalini-Yoga: Seminario tenuto nel 1932* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2004), 25 ff.

116

Kuno von Hardenberg participated in the second symposium of the International Centre for Spiritual Research (1931).

117

On the relationship between the "School of Wisdom" and Fröbe-Kapteyn's Eranos, see James Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (1976), Italian translation, *Il sistema occulto: La fuga dalla ra-*

universal, that Jung would theorize with the idea of the "individuation process."[172]

Conclusion

The Eranos Foundation is currently engaged in an extensive project to recover, catalog, digitize, and organize Fröbe-Kaptyen's art collection. This is a fund of about 450 images, ninety percent of which are stored at the Eranos archives in Ascona. The corpus of these works is presently being restored.

From 1978 to the present, the Eranos Foundation has supported the inclusion of Fröbe-Kapteyn's art materials as part of a series of important exhibitions:

- Thirteen paintings by Fröbe-Kapteyn from the "Meditation Plates" series were first included in the exhibition "Monte Verità—The Breasts of Truth," curated by Harald Szeemann (Ascona, Zurich, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, and Ascona again, 1978–1980). They are now permanently displayed at Casa Anatta, Ascona, which has functioned as the main venue for the museum exhibition on the history of Monte Verità since 1981[173] (Fig. 19).

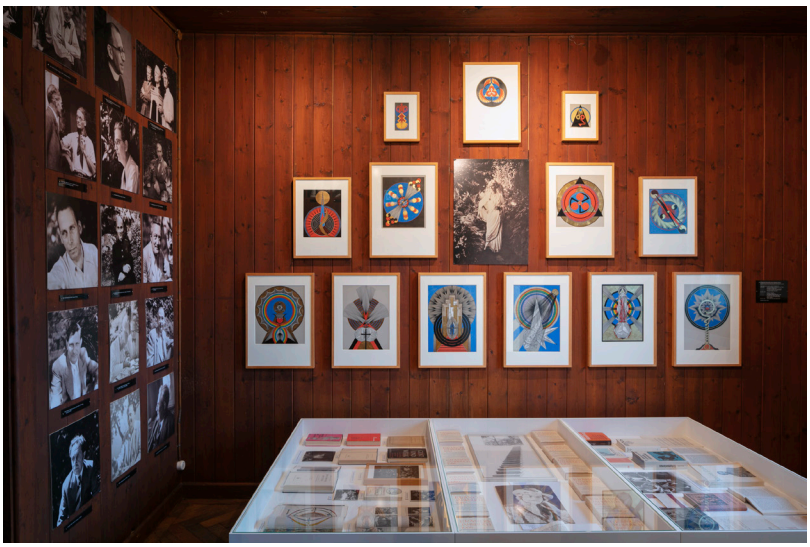

Fig. 19. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition "Monte Verità – The Breasts of Truth," curated by Harald Szeemann (Ascona, Zurich, Berlin, Vienna, Munich, and Ascona again, 1978–1980), now a permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of Monte Verità, set up at Casa Anatta, Ascona. Ph. Roberto Pellegrini. Courtesy of the Fondazione Monte Verità, from the permanent exhibition at Casa Anatta, Ascona-Monte Verità. All rights reserved.

- Two "Meditation Plates" and some "Eranos Mandalas" were shown during the exhibition "Eranos—Images of a Mythical Journey into Our Times," set up by the Eranos Foundation in Ascona (Aion Art Center, Museo comunale d'arte moderna, Museo Epper, and Monte Verità) and on the Brissago Islands from June 17 to September 2, 2006, and curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Claudio Metzger, and Giovanni Sorge. After the 1978 exhibition dedicated to the history of Monte Verità, which also included the Eranos experience, the 2006 exhibition—which coincided with the relaunch of the Foundation's

gione nella politica e nella società del xx secolo (Milan: SugarCo, 1989), 278 ff.; Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 20 f.; Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 45 ff.; Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 63 ff.; and von Reibnitz, "Der Eranos-Kreis," 110 ff.

118
Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 27.

119
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Erster Abend . . . ," 14.

120
Fröbe-Kapteyn, 7.

121
Fröbe-Kapteyn, 14; see also Id., letter to Marie Stopes, December 1, 1937 (British Library, London; transcript kindly provided by Karssenberg).

122
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Erster Abend . . . ," 15.

123
Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, September 20, 1937 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung).

124
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The Eranos Archive" (unpublished typescript, undated [1947?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

125
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism" (unpublished typescript, undated [1947?]; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

126
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism", 1.

127
Fröbe-Kapteyn, 8.

128
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Carl Gustav Jung, August 9, 1939 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

129
On the links between the Bollingen Foundation and Eranos, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 247–353, and Bernardini, "Neumann at Eranos," in Murray Stein and Erel Shalit, eds., *Turbulent Times, Creative Minds: Erich Neumann and C. G. Jung in Relationship* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron, 2016), 199–236.

130
The Board of the "first" Eranos Foundation, which remained active until 1955, was composed of Adolf Portmann (1897–1982; Professor of Biology and Zoology at the University of Basel and later

activities after a few years of administrative transition—was the first project to systematically present Eranos through photographs, documents, letters, books, and paintings[174] (Fig. 20).

Fig. 20. Exhibition "Eranos – Images of a Mythical Journey into Our Times," set up by the Eranos Foundation in Ascona (Aion Art Center, Municipal Museum of Modern Art, Epper Museum, and Monte Verità) and the Brissago Islands and held from June 17 to September 2, 2006, curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Claudio Metzger, and Giovanni Sorge. Ph. Riccardo Bernardini. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

- Some "Eranos Mandalas" were included in the exhibition "Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933–1952," curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Turin, held from October 19 to November 9, 2007, at the Rectorate of the University of Turin[175] (Fig. 21). The eighty photographs of Jung at Eranos exhibited on that occasion in Turin, most of which had never been seen before, are masterpieces by Margarita Marianne (Margarethe) Fellerer (1885–1961), Eranos's official photographer during the early decades of the Conferences. A monographic exhibition dedicated to her, "Margarethe Fellerer. Fotografa," curated by Diana Mirolo, was organized by the Epper Museum from March 31 to May 28, 2012.[176] The photographic collection of Margarethe Fellerer was donated on that occasion by her heirs to the Eranos Foundation, which still preserves this extraordinary heritage of images.[177]
- Two "Meditation Plates" were included in the exhibition "L'energia del luogo. Jean Arp, Raffael Benazzi, Julius Bissier, Ben Nicholson, Hans Richter, Mark Tobey, Italo Valenti. Alla ricerca del *genius loci* Ascona–Locarno," directed by Riccardo Carazzetti and Mara Folini at the Museo comunale d'arte moderna, Ascona, Casa Serodine, Ascona, Casa Rusca Pinacoteca comunale, Locarno, and Atelier Remo Rossi, Locarno from April 4 to July 5, 2009.[178]
- Twelve "Meditation Plates" were shown during the exhibition entitled "The Great Mother" and organized by the Trussardi

Rector Magnificus of the same University); Tadeus Reichstein (1897–1996; Professor at the Institute of Organic Chemistry, University of Basel and the 1950 co-winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine—along with Edward Calvin Kendall (1886–1972) and Philip Showalter Hench (1896–1965)—for the discovery of cortisone); Hans Conrad Bänziger (1895–1956; a renowned Zurich psychiatrist); and Walter Keller-Staub (a well-known Zurich lawyer). A "second" Eranos Foundation was established in August 1961. As stipulated in Fröbe-Kapteyn's will, Adolf Portmann was nominated as its first president. When Fröbe-Kapteyn passed away in 1962, the role of guiding Eranos was inherited by Portmann, who was assisted by Rudolf Ritsema (1918–2006), the scholar of the *I Ching*. The Alwine von Keller Foundation was established in von Keller's memory (1878–1965) by Emma Hélène von Pelet-Narbonne shortly before her death. Von Keller was a student of Jung's who lived at Eranos from 1937 to the early 1960s. In March 1980, the Eranos Foundation and the Alwine von Keller Foundation merged, becoming the Eranos and Alwine von Keller Foundation. After Ritsema stepped down, there were several successive presidents: Christa Robinson (1994 to 2001; analytical psychologist), Wanda Luban (2001 to 2002; psychotherapist), Maria Danioth (2002 to 2005; analytical psychologist), and John van Praag (2005 to 2009; classicist and businessman). In January 2008, the Foundation reverted to its original name, Eranos Foundation. The Board of the Eranos Foundation, headed since 2009 by Fabio Merlini, now includes representatives of the Government of the Canton of Ticino and of the Municipality of Ascona.

Fig. 21. Exhibition "Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933–1952," curated by Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Turin, held from October 19 to November 9, 2007, at the Rectorate of the University of Turin. Ph. Riccardo Bernardini. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

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On the history of the Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism, see Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 3: "Tracce. Jung e l'Archivio di Eranos," 247–353. A recent contribution on the subject is that of Frederika Tevebring, "Images from the Collective Unconscious. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn and the Eranos Archive," *The Public Domain Review* (February 22, 2023).

Foundation and the City of Milan at the Royal Palace of Milan from August 25 to November 15, 2015, in conjunction with the 2015 Universal Exhibition (Expo Milano 2015) on the theme, "Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life." "The Great Mother" exhibition was directed by Massimiliano Gioni, assisted by Roberta Tenconi[179] (Fig. 22). Gioni had already curated the 55th Venice Biennale (2013), "The Encyclopedic Palace," inspired by Jung's *Red Book*. The curators displayed in a dedicated slideshow the figures collected by Fröbe-Kapteyn and dedicated to the Great Mother theme, which were originally shown during exhibition "The Great Mother," set up in New York in 1939; the same slideshow was included in the exhibition "Judy Chicago: Herstory," set up at the New Museum in New York from December 10, 2023 to March 3, 2024, and curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Margot Norton, and Madeline Weisburg[180] (Fig. 23).

Fig. 22. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition "The Great Mother," organized by the Trussardi Foundation and the City of Milan at Palazzo Reale, Milan, from August 25 to November 15, 2015, in conjunction with World Expo 2015 (Expo Milano 2015) on the theme "Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life," curated by Massimiliano Gioni, assisted by Roberta Tenconi. Ph. Fondazione Trussardi, Milan. All rights reserved.

- The same twelve "Meditation Plates" shown in Milan were also included in the exhibition entitled "The Keeper," set up at the New Museum of New York from July 9 to October 2, 2016, curated by Massimiliano Gioni and Natalie Bell.[181] (Fig. 24)
- Some images of the thirteen "Meditation Plates" originally included in Harald Szeemann's exhibition "Monte Verità—Le mammelle della verità / Monte Verità—The Breasts of Truth" (1978–1980) have been featured in the exhibition dedicated to *Harald Szeemann. Museum of Obsessions*, curated by Glen Phillips and Phillip Kaiser, in collaboration with Doris Chon and Pietro Rigolo, at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles from February 6 to May 6, 2018.[182]
- Six "Meditation Plates" were shown at the exhibition entitled "Elles font l'abstraction. Une autre histoire de l'abstraction au

132
Upon Fröbe-Kapteyn's death, Szandor (Sándor) Végh (1905-1997), a Hungarian composer and violinist (later naturalized French), came specially from Basel to play Bach's *Chaconne* for her (Ritsema-Gris, "L'Œuvre d'Eranos et Vie d'Olga Froebe-Kapteyn," 22).

Fig. 23. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, slideshow with a selection of figures dedicated to the Great Mother theme belonging to the Eranos Archive for Research in Symbolism, originally shown at the occasion of the exhibition "The Great Mother," set up in New York in 1939. Exhibition "Judy Chicago: Herstory," set up at the New Museum in New York on December 10, 2023–March 3, 2024, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Margot Norton, and Madeline Weisburg. Ph. New Museum, New York. All rights reserved.

Fig. 24. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition "The Keeper," set up at the New Museum in New York from July 9 to October 2, 2016, curated by Massimiliano Gioni and Natalie Bell. Ph. New Museum, New York. All rights reserved.

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The number 127 refers to the "Plates" preserved at Eranos or found to date in external funds. It has not been ruled out that the total number of works is greater; this may even be likely. Part of a series of fourteen "Meditation Plates" were sent by Fröbe-Kapteyn in the 1930s to Turin, Italy, to Industrie Grafiche Vincenzo Bona (still in existence), probably through Vittorino Vezzani (Foster Bailey, letters to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, February 25, 1931 and January 12, 1932] Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]). High-quality reproductions were to be made, but the printing press was partly destroyed by Nazi bombing. On the night between June 11 and 12, 1940, the first Allied raid struck Turin: bombs fell on the city until April 5, 1945, hitting factories, homes, public build-

20e siècle," organized by the Centre Pompidou in Paris from May 19 to August 23, 2021, under the direction of Christine Macel[183] (Fig. 25).

Fig. 25. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition "Elles font l'abstraction. Une autre histoire de l'abstraction au 20e siècle," organized by the Centre Pompidou in Paris from May 19 to August 23, 2021, under the direction of Christine Macel (pictured here with Riccardo Bernardini, during the lockdown period of the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic). Ph. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia.

- The same six "Meditation Plates" were included in the exhibition reset under the title "Mujeres de la abstracción" at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao from October 22, 2021 to February 27, 2022, again directed by Christine Macel[184] (Fig. 26).

Fig. 26. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf). Exhibition "Mujeres de la abstracción," set up at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and held from October 22, 2021 to February 27, 2022, directed by Christine Macel. Ph. Erika Barahona Ede / FMGB Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa. All rights reserved.

- A first monographic exhibition dedicated to Fröbe-Kapteyn's art was set up, under the auspices of the Eranos Foundation, at the Kunsthalle Mainz from June 30 to October 1, 2023. The exhibition, entitled "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. Tiefes Wissen," was curated by Yasmin Afshar and showed forty-seven "Meditation Plates" and, for the first time, a selection of sixteen "Visions." The exhibition also included works by contemporary artists,

ings, monuments, and streets, and causing hundreds of deaths among the civilian population. Of the fourteen original paintings shipped to Turin, traces of ten were lost. Of the set of fourteen, however, several reproductions were saved; they are still preserved at the Art Institute of Chicago or for sale in European and American art galleries. We thank the Bona family and Pierdomenico Chiarabaglio, previously General Manager of Bona Industrie Grafiche, for their availability in searching for these works.

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An early, still very embryonic study of the "Meditation Plates" is contained in Riccardo Bernardini, "Da Monte Verità a Eranos: Elementi di una rete culturale per lo studio della psiche e della complessità umana," (master's thesis, Università degli Studi di Torino, 2003), § 2: "Eranos: una retrodatazione? Le Tavole di meditazione della Arcane School, New York-Ascona," 119–87, and "Appendice alla Parte Seconda, § 2: Tavole di meditazione dipinte da Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn spedite a Dion Fortune, con una lettera inedita di Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn del 19 marzo 1934. Su gentile concessione di Maria Babwahsingh / S.R.I.Am., Bayonne, NJ, ottobre 2023."

135
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The Hut and the Sacred Word" (unpublished typescript, Easter Monday 1945; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). In her visions, the color gold often appears as a symbol of the Self. (Cf., e.g., Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vision. 3 Juli 1947" [unpublished typescript, July 3, 1947; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

136
The "unifying" psychological function of the maṇḍala, which we find widely present in both of Fröbe-Kapteyn's artistic periods through the iconographic motif of the "Eranos Mandala" (series that was reconstructed and commented for the first time in Riccardo Bernardini, "Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos: Il contributo junghiano al Circolo di Eranos: ideazione, contributi e iniziative dal 1933 al 1952," (PhD diss., Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna, 2009), § 4.2: "Il 'mandala' di Eranos," 330–51; and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 1.5, 83–111 and 165 f.), is well documented in the seminar given at Eranos in 1943 by Carl Gustav Jung, *The Solar Myths and Opicinus de Canistris: Notes of the Seminar Given at Eranos in 1943*, eds. Riccardo Bernardini, Gian Piero Quaglino, and Augusto Romano (Einsiedeln: Daimon, 2015).

137
See Fabio Merlini and Riccardo Bernardini, "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. 1881, Londres (Royaume-Uni)-1962, Ascona (Suisse)," in *Elles font l'abstraction. Exhibition Album*, ed. Christine Macel and Laure Chauvelot (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2021), 54; the biography sheet was later republished in the website of AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions a pour objet la création, l'indexation et la diffusion de l'information sur les artistes femmes du XIXe et XXe siècle: https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/olga-frobe-kapteyn/.

e.g., Monia Ben Hamouda, Kerstin Brätsch, Hylozoic/Desires (Himali Singh Soin & David Soin Tappeser), Mountain River Jump!, and Sriwhana Spong[185] (Fig. 27).

Fig. 27. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard and "Visions," c. 1934–1938. Pencil on paper. Exhibition "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. Tiefes Wissen," held at Kunsthalle Mainz from June 30 to October 1, 2023, and curated by Yasmin Afshar. Ph. Norbert Miguletz / Kunsthalle Mainz. All rights reserved.

- An exhibition, titled "La scia del Monte ou les utopistes magnétiques," curated by Federica Chiocchetti and Nicoletta Mongini, was on view at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) from March 22 to September 15, 2024. Twenty-six contemporary artists dialogued with the works of artists who evoked the *genius loci* of Monte Verità in the first half of the twentieth century, such as Hans Arp, Marianne von Werefkin, and Fröbe-Kapteyn, with some of Fröbe-Kapteyn's "Meditation Plates." In conjunction with that exhibition, The Cool Couple artists set out to establish a dialogue between her work and synthetic thought: with the help of artificial intelligence, they thus combined Fröbe-Kapteyn's meditative drawings with a dataset of images of organic and inorganic elements[186] (Fig. 28).
- A second monographic exhibition, entitled "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artist—Researcher," was set up at the Museo Casa Rusca in Locarno from August 8, 2024 to January 12, 2025. The exhibition, curated by Raphael Gygax, showed several "Meditation Plates" and "Visions" in addition to several figures from the Eranos Archives for Research in Symbolism. The exhibition also included works by contemporary artists Loredana Sperini and Lucy Stein[187] (Fig. 29). In association with the exhibition, a display entitled "Winding and Unwinding," a project of the Italian duo The Cool Couple conceived for Monte Verità, was created. In a reinterpretation of Fröbe-Kapteyn's futuristic research idea, in the wake of the previous exhibition at MBAL in Le Locle, the artists moved along the ridge of the

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Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Lecture Program. August. 1930" (unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

139
See Foster Bailey, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, November 12, 1930 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

140
[Alice Ann Bailey?], "International Centre for Spiritual Research, first session, August 1930" (unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 6; Bailey's interpretation of these images were sometimes accompanied by a verse or paragraph "from the old commentaries contributed by the Tibetan" (cf. Alice Ann Bailey, "August 1930," 1930 [unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia], 9 f.), the disembodied entity their group communicated with in those years and whom Fröbe-Kapteyn recognized in Master Koot Hoomi (see Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan," cit., 3), using the techniques of *channeling* or ultraphany: see R. Bernardini, "Da Monte Verità a Eranos," 128 f.

141
International Centre for Spiritual Research, "Program of Lectures. Second session. August 2nd to 22nd, 1931," unpublished typescript, 1930; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

142
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Im Anfang war das Wort: Geschrieben für Bettina. Ostern. 1928" (unpublished typescript; 1928; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Zwei Erhlungen: Der Ewige Gefhrte, Der Turm. Geschrieben für Bettina. Zu Weihnachten. 1929" (unpublished typescript; 1929; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); and Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Erzählungen. Geschrieben für Bettina. Ostern. 1931" (unpublished typescript; 1931; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

Fig. 28. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition "La scia del Monte ou les utopistes magnétiques," curated by Federica Chiocchetti and Nicoletta Mongini, on view at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) from March 22 to September 15, 2024. Ph. Luca Olivet. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Le Locle. All rights reserved.

relationship between art, philosophy, psychology, and natural forms, reinterpreted by artificial intelligence (Fig. 30).

Fig. 29. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Sensory visit for families: an art workshop for children aimed at creating works inspired by Fröbe-Kapteyn's "Meditation Plates." Exhibition "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artist – Researcher," curated by Raphael Gygax, on view at the Museo Casa Rusca in Locarno from August 8, 2024 to January 12, 2025. Ph. Museo Casa Rusca, Locarno. All rights reserved.

- Three "Meditation Plates" by Fröbe-Kapteyn were on display at the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, which hosted the exhibition "Tussen hemel en oorlog. Kunst en religie in het interbellum" [Between heaven and war. Art and religion in the interbellum] curated by Rozanne de Bruijne, from February 20 to June 15, 2025[188] (Fig. 31).

Fig. 31. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934. Mixed technique (tempera, India ink, and gold leaf) on cardboard. Exhibition "Tussen hemel en oorlog. Kunst en religie in het interbellum," curated by Rozanne de Bruijne, on view at the Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, from February 20 to June 15, 2025. Ph. Catharijneconvent Museum, Utrecht. All rights reserved.

Fig. 30. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Meditation Plates," c. 1926–1934, reinterpreted by the artists The Cool Couple as part of the installation "Winding and Unwinding," conceived for Monte Verità, in the wake of the previous exhibition "La scia del Monte ou les utopistes magnétiques," curated by Federica Chiocchetti and Nicoletta Mongini, on view at the Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle (MBAL) from March 22 to September 15, 2024, and subsequently in conjunction with the exhibition "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artist – Researcher," set up at the Museo Casa Rusca in Locarno from August 8, 2024 to January 12, 2025.

143
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Gleichnisse" (unpublished typescript, October 1933; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

144
The use of the "Meditation Plates" within the International Centre for Spiritual Research is also documented by McGuire, "The Arcane Summer School".

145
Quoted by Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 42, and Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 62.

146
Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 47, fn. 73.

147
Hakl, 62 and fn. 115.

148
Hakl.

149
Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, June 15, 1932 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung).

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Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, May 20, 1933 (University Archives, ETH-Biblio-

- Six "Visions" by Fröbe-Kapteyn will be on display for the exhibition "Landscapes of the Mind C. G. Jung and the Exploration of the Human Psyche in Switzerland," currently being set up at the Landesmuseum (Swiss National Museum), curated by Stefan Zweifel and under the direction of Pascale Meyer, taking place from October 17, 2025, to February 15, 2026[189] (Fig. 32).

Fig. 32. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, [untitled]. "Visions," out of series, April 1938. Pencil on paper. Exhibition "Landscapes of the Mind C.G. Jung and the Exploration of the Human Psyche in Switzerland," curated by Stefan Zweifel and under the direction of Pascale Meyer, on view at the Landesmuseum (Swiss National Museum) from October 17, 2025, to February 15, 2026. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

- Another exhibition currently in preparation, featuring twelve "Meditation Plates" by Fröbe-Kapteyn, is entitled "Fata Morgana: Memories of the Invisible." [Fata Morgana: Memories of the Invisible], curated by Massimiliano Gioni, Daniel Birnbaum, and Marta Papini; the exhibition is conceived and produced by the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi for Palazzo Morando—Costume Moda Immagine at Palazzo Morando, Milan, from October 8 to November 30, 2025.

thek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

151
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The 4th Function and the Tibetan," 10.

152
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The Curse" (unpublished typescript, undated; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). See also Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, § 2: "Eranos: una retrodatazione? Le Tavole di meditazione . . ." and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 263.

153
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The Hut and the Sacred Word."

154
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Eranos: A Survey of its history since 1933, of the facts connected with it, a. the *Tagungen*, b. the Eranos Archive. The conclusions I have arrived at, my psychological realisations concerning it, its differences from other congress centres, and its chief problem" (unpublished typescript, 1942; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 15.

155
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "12 Mai 44" (unpublished typescript, May 12, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 1.

156
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Arcane School," 2 ff.; and Id., "The 4th Function and the Tibetan," 1–8.

157
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "11 June 44" (unpublished typescript, June 11, 1944; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia), 2.

158
Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 43.

159
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, letter to Dion Fortune, March 19, 1934 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia). Dion Fortune, who recognized in Jungian theory a psychology correlated with esoteric psychology (Dion Fortune, *The Magical Battle of Britain* [1993; Cheltenham: Skylight, 2012], 158 ff.), maintained a correspondence with Fröbe-Kapteyn for some years (Gareth Knight, *Dion Fortune and the Inner Light* [Loughborough: Toth, 2000], 217; mentioned in Hakl, *Eranos*, 333, fn. 12). A portion of the "ritual scenes" had a curious fate, connected with Dion Fortune. Copies of them were preserved in the archives of an American Rosicrucian order, the Societas Rosicruciana in America (S.R.I.Am.) of George Winslow Plummer (1976–1944), which was formed in 1907 by Sylvester C. Gould from a schism of the American Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis of Charles E. Meyer (1839–1908) and later led by Maria Babwahsingh. The latter, about 45 years ago, acquired a "Dion Fortune Collection," in which a series of reproductions of Fröbe-Kapteyn's works were included. (Maria Babwahsingh, personal communication to

In anticipation of a future critical edition of the "Blue Book" by the Eranos Foundation, scholarly research on Fröbe-Kapteyn's art, based on these exhibitions, continues to this day,[190] as does interest in her works in literature,[191] music,[192] documentary filmmaking, and cinematography.[193]

This growing interest, not only in the scientific community (primarily linked to Analytical Psychology and the History of Religions), but also in the international art world, has given us the opportunity to continue the study of these works and gradually begin their conservative restoration (Fig. 33).

Fig. 33. Restoration of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's "Meditation Plates," at the occasion of the 2015 exhibition at Casa Rusca Museum, Locarno. Ph. Patrick Zilic. Artifex Laboratorio Locarno. All rights reserved.

The future complete publication of the "Blue Book" will hopefully take the form of a catalogue raisonné, edited by the Eranos Foundation: an ambitious and essential project, which will hopefully allow future generations to continue to meditate on the forms of Fröbe-Kapteyn's imagination and, perhaps, to rediscover in them the individual and universal value they had for their creator and, indirectly, for her cultur-

Riccardo Bernardini, August 30, 2003; and Hans Thomas Hakl, personal communications to Riccardo Bernardini, July 2 and 4, 2003; see also Hakl, *Der verborgene Geist von Eranos*, 182, fn. 9, and Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 264, fn. 94.)

160
Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychological Types* [1921], in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 6, *Psychological Types*, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), para. 46 f.

161
Carl Gustav Jung, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, April 16, 1934 (University Archives, ETH-Bibliothek, Zurich / Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung). The Picture Archive of the C. G. Jung-Institut in Zurich actually holds black and white copies of nine drawings from "ritual scenes" belonging to the first album of "Visions," with handwritten notes by the author. Fröbe-Kapteyn's drawings were not included in the exhibition held in 2018 on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the C. G. Jung-Institut (1948) at the Museum im Lagerhaus - Stiftung für schweizerische Naive Kunst und Art Brut in St. Gallen: see *Das Buch der Bilder: Schätze aus dem Archiv des C. G. Jung-Instituts Zürich*, eds. Ruth Ammann, Verena Kast, and Ingrid Riedel (Ostfildern: Patmos, 2018).

162
Arthur Edward Waite, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, April 16, 1935 (Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia); quoted in Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 263, fn. 94.

163
White believed it might be useful for her to join his group—probably the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross founded in 1915—but this would involve a long initiatory path in their London temple. (See Arthur Edward Waite, letter to Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, April 19, 1936 [Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia]).

164
See, e.g., Riccardo Bernardini, "L'ultimo Jung nella stanza di analisi," in "Postludi: Lo stile tardo," special issue, *Elephant & Castle* 18 (2018): 4–34.

165
Fifteen "Visions" referring to her analytical work with Jung in October 1934 have unfortunately been lost—or perhaps were removed by the author herself.

166
A work on the "Visions" that was still propaedeutic is documented in Riccardo Bernardini, "Jung nel giardino di Eranos: il paesaggio dell'analisi," *Eranos Yearbook* 70 (2009, 2010, 2011): 731–38, later reissued as Bernardini, "Jung nel giardino di Eranos: il paesaggio dell'analisi," in *L'Ombra del Flâneur: Scritti in onore di Augusto Romano*, ed. Ferruccio Vigna (Bergamo: Moretti&Vitali, 2014), 35–46, and as Bernardini, "Jung in the Garden of Eranos: The Landscape of Analysis," in *Eranos: A Play*, ed. Henry Abramovitch and Murray Stein

al and existential endeavor—Eranos (Fig. 34).

Fig. 34. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. Symbol sculpted in the early 1930s on the external wall of the Lecture Hall of Casa Eranos, inspired by the paintings "Meditation [#1]" or "Meditation [#2]", belonging to the "Meditation Plates" series, c. 1926–1934. Ph. Margarethe Fellerer, 1938 or 1939. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reserved.

(Asheville, NC: Chiron, 2025), 127–40.

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Cf. Rosenberg, "Eranos oder Der Geist am Wasser," 2 f.; see also, for more details on his meetings with Eranos, Alfons Rosenberg, *Die Welt im Feuer: Wandlungen meines Lebens* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1983), *passim*; and Wehr, "Eranos in seiner Geschichte," 43.

168
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Arcane School," 1.

169
On female initiations, see the fundamental study by Bruce Lincoln, *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Studies in Rituals of Women's Initiation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); for an initial interpretive reading of Fröbe-Kapteyn's "Visions" in this perspective, see Riccardo Bernardini, "Donne terrene, divine e demoniache: Le iniziazioni femminili: materiali antropologici per la psicologia del profondo," in Marina Barioglio, ed., *La danza delle streghe: Energie femminili per una pedagogia spregiudicata* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2018), 176–90.

170
Fröbe-Kapteyn, "19 Mai 44," 3. The theme of Baptism is addressed by her in a series of reflections, e.g., "The White Elephant" (unpublished typescript, 1940; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia)—a vision that, in her opinion, could have been entitled "The Book of Transformation"—and "The Circle and the Point" (unpublished typescript, 1949; Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona-Moscia).

171
Cf. Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 86.

172
The first lecture given by Jung at Eranos in August 1933 was precisely devoted to the concept of the individuation process: Carl Gustav Jung, "Zur Empirie des Individuationsprozesses (Hiezu fünf Bildtafeln)," *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 1 (1933): 201–14; Engl. ed.: "A Study in the Process of Individuation" [1934/1950], in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 9.1, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Bollingen Series XX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969^{2}), 290–354.

173
Szeemann, *Monte Verità. Antropologia locale come contributo alla riscoperta di una topografia sacrale moderna* (Locarno: Armando Dadò; Milan: Electa, 1978); Harald Szeemann, ed., *Monte Verità: Berg der Wahrheit; Lokale Anthropologie als Beitrag zur Wiederentdeckung einer neuzeitlichen Topographie* (Locarno: Armando Dadò; Milan: Electa, 1978).

174
No catalog was produced for that exhibition.

175
Gian Piero Quaglino, Augusto Romano, and Riccardo Bernardini, eds., *Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos*

1933-1952 (Torino: Antigone, 2007).

176
Diana Mirolo, ed., *Margarethe Fellerer: Fotografa* (Ascona: Museo Epper, 2012).

177
See Riccardo Bernardini, "Collezionando ricordi: Margarethe Fellerer, fotografa di Eranos, e Carl Gustav Jung," in Quaglino, Romano, and Bernardini, *Carl Gustav Jung a Eranos 1933-1952*, 133–41, and more recently Gian Franco Ragno, "La fotografa di Eranos: Margarethe Fellerer. Die Eranos-Fotografin: Margarethe Fellerer," *Ferien Journal Ascona* 71, no. 505/1, 2025): 22–26. The Eranos Foundation photo collection also holds works by photographers who succeeded Margarethe Fellerer, namely Tim N. Gidal, Luciano Soave, and Adriano Heitmann.

178
Riccardo Carazzetti and Mara Folini, eds., *L'energia del luogo: Jean Arp, Raffael Benazzi, Julius Bissier, Ben Nicholson, Hans Richter, Mark Tobey, Italo Valent; Alla ricerca del genius loci Ascona-Locarno* (Locarno: Armando Dadò, 2009).

179
Massimiliano Gioni, ed., *La Grande Madre: Donne, maternità e potere nell'arte e nella cultura visiva, 1900-2015* (Milan: Skira, 2015); Massimiliano Gioni, ed., *The Great Mother: Women, Maternity, and Power in Art and Visual Culture, 1900-2015* (Milan: Skira, 2015).

180
Massimiliano Gioni, Gary Carrion-Murayari, Margot Norton, and Madeline Weisburg, eds., *Judy Chicago: Herstory* (New York: Phaidon, 2023).

181
Massimiliano Gioni and Natalie Bell, eds., *The Keeper* (New York: New Museum, 2016).

182
Glen Phillips, Phillip Kaiser, Doris Chon, and Pietro Rigolo, eds., *Harald Szeemann: Museum of Obsessions* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2018).

183
Christine Macel and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska, eds., *Women in Abstraction* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2021); Christine Macel and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska, eds., *Elles font l'abstraction* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2021); Christine Macel and Laure Chauvelot, eds., *Elles font l'abstraction: Exhibition Album* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2021).

184
Christine Macel and Karolina Ziebinska-Lewandowska, eds., *Mujeres de la abstracción* (Paris: Centre Pompidou; Bilbao: Guggenheim Bilbao Museoa, 2021).

185
No catalog was produced for that exhibition.

186
Federica Chiocchetti, ed., *Les voix magnétiques/ le voci magnetiche/die magnetischern stimmen/ the magnetic voices* (Le Locle: MBAL Musée des Beaux-Arts Le Locle, 2024).

187
Raphal Gygax, ed., *Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artista-ricercatrice*, texts by Yasmin Afshar, Riccardo Bernardini, Raphael Gygax, Fabio Merlini, and Sara Petrucci (Locarno: Museo Casa Rusca; Ascona: Fondazione Eranos; Bellinzona: Casagrande, in collaboration with Kunsthalle Mainz, 2024).

188
Rozanne de Bruijne, ed., *Tussen hemel en oorlog: Kunst en religie in het interbellum*, preface by Josien Paulides, texts by Rozanne de Bruijne, Irène Lesparre, Korine Hazelzet, Lieke Wijnia, Lex van de Haterd, Tessel M. Bauduin, Katerina Sidorova, Marty Bax, Laura Stamps, and Dick Adelaar (Zwolle: Waanders, 2025); see also Josien Paulides, ed., *Tussen hemel en oorlog*, texts by Rozanne de Bruijne, Katjuscha Otte, Inge S. Wierda, Korine Hazelzet, Laura Stamps, Hanna Melse, Anouk Custers, Ingrid Henkemans, Elzemiek Aalpoel, Linda Coppens, and René de Kam, *Catharijne Museummanagize* 43, no. 1 (2025).

189
Swiss National Museum, ed., *Landscapes of the Mind. C. G. Jung and the Exploration of the Human Psyche in Switzerland* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2025).

190
In addition to the already mentioned contributions, see also Eva di Stefano, "Voices and Faces of Elsewhere," *Outsider Art Observatory* 19 (2020): 12–27; Marco Pasi, "The Art of Esoteric Posthumousness," in *The Occult Nineteenth Century: Roots, Developments, and Impact on the Modern World*, ed. Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter (Camden: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 159–76; and Sara Petrucci, "Hablamos Marciano: Los Futuros de Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962) y Emma Kunz (1892-1963)," *A*Desk: Critical Thinking* (September 20, 2021); Chloë Sugden is also currently working on a doctoral research project at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich (Professur für Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft) devoted to Fröbe-Kapteyn's occult cosmograms: see, e.g., *Newsletter of the European Society for the Study of Esotericism* 13, no. 2 (2022), which she edited.

191
A painting by Fröbe-Kapteyn was used for the cover of the book by A. Savage, *Introduction to Chaos Magick* (New York: Magickal Childe, 1989), for the cover of the book by Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* (New York: Magickal Childe, 1990), and more recently for the cover of *The Edinburgh Companion to Modernism, Myth and Religion*, ed. Suzanne Hobson and Andrew D. Radford (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023); see, though, the significance of Fröbe-Kapteyn's art in the work of Naja Marie Aidt, one of Denmark's most accomplished writers, who used a "Meditation Plate" for the cover of her *Har døden taget noget fra dig så giv det tilbage: Carls bog* (København: Gyldendal, 2017), later translated into multiple languages; and also Jennifer Higgie's inclusion of Fröbe-Kapteyn's visionary practice in *The Other Side: A Journey into Women, Art, and the Spirit World* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2023), 231–34.

192
A painting by Fröbe-Kapteyn was used for the cover of the vinyl by Suzanne Ciani and Jonathan Fitoussi, *Golden Apples of the Sun* (Paris: Transversales Disques, 2023).

193
A selection of films, video testimonials, and video-documentaries—produced in particular by the Italian-language Swiss Radio and Television (RSI) over the decades—can be viewed on the Foundation's YouTube channel, through which the Foundation today documents almost all of its public cultural initiatives. The black and white video sequences included in the various films are taken from the silent movie *Eranos 1951*, directed by Ximena de Angulo-Roelli and Willy Roelli and produced by the C. G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles (1951). They are kept in the Foundation's archives.

Ancient Religions in Carl Gustav Jung's Visual Works: A Mythopoetic

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Abstract
Carl Gustav Jung was one of the most prominent figures at the meetings of the Eranos Circle. The comparative research presented on the shores of Lake Maggiore on Eastern thought and its possible relationship with Western philosophies, on the dialogues between different religious phenomena, and on archetypal motifs not only resonated with the scientific research of the psychiatrist, but also lay at the heart of his own visual practice. Jung's creative works were attempts to externalise unconscious psychic processes and a form of visualisation of what he called his "personal myth." In his images, Jung depicts various divinities or rituals, in a clear syncretic effort that gradually frees itself from any pre-established mythical referent to create an original and personal mythical visual system: a mythopoetic through art. By emphasising the links that unite it to the research of Eranos, this article sets out to study the various mythical representations present in Jung's visual works. The aim here is to try to better understand how the psychiatrist and creator seeks to constitute a very personal plastic and visual representation of myths, and divinities by transposing his research onto images.

Introduction

Among the many intellectuals, scientists, artists, and writers who frequented the shores of Lake Maggiore to give a presentation or attend the meetings of the Eranos Circle, the name and figure of Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) are certainly the first to spring to mind. The Swiss psychiatrist remains one of the personalities who had the greatest impact on the annual meetings, both through his stature his contributions, and his discussions, and through the direction that, whether consciously or not, he gave to the research carried out at the foot of Monte Verità. While Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962) is credited with giving birth to, founding, and organising these series of themed conferences every year, to the point of being affectionately nicknamed the *Domina Fröbe* by the regular participants,[1] Jung's role can certainly be likened to that of a tutelary figure, observing and acting with distance but great interest behind the scenes, the curtains lightly buffeted by the gentle Ticino wind. In short, he was a *spiritus rector*, as Riccardo Bernardini describes him,[2] whose role is evidenced by the "parallel meetings" that took place around him on the terrace of Casa Gabriella, in the shade of the garden's tall cedars, between two lectures, when many participants came to listen to him and ask him questions.[3] It turns out that the annual meetings in Ascona were also of particular importance to Jung, and Barbara Hannah vividly recalls his insistence on attending, even at the height of World War II.[4]

The work carried out at Eranos in the field of culture and images was increasingly similar to Jung's own scientific research, and the Zürich psychiatrist and the members of the group, who met once a year, generally shared the same engagement "in some form of spiritual endeavour,"[5] common research in the field of what Steven M. Wasserstrom called a "phenomenology of religions,"[6] and the central study of images in the search for a timeless formal, symbolic, and conceptual language which, for Jung at least, could have an archetypal nature and which would come from the collective unconscious.[7] This comparative approach to cultures, belief systems, myths, legends, and religions soon led Fröbe-Kapteyn to build up a veritable iconographic collection, the *Eranos Archive für Symbolforschung*, which she collected and continually enriched during her many trips to European museums and libraries; Jung drew on it, as part of his research, on alchemy in particular, but also Erich Neumann, during his own research on the archetypal figure of the Great Mother.[8] The collection was later bequeathed to the Warburg Institute in London in 1954.[9]

In Jungian scientific practice, images—both material and external, visionary and internal—play a crucial role, since they are the medium through which psychic content from the unconscious is expressed. They thus form the core of the technique that Jung theorised and gradually developed, which he first called the "transcendent function" and then "active imagination." Although not published until 1958, the *materia prima* of his essay on the transcendent function was written much earlier, in 1916.[10] In it, Jung defined what would later be called active imagination: "the union of conscious and unconscious contents."[11] To achieve this, it is necessary to practice "eliminating critical attention, thus producing a vacuum in consciousness" which "encourages the emergence of any fantasies that are lying in readiness."[12] According

1 Riccardo Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos: Il progetto della psichologia complessa* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2011), 285.

2 Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 79.

3 Bernardini, 45.

4 Barbara Hannah, *Jung: His Life and Work; A Biographical Memoir* (1976; London: Michael Joseph, 1977), 270.

5 Hans Thomas Hakl, *Eranos: An Alternative Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*, trans. Christopher McIntosh with the collaboration of Hereward Tilton (Sheffield: Equinox publishing, 2013), 44.

6 Steven M. Wasserstrom, *Religion after Religion: Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade and Henry Corbin at Eranos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 25.

7 Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 130.

8 Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, trans. from the German by Ralph Manheim (1955; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

9 Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 344.

10 Carl Gustav Jung, "The Transcendent Function" [1958], in Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 8, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 67–91.

11 "The psychological 'transcendent function' arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents," Jung, "The Transcendent Function," 69.

12 "The training consists first of all in systematic exercises for eliminating critical attention, thus producing a vacuum in consciousness. This encourages the emergence of any fantasies that are lying in readiness," Jung, "The Transcendent Function," 78.

to Jung, "fantasy must be allowed the freest possible play, yet not in such a manner that it leaves the orbit of its object, namely the affect."[13] There "comes a more or less complete expression of the mood, which reproduces the content of the depression in some way, either concretely or symbolically."[14] The manifestation of affect can take an intellectual, discursive form—a *language* in Roland Barthes's sense of the term, and even a language that is "beyond power," and therefore free: a *literature*[15]—but it can also adopt the language of the image—being, or becoming, a set of signs calling for a *lexis*.[16] For example, Jung states that "patients who possess some talent for drawing or painting can give expression to their mood by means of a picture,"[17] which would then be perceived ever more clearly in consciousness, like a blurred but distinct reflection in a lead mirror.

While active imagination was theorised in the second half of the 1910s, it turns out that Jung himself was practicing it directly at the same time, during what he called his "confrontation with the unconscious."[18] During this period, the psychiatrist engaged in a form of psychic self-experimentation that consisted of letting images from his unconscious come to him from the depths of the psyche in order to enter into a dialogue with them, and it was this same experience that gave rise to his famous *Red Book*.[19] These experiments with the unconscious also foreshadowed the goal towards which analytical psychology would later strive: the realisation of what Jung called his "personal myth," another name for the process of individuation, at the end of which the individual is supposed to succeed in differentiating the contents of the personal unconscious from those of the collective unconscious and achieve autonomy from the influence of the unconscious psychic contents that are the archetypes.[20] As Barbara Hannah points out, active imagination is, in fact, "a form of meditation which man has used, at least from the dawn of history, if not earlier, as a way of learning to know his God or gods."[21] To become autonomous individuals in our own right, to achieve individuation, we must first discover our "gods" and uncover the deep, intimate, and unique nature of our personal myth.

From the point of view of the history of religions, on one hand, Mircea Eliade—a faithful participant in the Eranos meetings—understands myth as the story of a sacred history, of a creation that can give rise alternately to the Cosmos, an institution, or an individual:[22] "myths describe the various, and sometimes dramatic, irruptions of the sacred (or the supernatural) into the World. It is this irruption of the sacred that really founds the World and makes it what it is today."[23] From the perspective of analytical psychology, on the other hand, Susan Rowland recalls that "the stories generated and reproduced via archetypes sponsoring psyche imbued archetypal images are to Jung 'myths,' " referring by this term to both "the cultural inheritance of specific mythologies and to personal myths that are the narrative structure of lives lived in a creative relation to the unconscious."[24] In fact, Rowland distinguishes "myths" from "personal myth," which is "the life story that is the living story, the story in which one lives, and by which intimate being is meaningfully fed."[25] According to her, "there is a creative tension within Jungian psychology on form-making: the emphasis on the need for structure versus the fluidity of process. Such a dynamic is

13
Jung, "The Transcendent Function," 82.

14
Jung, 82.

15
Roland Barthes, *Leçon inaugurale faite le vendredi 7 janvier 1977*, Collège de France, Chaire de sémiologie littéraire (Paris: Collège de France, 1977), 11–12.

16
Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (1957; Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2014), 213.

17
Jung, "The Transcendent Function," 82.

18
Carl Gustav Jung and Aniéla Jaffé, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. from the German by Richard and Clara Winston (1962; New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), 178.

19
The *Red Book,* realized between 1915 and 1928 and briefly revived in 1958, is based on Jung's self-induced visionary experiences between 1913 and 1914. It was not officially unveiled to the public, published, translated, and exhibited in cultural institutions and museums until 2009. See Carl Gustav Jung, *The Red Book: Liber novus* (*fac-simile*), ed. Sonu Shamdasani, preface by Ulrich Hoerni, trans. Mark Kyburz, John Peck, and Sonu Shamdasani (New York: W. W. Norton, & Company, 2009).

20
Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 6, *Psychological Types*, a revision by R. F. C. Hull of the translation by H. G. Baynes (1921; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 448–49.

21
Barbara Hannah, *Encounters with the Soul: Active Imagination as Developed by C. G. Jung* (Boston: Sigo Press, 1981), 3.

22
Mircea Eliade, *Aspects du mythe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1963), 16.

23
Eliade, *Aspects du mythe*, 17.

24
Susan Rowland, *Jungian Literary Criticism: The Essential Guide* (London: Routledge, 2019), 58.

25
Rowland, *Jungian Literary Criticism*, 65.

visible in the tradition of myths as specific stories *structuring*, versus the notion of a personal myth that stresses the creative *process* of a story."[26]

And yet, in his self-experiments, Jung literally illustrates this tension, as he staged his "I," his self-conscious avatar, in the company of psychic contents that took on the appearance—and sometimes the story—of characters from various mythologies or the Bible. These same "exercises"—spiritual perhaps, visionary at the very least[27]—also seem to nourish his visual practice, whether in painting, drawing, or sculpture, since he uses images of figures inspired by divinities, myths, or rites from many and varied pantheons, but always at the service of his personal narrative. Jung thus seems to have created a veritable mythopoetics in the sense of Véronique Gély's definition, which, in relation to literature, refers to the way in which myths are used.[28] While the term seems to have been employed for the first time by Plato, who used the term "mythmakers" to designate the poets themselves,[29] mythopoetic is also used by Claude Lévi-Strauss, who likens it to the concept of "bricolage," to designate the person who makes myths.[30]

Within these multiple creations realised by Carl Gustav Jung, how does he fashion his own personal myth by the images in the surviving divinities, heroes, and rites of the past? To what extent is this mythopoetic truly effective, active, and efficient in the context of the Swiss psychiatrist's "confrontation with the unconscious"? And to what extent did Jung's work on myths and their synthesis foreshadow the research carried out a few years later during the Eranos meetings?

To answer these questions, I will first briefly examine the relationship between Jung, Eranos, and Fröbe-Kapteyn—a necessary step in understanding Fröbe-Kapteyn's importance in the research carried out on the shores of Lake Maggiore. I will then analyse in detail some of the Swiss psychiatrist's visual works, comparing them with the visual and textual sources that shaped their original form—whether formally or conceptually. Drawing on Hans Belting's approach to the anthropology of images,[31] and Carlo Ginzburg's notion of the index paradigm,[32] the aim will be to show how, a few years before his own research at Eranos, Jung undertook work on images and culture to reveal a survival, a form of unity of meaning, and to synthesise the various legends, myths, and divinities to create a new, individual myth: his own.

The Place Where Synthesis Takes Place: Jung at Eranos, for a Union of Knowledge, Myths, and Culture

> Eranos ist meine Individuation.[33]

This is how the intellectual and artist Fröbe Kapteyn described to Ximena de Angulo her relationship with the meetings she had organised every year since 1933 for a few weeks in August at her house in Ascona. The permeability of the methodological approaches, involving the synthetic nature of the discourses and research carried out at Eranos, is already physically apparent in the profoundly liminal nature of Casa Gabriella, built between land and water; at the foot of Monte Veri-

26
Rowland, *Jungian Literary Criticism*, 66.

27
We are, of course, referring to the *Exercitia spiritualia*, which are defined as "any way of examining one's conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally . . ." Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Exercices spirituels*, trans. R. P. Pierre Jennesseaux (1548; Flavigny-sur-Ozerain: Éditions Traditions Monastiques, 2004), 9, translation by the author.

28
Véronique Géry, "Pour une mythopoétique: quelques propositions sur les rapports entre mythe et fiction," *SFLGC*, bibliothèque comparatiste (2006): 10, accessed October 4, 2023, https://sflgc.org/bibliotheque/gely-veronique-pour-une-mythopoetique-quelques-propositions-sur-les-rapports-entre-mythe-et-fiction.

29
Plato, *La République*, trans. and presentation by Georges Leroux (Paris: Flammarion, 2002), 151–52.

30
"Mythical thought expresses itself using a repertoire that is heterogeneous in composition and, of course, limited in scope; yet it has to use it, whatever task it sets itself, because it has nothing else at hand. It thus appears as a kind of intellectual bricolage, which explains the relationship between the two. Like bricolage on the technical level, mythic thinking can achieve brilliant and unexpected results on the intellectual level," Claude Levi Strauss, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris: Plon, 1962), 26, translation by the author.

31
Hans Belting, *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (2001; Princeton, Princeton University Press: 2011), 9–10, 17.

32
Carlo Ginzburg, "Traces: Racines d'un paradigme indiciaire" (1980), in Carlo Ginzburg, *Mythes, emblèmes et traces, morphologie et histoire*, trans. from the Italian by Monique Aymard, Christian Paoloni, Elsa Bonan, and Martine Sancini-Vignet, (1986; Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 290.

33
Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 285.

tà—already rich in a profound history that links it to both *Lebenserform* and the international artistic avant-garde and literature, through the figure, in particular, of Rudolf von Laban, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, or Hermann Hesse[34]—and on the shores of the calm, clear but deep waters of Lake Maggiore; like a sea in miniature, circumscribed by the arms of the hills and mountains. But while Fröbe-Katpeyn's phrase attests to her reception of Jungian ideas and concepts, it also shows that Eranos was for her a form of realisation of her "personal myth."

The very birth of Eranos was marked by the spirituality and occultist movements that had been sweeping Europe since the end of the nineteenth century. Fröbe-Kapteyn's initial project, launched in 1930, was to set up meetings on theosophical and esoteric themes, under the supervision and active participation of Alice Bailey, then president of the Arcane School, a dissident branch of the Theosophical Society, with the aim of constituting a genuine school of comparative spirituality.[35] The following year, however, in 1931, Fröbe-Kapteyn decided to turn to the sciences and the history of religions, contacting Rudolf Otto to give a more scientific and academic orientation to her project,[36] and it should be noted that it was the historian of religion himself who suggested the name *Eranos* to her.[37] In any case, she likely decided to draw inspiration from the example of Count Hermann Keyserling's *Schule der Weisheit*, whose annual meetings she regularly attended in Darmstadt. It was also at the 1930 meeting, and therefore in a spiritualist context, that she met Carl Gustav Jung for the first time.[38]

Although Jung initially refused to take part in a project that he considered too steeped in and indebted to theosophical ideas, which he—publicly at least—despised,[39] he eventually agreed to give a lecture at the 1933 session when he learned the names of the other participants, almost all of whom were friends or esteemed intellectuals.[40] His talk, on the individuation process,[41] thus became the first in a long series of scientific communications that Jung gave annually until 1951.[42] It soon became clear that, in addition to the lectures he gave at his seminars at the Zürich Psychological Club, founded in 1916, the Eranos meetings provided him with an opportunity, not least because of their international and interdisciplinary nature, to compare his theories with the wider field of studies on culture and its manifestations, and thus to broaden the scope and ambition of analytical psychology, destined to become a genuine "general psychology, with which the other sciences—from the history of religion to philosophy, from theology to anthropology, from the history of art to the natural sciences—could enter into dialogue."[43] Jung's objective was perfectly in line with that of the founder of Eranos, who also declared:

> The work of C. G. Jung, although never especially emphasized, represents the synthetic force at the heart of Eranos. It works, we might say, underground, invisibly, yet it holds the whole together and embodies the real significance of these meetings. It establishes a net of relationships between the different fields of research between the speakers, and between all members of the conferences, whether they are aware of it or not.[44]

34
See Kaj Noschis, *Monte Verità: Ascona et le génie du lieu* (Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 2011).

35
See the chapter "An Esoteric Prelude to Eranos," in Hakl, *Eranos*, 12–32.

36
Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 42.

37
Hakl, *Eranos*, 49.

38
Hakl, 39–41.

39
See the letter to A. L. Oswald, December 8, 1928, in Gerhard Adler, *C. G. Jung: Letters*, selected and edited by Gerhard Adler in collaboration with Aniela Jaffé, translation from the German by R. F. C. Hull, vol. 1, *1906–1950* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 56.

40
Hakl, *Eranos*, 45.

41
Carl Gustav Jung, "Zur Empirie des Individuationsprozesses," in "Yoga und Meditation im Osten und im Westen," herausgegeben von Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 1 (1933).

42
Although he attended the Eranos meetings in 1952 and was, as usual, besieged by questions from participants during the interludes between two speeches, 1951 was the year of his last official communication. See Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 241.

43
"A *Eranos*, la straordinaria sequenza di convegni interdisciplinari inaugurati nel 1933, Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) delineo più chiaramente l'idea di *psicologia complessa*: si trattava, ancor prima che di una scuola di psicoterapia, del disegno di una vera e propria psicologia generale, con cui le altre scienze—dalla storia delle religioni alla filosofia, dalla teologia all'antropologia, dalla storia dell'arte alla scienze naturali—avrebbero potuto dialogare," Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 25.

44
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "The Psychological Background of Eranos" [1939], *Spring: A Journal of Archetype and Culture* 92 (2015): 34, translation by the author.

Jung thus gradually became the "spiritual guide" of Eranos, its "central figure" who "animated and directed it behind the curtain,"[45] in the words of Ricardo Bernardini, who divides into seven the different phases of research carried out over the decades on the shores of Lake Maggiore, of which it seems possible to attribute to Jung the direction—unconscious or esoteric—of the first three: the very first stage in the Eranos project centred, between 1933 and 1937, on a comparative phenomenological approach to Western and Eastern spiritual traditions; a subsequent, more clearly Jungian impulse, from 1938 to 1946, with lectures on the themes of archetypes, their nature, and their manifestations; and finally the period from 1947 to 1962—Jung died in 1961—devoted to a genuine anthropology of culture.[46] Moreover, the profoundly Jungian dimension of the Eranos project is readily apparent from Fröbe-Kapteyn's own presentation of it in 1948:

> What we call synthesis in the Eranos work, namely the summarization of a wide variety of research and perspectives, is a dynamic process and involves the integration of seemingly independent but fundamentally interrelated fragments of knowledge into a pattern or image whose completeness is unknown to us. Our task is to capture a fragment of the vast picture of a newly emerging culture that has its roots in previous ages. The fact that we have so far followed the direction indicated by time is proven by the existence of Eranos today, in its own unique form and development.[47]

The increasingly Jungian matrix of Eranos and the increasingly archetypal nature of the research carried out there can also be seen in the very relationship that operates on, and through, images. From 1934 onwards, Jung asked Fröbe-Kapteyn to undertake iconographic research into alchemy,[48] increasingly important in the psychiatrist's research, according to which the alchemical processes developed in the texts and images of the Middle Ages and Renaissance were to be understood as a psychological key, and the experimental tests on the Philosopher's Stone (or *lapis philosophorum*) were in fact a metaphor for the process of individuation: the transformation of lead into gold was to be understood as the metamorphosis, the fulfilment of complete, psychically individuated human beings.[49] Fröbe-Kapteyn thus began to scour the museums and libraries of Europe to collect images, reproductions, and photographs of medieval paintings and miniatures, which soon became a veritable pool of visual material, the *Eranos Archive für Symbolforschung.* Although Jung used these iconographic archives in his scientific essays, such as *Psychology and Alchemy* (1944),[50] they also formed the basis for the work of other researchers and intellectuals, such as Erich Neumann, who drew on the iconographic holdings of Eranos to write his essay on the archetypal figure of the Great Mother.[51] From 1935 onwards, Fröbe-Kapteyn also came into contact with the Warburg Institute and its members, who were already based in London. She asked its then director, Fritz Saxl, for a number of bibliographical references, particularly on alchemy, which Saxl sent her when the works were available in the library.[52] And it was also to the Warburg Institute that Fröbe-Kapteyn decided to bequeath her

45
"Jung, principale ispiratore del progetto di *Eranos*, ne fu lo *spiritus rector*, e cioè la sua guida spirituale, la figura centrale, il nume che lo presiedeva incontrastato e che lo animava e lo dirigeva da dietro le quinte." Bernardini Riccardo, *Jung a Eranos*, 79.

46
Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos*, 51.

47
"Was wir in der Eranosarbeit Synthese nennen, die Zusammenfassung verschiedenster Forschungen und verschiedenster Anschauungen, ist ein dynamischer Prozeß und bedeutet die Integration scheinbar unabhängiger, aber im Grunde auf einander bezogener Bruchteile der Erkenntnis in einem Muster oder Bild, dessen Vollständigkeit uns unbekannt ist. Was uns als Aufgabe zufällt, ist das Einfangen eines Fragments von dem unübersehbaren Bilde einer neuentstehenden Kultur, die in den vorangegangenen Zeitaltern wurzelt. Daß wir bisher die von der Zeit angedeutete Richtung eingehalten haben, beweist die Existenz von Eranos heute, in der ihm eigenen Form und Entwicklung." Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort," in "Der Mensch," herausgegeben von Olga Fröbe Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 16 (1948), 1.

48
Hakl, *Eranos*, 255–56.

49
Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 9.2, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (1951; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 68.

50
Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 12, *Psychology and Alchemy*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (1944; Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980).

51
Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother.*

52
Warburg Institute Archive, CG, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn to Fritz Saxl, August 25, 1935, or Warburg Institute Archive, CG, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn to Fritz Saxl, January 10, 1939.

archives at the end of her life.[53] While *facsimiles* are still kept in the Eranos archives in Ascona, the original archives are now in London, where they are still classified according to their original mode, i.e., according to the archetypal figures they are supposed to manifest.

The Jungian inclination of Eranos's relationship with myths and images can be seen in the themes and directions taken by the annual conferences and even in the iconographic archives initiated by Fröbe-Kapteyn for Jung.[54] The lectures given and the guests chosen highlight the desire to research the many forms of common religious and spiritual expression and to compare them with Jungian psychological processes, which often involve the central question of the myth.

We should now take a closer look at the visual productions of the Swiss psychiatrist behind his theories, and thus behind the scientific orientations of Eranos, in order to gain a better understanding of his relationship with myths and how he used them in the service of a new and personal poetics, leading to the elaboration of his own myth through images, in parallel with his presentations on the shores of Lake Maggiore.

53
Warburg Institute Archive, CG, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn to Gertrud Bing, June 12, 1955.

54
It is worth mentioning here that Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn also pursued a creative activity throughout her life, which gave rise to numerous visual works. See Raphael Gigax, ed., *Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn: Artista-ricercatrice* (Locarno: Museo Casa Rusca; Bellinzona: Edizione Casagrande, 2024).

Formal Borrowings and Surviving Iconography for a Mythical Identification

In his creative works, Jung often chose to borrow an iconography from a character, a figure, or a myth from a belief system or a particular mythological tradition that had already been established, as part of his visual experiments aimed as much at creating images as at drawing out of the unconscious his "personal myth," unknown but *already* present. The narrative context and symbolism of these myths then underwent a form of metamorphosis, of *resemantisation*, the meaning of the myth thus chosen adopting a psychological reading in which Jung himself was given an active role.

This *modus operandi* is particularly perceptible in the *Red Book*, where several chapters are devoted to the transcription of his visionary adventures in which the mythical hero Izdubar plays a major role. Following the story proposed by Jung, he crosses the psychiatrist's path at the top of a high mountain in search of the legendary land of immortality, which he believes to lie to the west of the world, and he falls ill when Jung tells him that he has come from that region, but that immortality does not exist there any more than anywhere else.[55] The first image illustrating this part of the *Red Book* gives us an indication of the iconographic and therefore mythological model on which Jung seems to have based himself, at least in part (Fig. 1).

The male figure is presented in a hieratic frontal position, tall, wearing armour, and carrying an axe, with a coiffed head and braided beard. In front of him, kneeling with arms outstretched, we can make out the small, fragile figure—in appearance only—representing Jung's "I." It turns out that Izdubar was the first name that European translators gave to the hero of the text that would later become known as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. King of the ancient city of Uruk in Mesopotamia, Izdubar/Gilgamesh is also a hero of superhuman strength who, accompanied by his friend Enkidu whom the gods created, and following the signs revealed to him by dreams, has many adventures.[56] Jung had

55
Jung, *The Red Book: Liber novus*, 278–79 [38–39]. In the following notes, the pagination follows that of the transcription of the English text by Sonu Shamdasani. The pagination in brackets corresponds to that of the *Red Book* itself.

56
Épopée de Gilgamesh, text established, commented, annotated, and translated from Akkadian by Georges Contenau (Paris: Éditions Libretto, 2020).

Fig. 1. Carl Gustav Jung, Red Book, Liber Secundus, page 36, 1915, ink, tempera, and gold on paper, 27.3x20 cm, Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, © 2009 Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zürich. First published by W. W. Norton & Co.

a version of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in his library in Küsnacht[57] and, during exchanges between Jung's "I" and Izdubar, the latter mentions the goddess Tiamat, a Mesopotamian divinity incarnating the forces of chaos.[58] The choice of the name Izdubar was no accident, then, and already provided Jung's visionary adventures with a deliberately legendary, and even archaic, narrative framework by his preference over the name Gilgamesh.

If we now turn to the works or connections that might link Jung to the ancient culture and productions of the Mesopotamian region, we note that the Swiss psychiatrist's library contains, among other things, the catalogue of the British Museum's collections of Babylonian and Assyrian antiquities, where Jung even slipped in a few bookmarks.[59] What is more, Jung visited London on several occasions before or during the period in which the *Red Book* was being written; during the winter of 1902–1903, for example, but also in 1919. This attests to his familiarity with Sumerian legends and iconography by the time these images were created.

If we compare the figure of Izdubar/Gilgamesh with certain works in the collections of the British Museum, such as a head seen in profile taken from a wall panel in the palace of Khorsabad dating from the time of Sargon II (Fig. 2), we find the same braided beard, particularly on the face, which falls down and covers part of the neck, and whose curls merge with those of the beard as they rise up the face. Sonu Shamdasani has also pointed out that the figure of Izdubar painted by Jung bears a strong resemblance to an image in Wilhelm Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, which Jung had in his library in Küsnacht.[60]

Fig. 2. Wall panel from the Khorsabad palace, 710–705 B.C., gypsum, 62x53 cm, London, British Museum, Museum Number 118830, © The Trustees of the British Museum.

57
Gilgamesch: Eine Erzählung aus dem alten Orient (Leipzig: Im Insel-Verlag, 1916), Küsnacht, Jung's Library, ref. L 42.

58
"No stronger being has ever cut me down, no monster has ever resisted my strength. But your poison, worm, which you have placed in my way has lamed me to the marrow. Your magical poison is stronger than the army of Tiamat," Jung, *The Red Book: Liber novus*, 278 [38].

59
A Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Antiquities (London: British Museum, 1922), Küsnacht, Jung's Library, ref. L 54.

60
Jung, *The Red Book: Liber novus*, nn. 96, 309.

It is a reproduction of a bas-relief from the palace of Sargon II in Khorsabad, now in the Louvre, depicting a hero slaying a lion, often equated with Izdubar/Gilgamesh (Fig. 3). Jung was able to observe this bas-relief first-hand during one of his visits to Paris in 1902–1903.

In terms of the story that Jung had now developed, there were strong similarities with the story told in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. In the Sumerian text, after the death of his companion Enkidu, Gilgamesh decides to embark on a long and perilous journey westwards to the home of his ancestor, Um-Napishti, the only man who, like the biblical Noah, survived the Flood, so that he can reveal to him the secret of immortality.[61] In the *Red Book*, Izdubar recounts how he too left his country to travel west, in search of the land where he could find immortality.[62] Jung's "I" meets him at the top of a high mountain pass and tells him that, coming from the West, he knows that there is no such country, which plunges the hero into deep despair that quickly escalates into a state of illness that is dangerously fatal for both body and spirit.

Thus, in the story he tells in the *Red Book*—which, it should be borne in mind, is a reworking, a reconstruction, based on his previews notes in the *Black Books*—Jung places his "I" in the role of Um-Napishti, who brings the quest of the hero Izdubar/Gilgamesh to an end and, as we shall see later, enables him to achieve a form of rebirth. Jung thus seems to be superimposing his own narrative in the *Red Book* on that of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and creating his own personal myth by substituting it for the ancient myth.

This identification, both iconographic and narrative, with myths and religions, can be found in other pages of the *Red Book*, particularly those that continue the story of Jung's adventures with Izdubar, but this time, it seems, with a different type of cultural reference.

During their discussions and Jung's own reflections, he gradually came to realise that Izdubar was an important unconscious psychic content, what he called his "god,"[63] an externalised representation of his psychic totality. The Jung's "I" therefore decides to take care of the hero, who has fallen ill, which eventually leads this "I" to transform him into a golden egg and to perform a number of incantations and prayers that lead to the resurrection of Izdubar in a new form, "transformed, and complete."[64]

The section of the *Red Book* that contains these various prayers is punctuated by several paintings depicting the golden egg in which Izdubar now rests in different environments that borrow from a variety of myths and traditions, from the solar boat of ancient Egyptian cults to the tree motif, which can alternately represent the Ygdrassil of Scandinavian mythology and the biblical tree of Jesse.

However, it is particularly relevant to take a closer look at another painting from the chapter on *Incantations*, which also shows a form of identification here, where Jung's "I" seems to be taking part in well-defined religious rites (Fig. 4). This image occupies the whole of page 51 of the *Liber secundus*, the second part of the *Red Book*. Against a crimson background, the text of one of the incantation prayers is reproduced in German Gothic and framed by a series of decorative motifs and figures, including a snake and a white bird on the right and left. The egg containing Izdubar is at the bottom of the composition, deli-

Fig. 3. Hero taming a lion (Gilgamesh), detail, relief from the façade of the throne room in the Palace of Sargon II in Khorsabad, 8th century B.C. (710–705 B.C.), gypsum, 552x218 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Museum Number 1019862-17, © Photo (C) RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / René-Gabriel Ojeda.

61 "(Gilgamesh replied: I want to reach) Um-Napishti, my ancestor, who was able to ascend to the assembly of the gods and obtain [Life; about death and about life I want to ask him!]", Épopée de Gilgamesh, 91–92, translation by the author.

62 Jung, *The Red Book: Liber novus*, 278 [38].

63 Jung, 283 [48].

64 Jung, 286 [65].

cately placed on an altar-like form and framed by arcades containing other decorative motifs, including a cross and a star. At the very top is the only anthropomorphic figure in the painting, crowned, seated, legs crossed on a cushion, eyelids closed as if in repose or meditation.

Fig. 4. Carl Gustav Jung, Red Book, Liber Secundus, Page 51, 1916, ink, tempera, and gold on paper, 27.4x19.9 cm, Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, © 2009 Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zürich. First published by W. W. Norton & Co.

In fact, the crown worn by the figure closely resembles the ritual tiaras used in Tibet, which, in *Vajrayana* Buddhism, house the five *Jinas*, the Buddhas of the five wisdoms and the cardinal points.[65] If we take a closer look at the gestures adopted by the crowned figure, we see that the crossed legs, with the hands placed flat on top of each other, evoke the posture of the *dyana mudra* which, again in the Buddhist tradition, is the posture that represents the state of meditation.[66]

Jung's interest in Far Eastern cultures and philosophies is well known, particularly through his research into the mandala motif, whose term is also taken from the meditative practice of *dkyil `khor* in *Vajrayana* Buddhism.[67] Although Jung seems to have developed

65
Robert Sailley, *Le bouddhisme "tantrique" indo-tibétain ou "Véhicule de diamant"* (Saint-Vincent-sur-Jabron: Éditions Présence, 1980), 107–8.

66
Anjan Chakravarty, *Les peintures bouddhiques sacrées* (Paris: Charles Moreau, 2006), 32.

67
See Martin Brauen, ed., *Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche; New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009). Exhibition catalog, Rubin Museum of Art, New York, from August 14, 2009 to January 11, 2010.

his psychological interpretation of the mandala from his *Commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower* in 1929,[68] he possessed a large number of works that may have given him a much earlier insight into Buddhist rites and traditions. While his library contains Heinrich Zimmer's *Kunstform und Yoga im Indischen Kultbild* (1926), Martin Hürliman's book on the sculpture in Sri Lanka and Indochina, *Ceylon und Indochina. Baukunst, Landschaft und Volksleben* (1929), Maurice Maindron's *L'art indien*, William Cohn's *Indische Plastik* (1921) and *Buddha in der Kunst des Ostens* (1925), and *Tibetan Paintings* by George Roerich, the son of the Russian painter Nicolas Roerich (1925), it is more likely that Jung's visual references draw from his complete edition of the *Sacred Books of the East*, the date of publication (1908) being well before the dates when these paintings were produced. It should finally be noted that another potential source that may have contributed to Jung's knowledge of Indian spirituality and art can be found in the theosophical works that his library preserves, such as Helena Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine: The Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy* (1911) and *Höllen Traume* (1908).

Furthermore, if we continue the iconographic comparison between this painting and the works kept at the British Museum, whose collections Jung is known to have visited, we notice, for example, the presentation of a small bronze figure of a Buddha produced in Tibet, possibly the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, acquired by the museum in 1885, and which presents exactly the same *mudra* as the figure on page 51 (Fig. 5). As far as the crown painted by Jung is concerned, its strongly accentuated three-lobed structure is formally close to the models of the ritual headdresses of Tibetan Buddhism, as the psychiatrist was able to observe them not only in the Far Eastern collections of various European museums, but also in the reproductions presented in the numerous works in his library, such as the book by the art historian and Indianist Heinrich Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga* (Fig. 6).

It is therefore certain that Jung was familiar with the traditions, iconography, and rituals of Buddhism in general, and esoteric Tibetan Buddhism in particular, when he produced the painting on page 51 of the *Liber secundus*. In the part of the book devoted to the prayers supposed to lead to the resurrection of the hero Izdubar, the symbol of Jung's psychic totality, Jung would represent his "I" in a meditative posture, within a universe evocative of Buddhism, a religious system in which the concept of reincarnation through the cycle of *samsara* is essential.

As with the painting of Izdubar in front of Jung's "I," Jung seems to be staging himself, *portraying* himself in paintings whose content represents his inner experiences. But to do this, he drew on a vast repertoire of legends and myths, both visual and iconographic, borrowing from a wide range of cultures, legends, and religious traditions. It would seem, then, that Jung appropriated myths, both plastically and symbolically, with a view to creating his own personal myth; a personal one that would then either replace the previous myth or be placed in its direct continuity.

But beyond these two examples, it appears that in other cases Jung uses repertoires of mythical and religious images in a way that completely disengages him from the initial referent to which this icono-

68
Carl Gustav Jung, "Commentary on *The Secret of the Golden Flower*," [1929] in Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 13, *Alchemical Studies*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 1–56.

Fig. 5. Bodhisattva (Avalokiteshvara?), 19th century, bronze and semi-precious stones, London, British Museum, Museum Number 1885, 1227.18, © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Fig. 6. Buddha in paryanka posture, reproduced in Heinrich Zimmer, Kunstform und Yoga im Indischen Kultbild, Frankfurter Verlag, 1926, p. 80, ref. N 34.

graphic language belongs, making it the support of a totally personal narrative.

Conceptual Borrowings and Original Forms for a Personal Narrative

This mythmaking by image is active in a whole series of paintings depicting various ritual scenes (Fig. 7 and 8). Here we see officiants and figures in prayer positions before an altar, above which appears, like a mysterious epiphany of light, a figure dressed in a gilded garment with geometric motifs, floating in the air in a night sky made up of tesserae of bluish mosaics that seem to revolve around him.

Fig. 7. Carl Gustav Jung, Cultic Scene I, ca. 1917, gouache on cardboard, 26x21 cm, Jung Family Archive, © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zurich.

Fig. 8. Carl Gustav Jung, Cultic Scene with Phanês, ca. 1917, gouache and gilt bronze on paper, 28.5x20.5 cm, private collection, © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zurich.

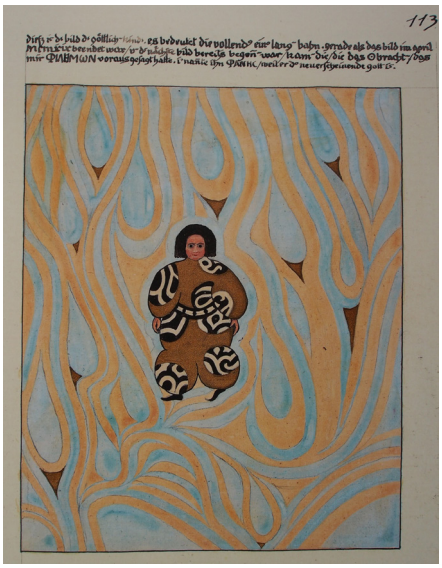

Fig. 9. Carl Gustav Jung, Red Book, Liber Secundus, Page 113, 1919, ink, tempera, and gold on paper, 21x16.8 cm, Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, © 2009 Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zürich. First published by W. W. Norton & Co.

This same figure appears on page 113 of the *Liber secundus* (Fig. 9) and, between this and the images depicting ritual scenes, we find the childlike figure, dressed in a puffy golden garment, as if suspended in a matrix-like universe made of ancient turquoise and opal. Above this painting, Jung writes:

> This is the image of the divine child. It means the completion of a long path. Just as the image was finished in April 1919, and work on the next image has already begun, the one who brought the Θ [rho] came, as ΦΙΛΗΜΩΝ [PHILEMON] had predicted to me. I called him ΦΑΝΗΣ [PHANES], because he is the newly appearing God.[69]

The childlike figure in this group of paintings would therefore be a representation of the god Phanês, the central deity of the Orphic mystery cults that flourished on the coasts of Asia Minor and Greece from the sixth century BC onwards; a cosmogonic deity begotten from the primordial egg before giving matter, form, and life to the world.[70]

69 Jung, *The Red Book. Liber novus*, 301 [113].

70 Florian Métral, *Figurer la création du monde: Mythes, discours et images cosmogoniques dans l'art de la Renaissance* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2019), 9.

Two letters written to Sigmund Freud attest to the fact that Jung spent three weeks in Italy in April 1912, mainly in Florence.[71] Visiting the Palazzo Vecchio, he and his wife probably observed in the Sala dell'Udienza the fresco that Francesco Salviati painted between 1544 and 1548 depicting Phanês (Fig. 10). The artist was probably inspired here by the *Orphic Rhapsodies* and a second-century AD bas-relief preserved in Modena and reproduced on the modern decoration of the entrance to the Cornaro Odeon in Padua.[72] In the room devoted to the audiences of Duke Cosimo de' Medici, the god is depicted in his classical attributes: that of a winged, laughing ephebe of his youth, with three animal heads standing out vividly from his naked, flat torso, a sceptre in his hand, dominated and dominating by bright flames and surrounded by the signs of the zodiac, a snake coiling sensually around his naked body. A reproduction of the ancient bas-relief from which Salviati drew his inspiration was included by Jung in his essay *Symbols of Transformation*, published the same year as his trip to Florence, in 1912, in which he definitively broke away from Freudian precepts.[73] On the subject of Phanês, Jung states that the Orphic god, like Eros in Hesiod's *Theogony*, represents a creative force, since he is assimilated to Priape and identified with the Theban Dionysus of Lysios, just as, like the Hindu Khâma, he is simultaneously God of love and cosmogonic principle.[74]

A representation somewhat similar to the traditional and canonical representation of Phanês appeared as early as 1916 in the upper part of a painting that Jung entitled the *Systema Mundi Totius*, which was also produced at the same time as his visionary experiences. However, Jung soon seemed to abandon this iconography, with which he was clearly familiar, and chose to depict the Orphic god in his own style. In his paintings of ritual scenes, the wings, the symbols of the zodiac, and the nudity of the young ephebe are replaced by a puffed-up garment, swaddling the cosmogonic child-god in gold and light.

A choice has therefore been made here: that of deliberately neglecting a familiar and classic iconography and formal approach—expected?—producing a liberation, one might say, in favour of an original image, new in the systems of symbolic representations it possesses, yet still indebted to a certain mythological tradition, attested to by the title and name of the divinity, but perhaps above all more effective in the system of operative images that Jung was creating.

Phanês is in fact a creator god, born from the cosmogonic egg containing the world in the making. We saw earlier that the golden egg painted many times by Jung in the *Red Book* contained Izdubar/Gilgamesh, in gestation, awaiting his imminent resurrection. Jung recognised in the Babylonian hero a representation of his Self: we can therefore see Phanês, the god in the egg, as the new form that Jung's Self adopted once Izdubar's metamorphosis was complete. Adding to this hypothesis, a comparison between the 1917 *Cult Scene* and the first painting depicting Izdubar highlights the identical posture adopted by Jung's "I" in front of Izdubar and the figure in front of the altar above which Phanês appears. It is therefore legitimate to recognise here too a representation of Jung's "I," then in prayer, accompanied by two female figures, before the epiphanic appearance of Phanês, Jung's new Self.

Fig. 10. Francesco Salviati, Phanês, 1544–1548, fresco, Florence, Palazzo Vecchio, Hall of the Audiences, north wall, © Fototeca Musei Civici Fiorentini.

71
Carl Gustav Jung, letters to Sigmund Freud dated April 1, 1912 and April 27, 1912, in William McGuire, ed., *The Freud/Jung Letters: The Correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung*, trans. Ralph Manheim and R. F. C. Hull (1974; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 498–99, 501–2.

72
Philippe Morel, "Virtù, Providence et arcanes du pouvoir dans la salle des Audiences du Palazzo Vecchio," in Philippe Morel, ed., *Le miroir du prince dans l'art italien de la Renaissance* (Tours: Presses universitaires de Tours; Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 209.

73
Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 5, *Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to a Case of Schizophrenia*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (1912; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), plate XII.

74
Jung, *The Collected Works*, 5:137–38.

The same prayerful posture can be seen in another painting depicting a cult scene, in which Jung's very probable "I" is framed by two Egyptian-looking sculptures in profile, on whose open palms rest two objects, while the central figure holds two winged female figures, one with jade butterfly wings, and the other with tawny bird wings (Fig. 11).

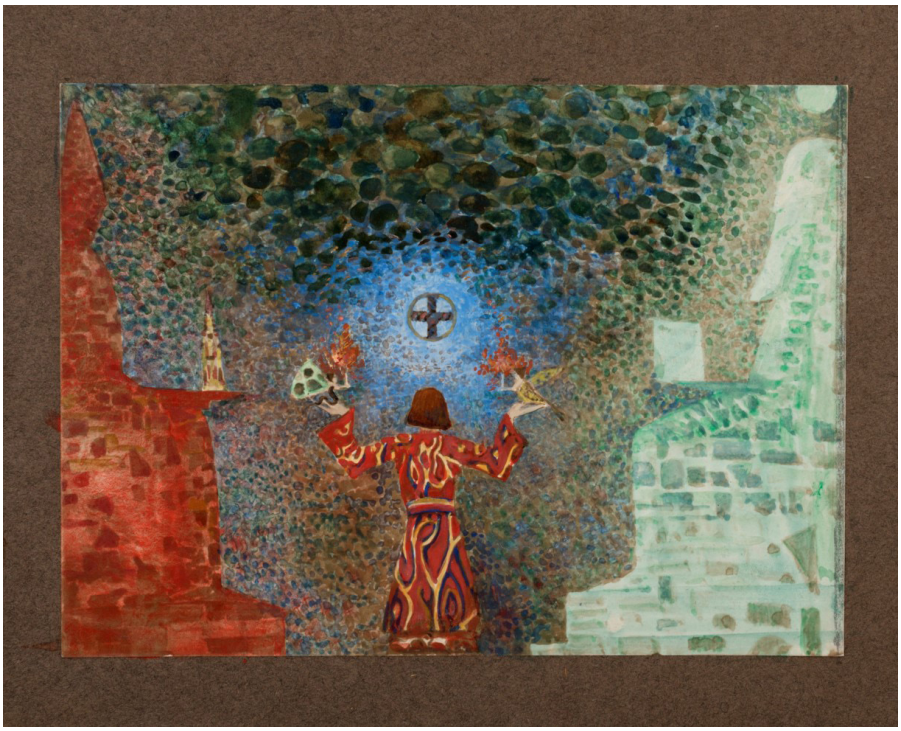

Fig. 11. Carl Gustav Jung, Cultic Scene II, ca. 1919, gouache on paper, 11x14 cm, Jung Family Archive, © Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zurich.

Based on the visionary experiences recorded in the *Black Books* and on Constance Long's diary, in which she transcribed a conversation she had with Jung in 1920, Diane Finiello Zervas has shown that the two stone figures most probably represent two aspects of Jung's personality. He would call the crimson sculpture on the left "Ka," representing a creative and Dionysian aspect associated with sensation, while the figure on the right would be Philemon, embodying the organising and Apollonian side, Jung's intuition.[75] The two female figures in Jung's "I" embody two aspects of the anima, one chthonian and the other spiritual, linked respectively to Ka and Philemon.[76] Here too, then, Jung depicts his "I" grappling with unconscious content, the form of which is borrowed from representations of ancient pantheons. However, between this painting and the previous *Cult Scene*, Phanês has disappeared. All that remains of the child floating in his halo of light is a shimmering sphere before which Jung's "I" appears to be praying, a sphere separated into four sections by a central cross.

This luminous sphere, with its elementary geometry and quadripartite division, can undoubtedly be likened to a mandala. The creation of mandalas, the term for which, as we have seen, is taken from *Vajrayana* Buddhism,[77] would, according to Jung, be a means of achieving a state of balance and harmony between the conscious and unconscious, personal, and collective contents of the personality, the mandala symbolising the Self.[78] As we have already seen, for Jung,

75
Diane Finiello Zervas, "Philemon, Ka, and Creative Fantasy: The Formation of the Reconciling Symbol in Jung's Visual Works, 1919-1923," *Phanes: Journal for Jung History* 2 (2019): 70, 73.

76
Zervas, "Philemon, Ka, and Creative Fantasy: The Formation of the Reconciling Symbol in Jung's Visual Works, 1919-1923," 73.

77
See Martin Brauen, ed., *Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism*, (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche ; New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009). Exhibition catalog, Rubin Museum of Art, New York, from August 14, 2009 to January 11, 2010.

78
Carl Gustav Jung, "Mandalas" [1955], in Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works*, vol. 9.1, *The Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 388.

Izdubar, like the egg and Phanês, is a motif that also symbolises the Self. It would seem, then, that in his search for representations of his Self, his inner god, Jung migrated from a figurative mode of representation based on ancient, mythical, and antique references—alternately the hero Izdubar/Gilgamesh, the cosmogonic egg or Phanês, the god in the egg—to a semi-abstract mode of representation in which his psychic totality is signified by an arrangement of geometric shapes and colours.

This liberation, both from mythical and legendary referents and from classical iconography, is in the end perfectly represented in a painting from the *Red Book* that offers a synthesis of Jung's work on the representation of his Self and the constitution of his personal myth based on divinities and cults of the past (Fig. 12).

Fig. 12. Carl Gustav Jung, Red Book, Liber Secundus, Page 127, 1921, ink, tempera, and gold on paper, 20.8x20.6 cm, Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, © 2009 Foundation of the Works of C. G. Jung, Zürich. First published by W. W. Norton & Co.

Created on page 127 of the *Liber secundus*, this image, which is one of Jung's only visual works to be clearly titled, is called *Amor Triumphat.* It shows a large circle divided into four sections by a central cross. Against a background of abstract red and blue shapes, the lower left-hand section shows a tree half felled by an axe, with a dead bull beside it, the knife still stuck in its bloody spine. The upper right shows a crucified man and, to his left, a naked figure lying as if on a bed of stings or spikes, a large circle with a cross on its chest. At the bottom of the painting, Jung wrote:

> This image was complete on 9 January 1921, after it had waited incomplete for 9 months. It expresses I know not what kind of grief, a fourfold sacrifice. I could almost choose not to finish it. It is the inexorable wheel of the four functions, the essence of all living beings imbued with sacrifice.[79]

Noting that this image was produced shortly after Jung had finished writing *Psychological Types*, Zervas describes it as a work "that presents a vision of the collective process of humanity and cultural history integrated with the personal process of individuation, including that of Jung,"[80] the process of individuation being, as previously explained, the scientific name derived from the idea of searching for one's personal myth. According to Zervas's interpretation, it would be possible to start reading the work from the bottom right-hand section and work counter-clockwise to the top right-hand quarter, which would correspond to the spiritual evolution of humanity as thought by Jung. The first part of the work with the half-cut tree would therefore represent the end of the early cults devoted to nature[81] while the second part would show the decadence of the pre-Christian cults, in particular that of Mithra, slayer of the cosmic bull.[82] The crucified man in the upper part represents Christ, but it seems that his cult must also be overcome in order to reach the last quadrant of the composition. The figure in this section, which can be likened to Jung's "I," wears a mandala on his chest which, as we have seen, symbolises the Self. Here we have the image of the new subject of the new cult: the god within, the inner divinity, the Self, whose image here is devoid of any reference to a past cult or tradition and is, on the contrary, perfectly abstract because it is absolute, universal, and totally interiorised.

79 Jung, *The Red Book: Liber novus*, 307 [127].

80 Zervas, "Philemon, Ka, and Creative Fantasy: The Formation of the Reconciling Symbol in Jung's Visual Works, 1919-1923," 80.

81 Zervas, 82.

82 Zervas, 83.

Conclusion

Jung's images draw on a vast iconographic repertoire and are inspired by many mythical and religious traditions, both Western and Eastern. But, from Babylonian legends to Christianity, Buddhism, and the Orphic mystery cults, we can also see that his imagery is above all the site of an action, a pictorial representation of his inner experiences, in which he always takes centre stage and plays a very active role. Such figurations are to be understood above all as manifestations of psychological content, archetypal images that externalise unconscious psychic elements through painting. The coloured pigments and alternately geometric and organic forms of Jung's images are thus the source of a truly personal and original mythopoetic. The references to ancient myths appear to be a necessary step in representing the different stages leading to the discovery of one's own god, through the visual representation of one's own personal myth for successful individuation which, according to Susan Rowland, "is myth-generating," as "in individuation, we cast from intimate experience a story that functions as a form-making myth for living."[83] Achieving liberation from unconscious content translates into an image that gradually frees us from references to ancient cults, and the image of Jung's personal totality, of his inner god, the image of his Self, thus becomes an almost abstract image, in which the content of his personality is liberated from the mi-

83 Rowland, *Jungian Literary Criticism*, 65.

metic yoke of myth. In this context, Jungian images thus become the place of encounter and tension between the structuring properties of historical myths and the creative process driven by the personal myth that Rowland distinguishes.[84]

During his period of confrontation with the unconscious, Jung experienced this laying bare of myths to reveal their effectiveness, which is both inner and universal, and universal because it is inner, this meaning of images that would be valid in its essence in all cultures. But after all this, after the creative period that gave rise to the *Red Book*, and his paintings, it was at Eranos that Jung was able to explore the depiction of myths with other researchers. Eranos seems thus to have been a major location for Jung in many respects: in terms of putting images to the test through scientific confrontation and the presentation of his theories; in terms of the dialogue between images and those also produced by Fröbe-Kapteyn; and finally in terms of the study of images that he was able to consult thanks to the iconographic archives that Eranos's mistress was compiling: for a place where images are born, live, and take flight—over the deep waters.

84
"There is a creative tension within Jungian psychology on form-making: the emphasis on the need for structure versus the fluidity of process. Such a dynamic is visible in the tradition of myths as specific stories *structuring*, versus the notion of a personal myth that stress the creative *process* of a story." Rowland, *Jungian Literary Criticism*, 66.

Science and Aesthetics in Portmann's Post-war Eranos Lectures

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Abstract
In the years following 1945, several natural scientists were invited to the Eranos meetings in an attempt to integrate the sciences and the humanities. The biologist Adolf Portmann was the most important member of this group for the future of Eranos. This article follows Portmann's attempts to establish a dialogue between science, art, and religion, with a special focus on how he used aesthetics to bridge these domains. Portmann was motivated by his conviction that aesthetics was a central phenomenon in the natural world and neglected by contemporary biology. For him, the appearance of organisms was not simply a byproduct of other biological processes but meaningful in its own right. Beyond his discussions of the natural world, aesthetics also featured prominently in his broader reflections on the place of science in culture. He assumed that culture was divided into a rational tendency, on the one hand, and what he alternately calls the imaginative or aesthetic tendency, on the other. This framework helps to explain why Portmann came to identify so strongly with Eranos; for him, its meetings were the place where modern rationalism could be connected to this other side of culture.

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Introduction

Eranos is commonly discussed regarding the study of religion and of the arts and humanities more broadly. The natural sciences appear, if at all, only as the other of the meetings. For example, Wouter Hanegraaff describes one of the guiding themes at Eranos as the fascination with everything excluded by the Enlightenment and modern science.[1] Looking at the history of Eranos as a whole, this perspective has great merit; clearly, the meetings were dominated by scholars from the humanities and especially scholars of religion. At the same time, Eranos has a long and diverse history, and in this article I want to draw attention to an episode in the history of Eranos that helps create a more complex picture: the effort in the postwar years to include perspectives from the natural sciences.

Most of the scientists invited during these years were physicists interested in connecting science to philosophy and religion. Adolf Portmann (1897–1982), the lone biologist among them, shared these interests and became interested in how artistic approaches to nature could complement the scientific perspective. He was beyond doubt the most important in this group for the history of Eranos, and so this article will focus mostly on his contributions and how he attempted to connect science, art, and religion. I will suggest that it was primarily his focus on aesthetics that allows us to understand how he saw their relationship.

Portmann's interest in appearance is well established in the literature on his work. Bertrand Prévost and Georges Thinès present his approach as a challenge to mainstream biology, which according to Portmann disregarded the form of living beings as byproducts of either evolutionary or molecular biological processes. He, on the other hand, claimed that forms have their own autonomous meaning. The articles of both Prévost and Thinès highlight the concept of self-presentation (*Selbstdarstellung*) as central to Portmann's views, in that for him, the appearance of animals was primarily an act of expression. Thinès also connects these ideas to those of Frederik Buytendijk,[2] which relate to Eranos, as Buytendijk was himself a speaker in 1950. Pietro Conte adds an analysis of how the concept of self-presentation evolved throughout Portmann's career, becoming particularly crucial in his 1960 revision of *Animal Forms and Patterns*.[3] This development coincided with Portmann's active period at Eranos, suggesting the influence of its interdisciplinary exchanges on his thought.

However, Eranos is not mentioned in either of these articles, which raises the question of the importance of the meetings for Portmann's ideas about aesthetics. On the other hand, Matthias Riedl's article about Portmann at Eranos focuses on his anthropological research as a contribution to the meetings and his search for interdisciplinary exchange, but it does not mention his interest in aesthetics.[4] I hope to show that this was another important motivation for Portmann as well as a central theme of his lectures.

In the following, I will first examine the introduction of the natural sciences at Eranos in the postwar years, showing how scientists presented their work in humanistic terms. Then I turn to Portmann, demonstrating how he positioned himself between the sciences and the humanities and gained a unique position at Eranos. I suggest that

1 Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 278–79.

2 Bertrand Prévost, "L'élégance animale: Esthétique et zoologie selon Adolf Portmann," *Images re-vues* 6 (2009); Georges Thinès, "4. La forme animale selon Frederik Buytendijk et Adolf Portmann: Une phénoménologie du comportement expressif," in *Penser Le Comportement Animal*, ed. Florence Burgat (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2010).

3 Pietro Conte, "Playing Appearances: On Some Aspects of Portmann's Contribution to Philosophical Aesthetics," in *Adolf Portmann: A Thinker of Self-Expressive Life*, ed. Filip Jaroš and Jiří Klouda (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021).

4 Matthias Riedl, "Adolf Portmann: Ein Skeptiker auf der Suche," in *Pioniere, Poeten, Professoren: Eranos und der Monte Verità in der Zivilisationsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Elisabetta Barone, Matthias Riedl, and Alexandra Tischel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004).

for Portmann, aesthetics provided the key for connecting the religious, artistic, and scientific themes at the meetings. After that, I examine his emphasis on appearance in nature, which also had a psychological dimension, leading to an engagement with the work of Carl Gustav Jung at Eranos. Finally, I look at Portmann's broader reflections on the relationship between science, art, and religion, and how he saw them as manifestations of more fundamental human traits of rationality and imagination.

Humanist Scientists at Eranos

In the first Eranos meetings of the 1930s, the guiding theme was the relationship between "Eastern" and "Western" religious traditions,[5] following Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's conviction that there is something common to them. The initial programme was then interrupted by World War II, when the meetings were necessarily reduced, with few lectures by the speakers, all living in Switzerland. When Eranos was fully re-established after the war, there was a shift in perspective: the main topic moved from religion to the concept of the human and the place of humanity in the cosmos. In the years between 1947 and 1961, all the titles of the meetings had the word "man" (*Mensch*) in them. This shift clearly reflects the influence of Fröbe-Kapteyn: she was responsible for organising the meetings,[6] and her prefaces show that the changing outlook was a deliberate choice in response to the catastrophe of the war. In 1946, she called for a "cultural regeneration" (*kulturelle Erneuerung*), which required a new synthesis of all the disciplines, both in the natural sciences and the humanities. The concept of the human was meant to provide a common basis for these different fields: "All branches refer to humanity and its relation to the spirit, to nature, and to other human beings."[7] Beyond these interdisciplinary goals, Fröbe-Kapteyn also saw this as a dialogue between science and religion, claiming that the scientific pursuit of truth was itself guided by a deeply religious ethos.

The postwar context also manifested itself through the increasing cultural influence of the United States at Eranos. In her preface to the 1947 meeting, Fröbe-Kapteyn described the historical situation as an opportunity for the "pioneer spirit in old wounded Europe . . . to participate in creating a new orientation and a new culture." She saw the contribution of Eranos to developing new forms of interdisciplinary collaboration, which she associated with Anglo-American academic practice. This is evident in the anglicisms she repeatedly used to describe collaboration: the participating researchers were those "who understood our kind of group work or 'teamwork' [English in original]"; and she emphasised that the meetings were all centred around "an idea, and around it a group or a 'team' [English in original] of researchers, which is always composed differently." She also compared the meetings to a "Round-Table-Conference [English in original]."[8]

As part of this broader transformation of Eranos after 1945, several natural scientists were invited for the first time:

- the biophysicist Friedrich Dessauer (1881–1963)
- the physicist Erwin Schrödinger (1887–1961)

5
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1933: Yoga und Meditation im Osten und im Westen*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1934).

6
Marianna Ferrara, "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's Ashram: The Great Mother and the Personal History of Eastern Religions," *ASDIWAL: Revue genevoise d'anthropologie et d'histoire des religions* 16, no. 1 (2021): 82.

7
"[A]lle ihre Zweige beziehen sich auf den Menschen und auf sein Verhaltnis zum Geiste, zu der Natur und zu seinen Mitmenschen." Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1946: Geist und Natur*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947), 7. All translations from the original German are my own.

8
Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, "Vorwort," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1947: Der Mensch (Erste Folge)*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947), 6–7.

- the biologist Adolf Portmann (1897–1982)
- the physicist and mathematician Hermann Weyl (1885–1955)
- the physicist Markus Fierz, assistant to Wolfgang Pauli (1912–2006)
- the electrical engineer Max Knoll (1897–1969)
- the physicist, philosopher, and industrialist Lancelot L. Whyte (1896–1972)

Some of these men were famous figures, like Schrödinger and Weyl, while others were more marginal, like Knoll and Whyte. They all shared an interest in broader cultural questions and particularly in the philosophical underpinnings of science. For example, Dessauer had published about the relationship between Catholicism and science, and Schrödinger had an interest in ancient Indian thought.[9]

These scientists were still a minority, even in these years. Apart from Portmann, who would return to Eranos every year for the rest of his life, they all attended only once or twice; Erwin Schrödinger declined an invitation for a second visit.[10] Their role as guests at events dominated by scholars from the humanities is reflected in the lectures. For example, Schrödinger stated that he could not assume that his listeners had even superficial knowledge of the facts.[11] More importantly, some of the speakers expressed an uncertainty about whether their lectures were relevant for the larger topic of the conference. In the middle of his lecture in 1948, Weyl apologised for having hardly spoken about the human up to that point.[12] Markus Fierz opened his lecture in the same year with the question: "But is it the physicist's job to talk about man?"[13] As will become clear below, Portmann became more comfortable at Eranos, but the opening statement of his lecture at the 1949 meeting on "Man and Myth" (*Der Mensch und die mythische Welt*) shows that he was also aware of this issue: "Perhaps it was here and there mentioned with surprise that natural research should be heard at a conference on the topic of myth."[14]

The scientists had the additional difficulty that their research had become morally suspect: although World War II led to the inclusion of scientists at Eranos, it also strengthened the association of science with technology and destruction. The scientists were keenly aware of this: Schrödinger and Dessauer, the two physicists in 1946, both referred to the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in their lectures.[15] Portmann referred to the misuse of biology during the Nazi period, which he called the "dark problem of political biology."[16]

With this background it becomes clear that the speakers had to adapt their lectures to their audience and did so by presenting the natural sciences in a humanistic form. In general, the German word *Geist*, which is difficult to translate but means something close to "spirit" or "mind," was the most important point of reference, and not the word *Natur* or "nature." More specifically, the speakers used three strategies to talk about science in a humanistic way: First, some of them presented modern science as part of a general cultural history of humanity. This is the main theme of the lectures of Schrödinger and Dessauer in 1946: both told the history of science as a series of great ideas, and therefore as part of a larger history of human ideas. Schrödinger presented a broad history of physics and biology in the nineteenth and

9
Friedrich Dessauer, *Der Fall Galilei und Wir* (Luzern: Räber, 1943); Walter John Moore, *Schrödinger, Life and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 168–77.

10
Hans Thomas Hakl, *Eranos: An Alternative Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2013), 343.

11
Erwin Schrödinger, "Der Geist der Naturwissenschaft," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1946: Geist und Natur*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947), 501.

12
Hermann Weyl, "Wissenschaft als Symbolische Konstruktion des Menschen," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1948: Der Mensch (Zweite Folge)*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1949), 400.

13
"Aber ist es denn Sache des Physikers, über den Menschen zu sprechen?" Markus Fierz, "Zur physikalischen Erkenntnis," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1948: Der Mensch (Zweite Folge)*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1949), 28.

14
"Vielleicht ist da und dort mit Befremden bemerkt worden, daß in einer Tagung, die dem Mythischen gilt, die Naturforschung zum Worte kommen soll." Adolf Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1949: Der Mensch und die Mythische Welt*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1950), 475.

15
Schrödinger, "Geist der Naturwissenschaft," 507; Friedrich Dessauer, "Galilei, Newton und die Wendung des abendländischen Denkens," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1946: Geist und Natur*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947), 301.

16
Adolf Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1948: Der Mensch (Zweite Folge)*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1949), 476. For Portmann's political motivations see also Riedl, "Adolf Portmann," 117.

twentieth century, focusing on what he called their guiding thoughts. He tried to show that in each century both disciplines shared major ideas. In the nineteenth century, the common idea was "intelligible randomness" (*verständlicher Zufall*), or statistics more generally expressing itself both in the theory of evolution and in thermodynamics. For the twentieth century the leading idea was the thinking in discrete and quantifiable units, which formed the basis for quantum theory and modern genetics.[17] Friedrich Dessauer similarly spoke about the history of science, mainly involving Galileo and Newton.[18] Like Schrödinger he focused on ideas, but he was more interested in religion than philosophy. Motivated by a critique of contemporary and secular science and technology, Dessauer claimed that great scientific ideas had a religious element, and that research was a "natural revelation."[19] In other words, neither Schrödinger nor Dessauer spoke about contemporary research in physics but instead used the medium of historiography and specifically intellectual history, as though to show that even the sciences have great ideas.

Secondly, some speakers presented science, and specifically physics, as products of the human mind. What these speakers tried to achieve was to present an alternative conception of physics, not focused on the manipulation of matter to create technology, but on the search for meaning in the material world. In his second lecture in 1947, Dessauer presented the expansion of knowledge about the natural world since the ancient Greeks as a revolution in what it means to be human, in that humans were now in an ever-expanding and therefore always fascinating cosmos. He contrasted this perspective with what he called "philosophies of doom" (*Philosophien des Untergangs*), according to which humans are thrown into an alien universe—a reference to Heidegger's early philosophy.[20] On the other hand, Markus Fierz and Hermann Weyl did not speak about the universe as a whole but about mathematics. They drew on the connection to the larger topic of the meetings, the concept of the human, by presenting mathematics as the product of the creative human mind. Weyl saw the construction of mathematical symbols as an expression of the human condition: "Mathematics is not the rigid and paralysing schema, as it is often regarded by laypeople; rather, in it we are at the border between necessity and freedom, which is the essence of humanity itself."[21] Fierz on the other hand compared mathematical objects to archetypes, and it is important to note here that Fierz was the assistant of Wolfgang Pauli, whose correspondence with C. G. Jung has become famous.[22]

A third group of lectures, by Max Knoll and Lancelot Whyte, presented a vision of a unified science of the future that will have overcome the distinction between mind and matter. These two speakers went beyond the others by not just presenting science in a human form, but by demanding changes in the basic organisation of knowledge. In his 1951 lecture, Whyte called for a new synthesis of knowledge that could integrate "the exact, analytical specialised knowledge of quantitative science."[23] He proposed that it should be based on the concept of form, which was buried under a purely quantitative perspective in the modern period. The engineer Max Knoll's lecture in 1951 also connected physics and psychology, but it was far more concrete than the general reflections of Whyte: he tried to find evidence for the claim that

17
Schrödinger, "Geist der Naturwissenschaft."

18
Dessauer, "Galilei, Newton und die Wendung."

19
Dessauer, 329.

20
Friedrich Dessauer, "Mensch und Kosmos," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1947: Der Mensch (Erste Folge)*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1948).

21
"Die Mathematik ist nicht das starre und Erstarrung bringende Schema, als das der Laie sie so gerne ansieht; sondern wir stehen mit ihr genau in jenem Schnittpunkt von Gebundenheit und Freiheit, welcher das Wesen des Menschen selbst ist." Weyl, "Wissenschaft als symbolische Konstruktion," 413.

22
Fierz, "Zur physikalischen Erkenntnis."

23
Lancelot L. Whyte, "Time and the Mind-Body Problem: A Changed Scientific Conception of Process," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1951: Mensch Und Zeit*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1952), 254.

the activity of the sun at the time of birth could influence a person's psychology, mediated by effects on climate. He explicitly connected this to astrology, which he claimed had been "a speculative attempt to deduce the entire structure of the material and psychic world from solar effects in nature and on humans."[24] This scientific justification for astrology was gladly accepted by C. G. Jung in his lecture that same year. He spoke about synchronicity as a psychological phenomenon but then added that this was not the case for astrology: "In the light of the latest astrophysical research, this is not a case of synchronicity, but largely of a causal relationship."[25]

To sum up, the physicists at the Eranos meetings used a variety of strategies to give the natural sciences a human dimension, by presenting it as part of the history of ideas, by seeing it as an expression of timeless human nature, and by envisioning a future in which there would no longer be a distinction between natural sciences and humanities. For this article, what is interesting about the lectures by the physicists at Eranos is that even though they clearly connected science with the humanities, they were not particularly interested in the topic of art. For them, philosophy, psychology, and religion were the main points of reference, while art was hardly mentioned. Whyte's lecture is the only exception: apart from Aristotle, his main references for the new unified worldview were Leonardo da Vinci and Goethe.[26] Yet even Whyte focused mainly on philosophical concepts. This relative disregard for art was not at all the case with Portmann, the focus of the rest of this article.

24
"Als spekulativen Versuch, aus solaren Wirkungen in der Natur und am Menschen auf den ganzen Aufbau der materiellen und psychischen Welt zu schließen." Max Knoll, "Wandlungen Der Wissenschaft in Unserer Zeit," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1951: Mensch Und Zeit*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1952), 430–31.

25
"Im Lichte neuester astrophysikalischer Forschung betrachtet, handelt es sich bei der astrologischen Entsprechung wahrscheinlich nicht um Synchronizität, sondern zum größeren Teil um eine Kausalbeziehung." Carl Gustav Jung, "Über Synchronizität," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1951: Mensch Und Zeit*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1952), 279.

26
Whyte, "Time and the Mind-Body," 260.

Portmann's Special Position at Eranos

Portmann was in a different situation from these other scientists. He was the only one who personally came to identify with Eranos and who had a strong impact on meetings beyond the postwar years. After his first appearance in 1946, he would return to Eranos every year until his death in 1982, and he became director of Eranos after the death of Fröbe-Kapteyn in 1962. One reason for this difference between the other scientists and Portmann is his distinct scientific background: as a biologist who was by this time mainly concerned with biological anthropology, what he was saying was directly relevant at the meetings, involving the nature of the human. More broadly, he carved out a role as a mediator between the humanities and the natural sciences. Biology was located at the intersection of the human and non-human realms, and he was therefore uniquely positioned to speak about questions of boundaries.

This role reflected Portmann's place in the meetings: in six out of the nine of them, between 1946 and 1954, he gave the closing lecture. This was presumably a decision by Fröbe-Kapteyn, responsible for their organisation, but when Portmann became head of the Eranos foundation in 1962, he kept this arrangement. More importantly, he frequently referred to this position, for example in his 1948 lecture:

> At the end of this conference the biologist speaks to you, and before our parting we will therefore take a look outside into this beautiful garden, in which we can be together. And we want to

remind ourselves of the good fortune that this garden means for our intentions. During these days we have tried to look within and understand the works of the spirit in its diversity. But today we look outside to the many life forms of this piece of the Earth. And when this look around eventually leads back to us, we will take note of the necessity with which we will always meet ourselves and the mystery in us even in the things around us.[27]

Fig. 1. Adolf Portmann (right) in conversation with Henry Corbin at Eranos. Eranos Foundation archives, Ascona-Moscia. All rights reseved.

This quote shows what Portmann regarded as his role at the meetings: rather than directly studying the human spirit as did other disciplines represented at the meetings, the contribution of biology was to define its boundaries. Biology was not committed to one of the metaphysical positions that placed spirit either above matter or vice versa; it could therefore explore the relationship between the two.[28] Therefore, he as a biologist had a crucial role to play, not just compared to other natural scientists, but also compared to the humanist scholars that made up the majority of the speakers.

In his concern for "wholeness," Portmann followed a longer line of German-speaking scientists especially who opposed the "disenchantment of the world" and sought to create an alternative, holistic science. In her book,[29] Anne Harrington has studied this movement and several of its scientists who directly influenced Portmann: Jakob von Uexküll inspired his concept of *Innerlichkeit*,[30] and Gestalt psychology was important for his emphasis on complex—or "holistic"—sense experience.[31] This commitment to holism explains why Portmann came to

27
"Da am Ende dieser Tagung der Biologe zu Ihnen spricht, so wollen wir, bevor wir Abschied nehmen, noch einmal hinausblicken in den schönen Garten, in dem wir hier zusammen sein dürfen. Und wir wollen auch recht des Glückes inne sein, das dieser Garten für unsere Absichten bedeutet. Wir haben in diesen Tagen, nach innen blickend, die Taten des Geistes in ihrer Vielfalt zu schauen und zu verstehen versucht. Heute aber blicken wir hinaus zu den vielen Lebensformen dieses Stückchens Erde. Und weist uns dann dieser Blick auf unseren Umkreis schließlich wieder zu uns selber zurück, so werden wir umso eher der inneren Notwendigkeit gewahr, mit der wir stets wieder uns selbst und unserer Rätselhaftigkeit auch im Blick auf die Dinge um uns begegnen." Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 461.

28
Adolf Portmann, "Die Biologie und das Phänomen des Geistigen," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1946: Geist und Natur*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1947), 523–25.

29
Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture From Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

30
Adolf Portmann, "Vorwort," in *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen: Ein Bilderbuch unsichtbarer Welten/Bedeutungslehre*, ed. Jakob von Uexküll and Georg Kriszat (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956), 10.

31
The concept of "Gestalt" can be found throughout his lectures, and an explicit reference to Gestalt psychology is in Adolf Portmann, "Die Bedeutung der Bilder in der lebendigen Energiewandlung," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1952: Mensch und Zeit*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1953), 351.

identify so strongly with Eranos; as he put it in 1948, it was "the place where dividing barriers fall, where the individual not only acts as . . . a representative of a field of research but at the same time as someone who wishes to demonstrate and cultivate common aspects of the human endeavour."[32] In other words, he came to Eranos not necessarily to promote a biological perspective, but to enter into a dialogue with the arts and humanities, the fields that were mainly represented there. This supports Matthias Riedl's finding, mainly based on later sources, that Portmann was a "sceptic" keenly aware of the limits of biology, especially with respect to the meaning of natural phenomena; and that he therefore came to Eranos to complement it with interdisciplinary perspectives.[33]

For Portmann, the search for a holistic view of the human, and by extension the Eranos meetings, was not simply an intellectual pursuit, but a matter of urgent contemporary relevance, as he emphasised in a 1962 lecture about the meaning of Eranos. Much like Fröbe-Kapteyn in 1946, he conceived of his own time as one of a cultural crisis: a one-sided rationality was spreading across the world, and not even the West, where this development originated, had found a way to solve the conflicts that arose from it.[34] Thus he emphasised that Eranos was not a withdrawal from the present, but a response to its needs. This sense of a mission did not lead him to call for an activist turn for Eranos; rather, he saw its task as the slow work on fundamental questions, to counterbalance the impatience of the present: "The Eranos meetings are a labour of silence."[35]

More specifically, he saw the purpose of Eranos as the rediscovery of the "archaic" that could complement modernity. When speaking about "this original humanity," he associated it with art, stating that "the importance of its spiritual creativity and its lasting contribution to artistic forms has often been emphasised at the conferences at Lago Maggiore."[36] However, in this lecture he particularly emphasised the religious dimension of the archaic; he described religion as "a way of relating to the world that truly establishes our humanity," and that therefore had to become a central focus of Eranos.[37] Portmann tended to present human culture as divided in two, and he saw the primary representatives of these two poles as science and technology on one hand, and art and religion on the other. Eranos was the place where they could reconnect.

To answer the question of how Portmann tried to bridge these domains, the above-mentioned quote about standing between Eranos and nature is revealing because of his emphasis on the beauty of the garden. This aesthetic dimension was not incidental but central to his broader goal of connecting science, art, and religion. Visual imagery generally plays an important role in the language he used, reflecting his criticism of a biology that is only concerned with the invisible. In addition, the word "image" (*Bild*) itself features prominently in many of his lectures: first as a general term for both traditional and scientific understandings of nature, for example when he spoke of "the image of the bird" as a creature whose life is especially affected by time and change[38]; then as a specific scientific concept in his lecture "The Significance of Images for the Living Transformation of Energy" ("Die Bedeutung der Bilder in der lebendigen Energiewandlung," 1952), by

32
"Der Ort, wo trennende Schranken fallen, wo der einzelne nicht lediglich . . . als Vertreter eines Forschungsgebietes gelten darf, sondern zugleich als einer, der Verbindendes im humanen Tun aufweisen und pflegen möchte," Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 475. Portmann retained this conception of the purpose of Eranos until his death, as can be seen in a similar statement from 1979 quoted in Markus Ritter, "Die Biologie Adolf Portmanns in zeitgeschichtlichem Kontext," *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 100 (2000): 251.

33
Riedl, "Adolf Portmann," 120–23.

34
Adolf Portmann, "Vom Sinn und Auftrag der Eranos-Tagungen," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1961: Der Mensch im Spannungsfeld der Ordnungen*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1962), 19.

35
"Die Eranos-Tagungen sind ein Werk der Stille." Portmann, 28.

36
"Eranos hat auf die Größe und das Weiterbestehen dieses ursprünglichen Menschentums hingewiesen; die Bedeutung seiner geistigen Schöpferkraft und sein dauernder Anteil am künstlerischen Formen ist oft an den Tagungen am Langensee hervorgehoben worden." Portmann, 14.

37
Portmann, 20–21.

38
Portmann, "Die Zeit im Leben," 453.

which he meant that animals do not act directly in response to sense impressions, but instead form images or complex structures of stimuli that then trigger various internal processes[39]; finally, as a term for one of the main goals of research, which according to Portmann included the creation of "comprehensive, rich images of larger areas of nature."[40] When discussing the importance of myth across disciplines, he explicitly highlighted his visual approach: "Let me put this common element before your eyes once again—really before your eyes, in that language of images in which natural forms and spiritual works are initially before us."[41] Unlike some lectures by other speakers, Portmann's did not contain illustrations, but the "language of images" was central to how he conveyed his ideas.

This visual understanding of knowledge aligned with how he saw the goals of the Eranos meetings. After presenting the reproduction of silver-washed fritillaries, then the process of infection by the rabies virus, he summed up:

> The work at our Eranos meetings serves the exploration of all human attempts to understand the world and life and to depict the inaccessible, what was recently only foreshadowed, in great symbols. For the sake of this goal, we also want to consider the dark image of the Rabies with deep seriousness, just as we have considered the joyful and cheerful image of the imperial mantle.[42]

When Portmann spoke of "great symbols," he was making a connection not just to art but also to religion. This becomes clear from the 1962 lecture mentioned above, which similarly associated Eranos with the study of symbolism and went into more detail, describing how the meetings explored "what the history of religion and research on symbols, mythology and psychology could tell us about the origins of religious ideas, about the deepest comprehensible commonalities of the religious relationship to the world." This was achieved by studying the "enormous archive" of ancient traditions and their symbolic world, examining "primordial images" like that of the "Great Mother" across different archaic cultures.[43]

Therefore, when Portmann talked about topics like rabies, he was adding symbols from the natural world, thereby contributing to the central concern of the meetings. Images served as a mediating element between science, art, and religion—by emphasising their role in each of these domains, he found common ground between them. As will become clear in the next section, Portmann's focus on images as a bridge between different areas of knowledge was not coincidental, because it aligned with his specific biological approach centred around the role of appearance for living organisms.

The Role of Aesthetics in the Natural World

Portmann was a highly visual person. In his childhood, he was fascinated by drawing and painting the natural world on the banks of the Rhine near Basel. In 1921, shortly after finishing his PhD in zoology, he left his position as an assistant at the university of Geneva and spent

39
Portmann, "Bedeutung der Bilder."

40
Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 486.

41
"Lassen Sie mich dieses Gemeinsame noch einmal vor Augen—wirklich vor Augen, in jener Sprache der Bilder, in der Naturformen wie Geistwerk zuerst vor uns sind." Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 512–13.

42
"Die Arbeit an unseren Eranos-Tagungen dient der Erforschung aller menschlichen Versuche, Welt und Leben zu verstehen und das Unzugängliche, das eben noch zu Ahnende in großen Symbolen darzustellen. Um dieses unseres Zieles willen wollen wir auch das dunkle Bild der Rabies in tiefem Ernst bedenken, so wie wir das frohe und heitere des Kaisermantels bedacht haben." Portmann, "Bedeutung der Bilder," 357.

43
Portmann, "Sinn und Auftrag," 9.

a year in Munich to study painting, seriously considering it as a career option.[44] Although he remained a biologist professionally, his passion for the visual appearance of organisms remained with him throughout his career, as reflected in publications such as *The Animal Form* (*Die Tiergestalt*, 1948).[45]

This interest in appearance is well known in the literature on Portmann, often with reference to his critique of Darwinism and molecular biology. His Eranos lectures support this finding: Portmann frequently developed his ideas in opposition to purely functional interpretations of natural forms, especially evolutionary explanations.[46] One of his main examples was that of the testicles of male mammals, since this is a feature which developed not independently from, but apparently in contradiction to the survival interests of the individual. Portmann noted that the development of mammals was accompanied by a movement of the testicles from a secure location at the centre of the body to a dangerously exposed position on the outside, and that all attempts to explain this process with natural selection had been unsuccessful:

> The phenomenon is all the more remarkable as there is no way to explain the formation of this structure through selection. For nothing in the struggle for existence could have caused the hidden testicles to emerge from the protective body cavity. And no theory of selection has so far been able to explain which sexual selection processes were able to drive the testicles out in the first place.[47]

Portmann used this example to support his argument for an aesthetic dimension of life not encompassed by Darwinian evolutionary theory. What is especially noteworthy here is that Portmann rejects the explanation of this phenomenon through "sexual selection."[48] In another lecture, Portmann again highlighted the importance of sexuality and sexual organs for the "beauty" of organisms.[49] It was important for Portmann to disassociate sexuality from selection in an evolutionary sense because he saw the former as part of the aesthetic dimension of life, a separate sphere not encompassed by Darwinian evolutionary theory.

Portmann distinguished between the appearance of animals as signs with a communicative function, for example to signal sexual availability, and as expression without a functional explanation. By that he meant the specific design of a feature. In his lectures Portmann frequently tried to evoke the aesthetic value of such features, for instance about the head and horns of antelopes: "[W]hat richness of form, what conciseness, what unmistakable memorability."[50] For him, the expressive value as opposed to the sign value went beyond a strictly biological perspective, but by his role as a mediator, he still considered biology to be relevant here: "[T]his points us over into areas, for which one of the many meanings of the word 'spirit' is used. The biologist describes the boundary, and even if, true to the nature of his work, he does not cross it—whoever has reached a boundary, whoever lives at it, has secretly already crossed it."[51]

However, as will become clear in the next section, in the following years Portmann more often called the main cultural counterpart of

44
Joachim Illies, *Das Geheimnis des Lebendigen* (München: Kindler, 1976), 33–76.

45
Adolf Portmann, *Die Tiergestalt* (Basel: Reinhardt, 1948).

46
Karel Stibral makes the point that this was not necessarily an opposition between Portmann and Darwin, who shared some of these views, and that the debate was rather with Neo-Darwinism, see Karel Stibral, "The Beauty of Organisms: Biological Aesthetics Between Darwin and Portmann," in *Adolf Portmann: A Thinker of Self-Expressive Life*, ed. Filip Jaroš and Jiří Klouda (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021).

47
"Die Erscheinung ist um so beachtenswerter, als es keine Möglichkeit gibt, die Entstehung dieses Gebildes durch Selektion zu erklären. Denn nichts im Daseinskampfe konnte die geborgenen Hoden veranlassen, aus der schützenden Leibeshöhle nach außen zu treten. Und keine Selektionslehre hat bisher vermocht zu erklären, welche sexuellen Ausleseprozesse den Hoden zuerst überhaupt hinauszutreiben vermocht hätten." Portmann, "Biologie und das Phänomen," 538.

48
Evelleen Richards, *Darwin and the Making of Sexual Selection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

49
Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 467.

50
"[W]elcher Reichtum der Formen, welche Prägnanz, welche unverwechselbare Einprägsamkeit." Portmann, "Biologie und das Phänomen," 541.

51
"[D]as weist uns hinüber in Bereiche, für die ja auch eine der mancherlei Bedeutungen des Wortes Geist in Gebrauch ist. Der Biologe bezeichnet die Grenze, und wenn er sie auch, der Art seines Schaffens getreu, nicht überschreitet—wer immer an eine Grenze vorgedrungen ist, wer an ihr lebt, der hat sie heimlich auch schon überschritten." Portmann, "Biologie und das Phänomen," 541.

science the "aesthetic" or the "imaginative" sphere. I therefore suggest that this is what he had in mind already in 1946: that the importance of aesthetics for living beings meant that science alone was not able to study them fully; it had to be complemented by more humanistic approaches.

At times Portmann spoke of the "value of the surface" (*Wert der Oberfläche*) to sum up his defence of the aesthetic dimension, as opposed to only looking for meaning underneath the surface. However, this does not mean he was only interested in appearance for its own sake. Rather, the aesthetics of the natural world fascinated him because of what it revealed about the interior of living beings: "The more superficial, the more powerfully an animal image conveys the inwardness, the peculiarity of the being that presents itself in this way."[52] For Portmann, this concept of "inwardness" was central. In his lecture in 1948, he expanded on it, claiming that animals create "counter-worlds" (*Gegenwelten*), whose structure is not a precise reproduction of an environment, but a reinterpretation based on its general organisation. In other words, there is a creative element to how organisms relate to the world. When studying this inward dimension, Portmann likened his approach to that of a psychologist: "Just as the psychologist, for instance, relies on the products of man's mental labour when he uses the formations of myth as documents for the structure of our inwardness, so the naturalist seeks first to penetrate through the many organs of sensory life and expression to the hidden realm."[53]

This psychological interpretation of appearance has not been highlighted enough in the literature on Portmann. The articles by Prévost and Thinès, also focusing on his aesthetics, primarily present his understanding of appearance as an autonomous sphere. This makes the Eranos lectures special: the central position of C. G. Jung, who presumably was "the psychologist" in the quote above because of his interest in myth, led Portmann to explicitly connect his views to the field of psychology.

As with others at Eranos, Jung was one of Portmann's primary interlocutors. In his lecture "Myth in Science" ("Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 1948), he referred to psychological and ethnological research on myth that was focused on structures in the unconscious. Here he did not mention Jung by name, but it is again clear that this is who he had in mind, because the rest of the lecture was a discussion of the notion of archetypes. As mentioned above, this lecture was one case where natural scientists expressed uncertainty about whether they could contribute something relevant to the theme of the meeting. He therefore used the concept of the unconscious to connect his own field to the topic of myth: "Work in biology is constantly concerned with the order of unconscious life; no-one is more impressed by the greatness of the order that prevails in this hidden realm than the developmental physiologist who follows the development of an organism, the formation of its dispositions."[54]

More precisely, he saw a connection between the complex forms he was interested in and Jung's archetypes, which he primarily understood as heritable psychological structures. According to Portmann, biologists tended to be sympathetic to this idea of heritability. The examples that Portmann used to support the idea of "archetypes" in

52
"Je oberflächlicher, desto machtvoller zeugt ein tierisches Gebilde von der Innerlichkeit, der Sonderheit des in dieser Erscheinung auftretenden Wesens." Portmann, "Biologie und das Phänomen," 539.

53
"So wie etwa der Psychologe sich an die Erzeugnisse der geistigen Arbeit des Menschen hält, wenn er die Gebilde des Mythus als Dokument für die Struktur unserer Innerlichkeit verwendet, so sucht der Naturforscher zuerst durch die vielen Organe des Sinnenlebens und der Kundgabe ins Verborgene vorzudringen." Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 470.

54
"Mit Ordnung des unbewußten Lebens hat aber das biologische Schaffen dauernd zu tun; niemandem äußert sich die Größe der Ordnung, die in diesem verborgenen Bereich waltet, eindrucksvoller als etwa dem Entwicklungsphysiologen, der das Werden eines Organismus, die Bildung seiner Anlagen verfolgt." Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 496.

non-human species come from his familiar theme of the central role of appearance: a cuckoo recognises other members of its species even when it has never seen them before. Storks require their young to perform complex "ceremonies" before they feed them. Young mouthbrooders seek the mouth of their mother for protection; experiments show that any vaguely fish-shaped body with two eyes triggers this behaviour. All this was meant to show that animals have "rich dynamic images" that correspond to something in the external world and do not have to be learned. Referring to the Gestalt psychologist Wolfgang Köhler, he called these correspondences isomorphisms.[55]

However, Portmann was more sceptical about the concept of archetypes when it came to humanity, which is surprising given his interest in the rediscovery of the archaic. This can be explained by the differences in how he understood these two terms: as mentioned above, he associated "archaic humanity" with creativity. In contrast, he understood archetypes as instincts.[56] This clashed with Portmann's views on the unique aspects of human culture: whereas other species are strongly determined in their way of life, the human is characterised by its openness and freedom. The importance of social life for humans brought with it "historicity," a feature which Portmann explained biologically: compared to similar mammals, humans are born after a short pregnancy, and much of their development takes place after birth in social settings.[57] For these reasons, Portmann warned of at least some understandings of "archetypes," if they are understood as cultural products that somehow become heritable: "[This view] is real Lamarckism and therefore shares its fate."[58]

Among Eranos participants generally, Portmann was not unique in his ambivalent attitude towards Jung.[59] However, he stands out among the group of natural scientists in this respect: the others either ignored Jung or, like Max Knoll and Markus Fierz, spoke about him only in positive terms. It is particularly interesting that the biologist Portmann emphasised the importance of culture, while he criticised Jung for overestimating the importance of biological factors. This is only an apparent contradiction: he came to Eranos not necessarily to promote his own discipline, but to complement it with other perspectives. As we have seen, one of his preoccupations was identifying the boundaries of biology, and therefore he was particularly concerned when they were overstepped.

Portmann's concern with the special character of human culture does not mean that he wanted to establish a clear separation between humanity and the rest of nature. For him, human beings were distinct from other animals by their "historicity," their openness to change, but he maintained that this feature is itself "natural."[60] In more specific cases, it is sometimes difficult to establish what Portmann saw as uniquely human and what he considered to be a broader phenomenon. Several passages suggest that he thought of religion as a human affair.[61] At the same time, he used concepts such as myth that generally relate to human culture in the context of nonhuman organisms. Most importantly, the centrality of aesthetics was something that for Portmann cut across human culture and the rest of nature.

55
Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 500–501.

56
For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between Jung and Portmann, see Ondřej Váša, "On the Brink of the Expressible: Adolf Portmann Meets Carl Gustav Jung on Eranos Ground," in *Adolf Portmann: A Thinker of Self-Expressive Life*, ed. Filip Jaroš and Jiří Klouda (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021) and Riccardo Bernardini, *Jung a Eranos: Il progetto della psicologia complessa* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2011), 223–24.

57
Portmann, "Mythisches in Der Naturforschung," 508–9.

58
"[Diese Überzeugung] ist echter Lamarckismus und teilt daher dessen Schicksal." Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 511. For Jung's negative reaction to this criticism see Hakl, *Eranos*, 139–40.

59
See for example Hakl, *Eranos*, 170.

60
Adolf Portmann, "Das Ursprungsproblem," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1947: Der Mensch (Erste Folge)*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1948), 39.

61
Adolf Portmann, "Riten der Tiere," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1950: Mensch und Ritus*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1951), 395; Portmann, "Mythisches in Der Naturforschung," 496.

Portmann on Rationality and Imagination

Although Portmann tended to view culture in terms of fundamental dichotomies, he did not think of science as belonging to either one or the other side. Instead, he presented science itself as divided in two: an older tradition of natural history on one hand, and modern laboratory research on the other. He associated natural history, whose practitioners he called naturalists (*Naturforscher* or *Naturkundige*), with observing and collecting the diversity of life in the field. Modern biology, on the other hand, was modelled after physics and chemistry and focused on studying a small number of species in the laboratory.

Again, the appearance of organisms plays an important role here. On a basic level, one of the defining differences between the two approaches according to Portmann was the importance they gave to visual features. He saw a trend in contemporary biology towards studying the invisible, beyond what can be seen under a microscope. From this perspective, the appearance of organisms only plays the role of a "test" of the internal processes of primary interest; it has "no intrinsic value." Portmann saw this as an impoverishment not just for science, but for how we relate to the world, for example through art:

> Our spiritual relationship to the many natural forms that surround us is a significant part of our lives and is just as important for the choice of artistic images and metaphors as it is for the overall shaping of our experience and expression. For this reason, any preference for mental work that leads away from the obvious forms and into the invisible also means a loss and a great danger for the whole of our experience of the world, in addition to the undisputed gain.[62]

Portmann feared that like the physical sciences, biology was moving away from everyday experience and thereby disconnecting itself from the rest of culture. In contrast, natural history had been rooted in the common human experience of nature. Great naturalists such as Charles Darwin or Alexander von Humboldt all shared an emotional connection with the living world, and they all had an affinity for the "diversity of life forms precisely in their richness of forms."[63] In other words, they all appreciated the natural world not just for intellectual but also for aesthetic reasons. Although he added that he was not trying to devalue the modern biologist, his sympathies clearly lay with the older tradition: while Thomas Hunt Morgan as a representative of modern laboratory research was simply described as "one of the most important hereditary researchers of the last decades,"[64] Jean-Henri Fabre, his favourite example of a naturalist, was presented enthusiastically as at the same time a brilliant scientist and a great artist. Reference to Fabre's artistic sensibilities can be found repeatedly in Portmann's lectures, for example in 1946:

> Through the *Souvenirs entomologiques*, the experiments of J. H. Fabre really entered the literature and the whole intellectual life of the time. The researcher whom Darwin called the incomparable observer, who so deeply influenced poets such as Maeterlinck, who had an effect on Bergson, who was emphati-

62 "Unsere geistige Beziehung zu den vielen uns umgebenden Naturgestalten ist aber ein bedeutungsvoller Teil unseres Lebens, und für die Wahl der künstlerischen Bilder und Gleichnisse ebenso wichtig wie für die gesamte Formung unseres Erlebens und unseres Ausdrucks. Daher bedeutet jede Bevorzugung einer Geistesarbeit, die von dem sinnfällig gegebenen Gestalten weg ins Unsichtbare hineinführt, neben unbestrittenem Gewinn auch einen Verlust und eine große Gefahr für das Ganze unseres Welterlebens." Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 477.

63 Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 473–74.

64 Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 475.

> cally called the Homer, the Virgil of insect life, J. H. Fabre, gave such an impressive picture of the complexity, but also the rigid narrowness, which characterises the behaviour of insects, that his examples have become almost classical.[65]

In 1948, he claimed that Fabre would be known as a great artist if his achievements as a researcher had not been even clearer.[66] Fabre was also a "master in the art of biological experimentation"—here research itself is described as an art. However, Portmann emphasised that experimentation had only been one tool among many for Fabre, and that he had primarily worked in the field instead of the laboratory, in order to "investigate the living being in the fullness of its relationships."[67]

For Portmann, these different approaches to studying nature were only one case of a more fundamental distinction between two basic tendencies of the human mind. This was a central theme for Portmann, as he returned to it in three lectures between 1948 and 1951. In "Der naturforschende Mensch" (1948), he called these tendencies the "theoretical function" on one hand, centred around logic and a mathematical or physical approach, and the "aesthetic function" on the other hand, oriented towards sensory experiences and emotions.[68] After that, he more commonly referred to them as rationality and imagination.

Portmann saw religion and art as the main manifestations of the aesthetic or imaginative tendency. One of his examples of its value was an anecdote about Leonardo da Vinci: "It is about the intensive stimulation of the creative ground within us, as Leonardo da Vinci saw it when he recommended that painters use the structure of pieces of rock, this mysterious order not created by man, this apparent chaos to stimulate the imagination."[69]

In other words, this approach does not try to analyse what is not understood but takes it as inspiration. At another point, he describes the imagination as the source of "the greatest artistic creations."[70] Similarly, he clearly associated religion with this tendency. In the 1953 lecture "The Earth as the Home of Life" ("Die Erde als Heimat des Lebens"), Portmann suggested that the "otherwise so different creations of religion, myths, rituals and symbols" were rooted in a "primary mode of experience" (*primäre Erlebensweise*), an unmediated relationship with the earth that expressed itself through dreams and fantasy.[71]

When it comes to science, however, he did not simply place it on the other side of that divide, which can already be seen from the discussion of different approaches to biological research mentioned above. More broadly, he claimed that although modern science is oriented towards rationality, the imagination also plays an important role.[72] For example, he described modern theories of evolution or comprehensive cosmological theories as "genuine products of the mythical imagination" that are influenced by ancient imagery, such as the expectation of a final return to chaos.[73]

Portmann had another version of this distinction framed in terms of two different conceptions of the human: "Ptolemaic Man" on the one hand, who represents an aesthetic, intuitive approach to the world and has an immediate connection to sensory experiences; and "Copernican Man" on the other hand, who embodies the rational, scientific mindset that distrusts the senses. This form has already been discussed

65
"Durch die 'Souvenirs entomologiques' sind die Versuche J. H. Fabres recht eigentlich in die Literatur und das ganze Geistesleben der Zeit eingegangen. Der Forscher, den Darwin den unvergleichlichen Beobachter genannt hat, der Dichter, wie Maeterlinck, so tief beeinflußt hat, der auf Bergson wirkte, den man emphatisch den Homer, den Virgil des Insektenlebens genannt hat, J. H. Fabre, hat ein so eindrucksvolles Bild von der Komplexität, aber auch der starren Enge gegeben, welche das Verhalten der Insekten kennzeichnet, daß seine Beispiele geradezu klassisch geworden sind." Portmann, "Biologie und das Phänomen," 528.

66
Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 485.

67
Portmann, 474.

68
Portmann, 478.

69
"Es geht um die intensive Förderung des schöpferischen Grundes in uns, wie sie Leonardo da Vinci gesehen hatte, als er den Malern empfahl, die Struktur von Felsstücken, diese nicht vom Menschen geschaffene rätselhafte Ordnung, dieses anscheinende Chaos zum Anregen der Phantasie auszuwerten." Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 480.

70
Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 478.

71
Adolf Portmann, "Die Erde als Heimat des Lebens," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1953: Mensch und Erde*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1954), 490–91.

72
Adolf Portmann, "Die Zeit im Leben der Organismen," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1951: Mensch und Zeit*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1952), 456.

73
Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 466.

by Oreste Tolone, who emphasises Portmann's critique of the excessive rationality of modern science and his call for integrating these different modes of understanding.[74]

This is indeed an important theme in the lectures, not just with respect to Ptolemaic and Copernican Man, but also when Portmann talked about imagination and rationality. Portmann thought that in modernity, the imagination is increasingly sidelined in favour of the rational, a development he saw as an existential threat: "The wholeness of human existence is at risk; the imaginative function is dying off; living, creative imagination is degrading and thus a deeply hidden source of creativity is drying up, from which scientific work ultimately also receives its inspiration."[75]

However, a closer look at the lectures reveals a more nuanced understanding of Portmann's views. While he did call for a connection between different forms of encountering the world and hoped that Eranos provided a place for it, he also emphasised the tension between these modes: "These two modes of experience are polar opposites; they are both integral parts of the human—we must therefore take them seriously in the tension of their opposition and must not accept one or the other as the more valuable, as the one to be favoured."[76]
In addition, although he saw a one-sided rationalism as the primary danger of his epoch, he also at times expressed apprehension about moving too far in the opposite direction.[77] In his 1948 lecture, Portmann defended the theoretical and rational attitude against a "radical turn to the irrational," which he associated with surrealism. While he described surrealism as "a great, important movement," he also claimed that it "must be overcome and made fruitful by more conceptual intellectual work (*erfassendere Geistesarbeit*)."[78]

The lecture on myth in the following year goes into more detail about what he regarded as the problem: not the imagination itself, which was clearly valuable for him, but a dangerous mix in which the works of the imagination presented themselves as rational. In this form it could be an obstacle that science must overcome, as he said with reference to Gaston Bachelard.[79] One of his main examples in this direction was that of ideas about reproduction. For a long time, the idea of the origin of living beings was dominated by myths that were associated with moisture, often together with swamp imagery. Portmann explained this continuity with the power of the sensory impressions in these myths, as is clear in his description of Asian ideas:

> What an interplay of impressions of the eye, of the touching hand, of the so deeply penetrating odours of decomposing vegetation, from which finally such powerful pictorial symbols are forming as that of the emergence of the pure beauty of lotus leaf and lotus blossom from the murky, opaque mud . . . In the works of the East, which depict this miracle of swamp birth, we encounter clearly and powerfully the mythical intention and its adequate instrument: imaginative thinking and creation.[80]

The aesthetics of living beings, so important for Portmann's approach to biology, could therefore also lead to the entrenchment of false ideas. Within modern science, these images remained influential: "[A]gainst

74
Oreste Tolone, "Ptolemaic Man and Copernican Man: In Favour of 'Depth Anthropology,' " in *Adolf Portmann: A Thinker of Self-Expressive Life*, ed. Filip Jaroš and Jiří Klouda (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021).

75
Portmann, "Die Zeit im Leben," 456.

76
"Diese zwei Erfahrungsweisen stehen in polarem Gegensatz; sie sind beide stete Glieder des Humanen—wir müssen sie daher in der Spannung ihrer Gegensätzlichkeit ernst nehmen und dürfen nicht die eine oder die andere als die wertvollere, als die zu bevorzugende gelten lassen." Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 480.

77
See also Váša, "On the Brink," 7.

78
Portmann, "Der naturforschende Mensch," 482.

79
Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 482; the evidence that Portmann had Bachelard's concept of the "epistemological obstacle" in mind when using the word "obstacle" here is on p. 477.

80
"Welch ein Zusammenwirken von Eindrücken des Auges, der tastenden Hand, der so tief haftenden Gerüche zerfallender Vegetation, aus denen sich schließlich so mächtige bildhafte Symbole formen wie das der Entstehung der reinen Schönheit von Lotosblatt und Lotosblüte aus dem trüben, undurchsichtigen Schlamm . . . In den Werken des Ostens, die dieses Wunder der Sumpfzeugung darstellen, begegnet uns rein und mächtig die mythische Zielsetzung und ihr adäquates Instrument: das imaginierende Denken und Schaffen." Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 487.

what mental constructs of an imaginative interpretation of the world did objective research have to prevail!" Many researchers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still assumed that the germ originated in a slimy fluid in the uterus, even after mammalian eggs and sperm had been observed under the microscope.[81]

Another example from the lecture on myth better illustrates what kind of imagination Portmann wanted to promote and what kind he saw as dangerous. In the context of this "primordial yearning" (*Ur-Sehnsucht*) of ours, he discusses two Greek myths, each of which illustrates one side of the dream of flight. One of them is the "night dream" of the Olympian gods and especially of the god Hermes's ability to fly. This version of flight is effortless, a self-evident part of the "mythical physics" at play here—and a pure product of the imagination. In contrast, the flight of Icarus is a "daydream," closer to our world in its imitation of birds as real examples of flying creatures. In this story, flight is achieved through technology; it is closer to a rational-scientific approach to the world. Portmann's point here is that only the Icarus myth provided an obstacle to scientific progress: its extrapolation from bird to human flight, plausible on its face, supported the idea that it could be true in a straightforward sense. Scientific research into flight therefore had to unlearn the image of the beating wings of the bird to come up with the airplane, which according to Portmann was based on completely different principles and a product of the rational mind. On the other hand, the night dream of divine flight was so far removed from our reality that it could inspire without leading research astray.[82]

Portmann's position was thus more complex than it might initially appear. As the examples above demonstrate, he thought that an aesthetic and imaginative approach could sometimes hinder scientific progress, precisely because of its persuasive power. While he certainly advocated for integrating rational and aesthetic modes of understanding, his examples suggest that he also wanted to maintain some boundaries between these approaches and preserve a productive tension between them.

81
"[G]egen welche Geistesgebilde einer imaginierenden Weltdeutung mußte sich die objektive Erforschung durchsetzen!" Portmann, "Mythisches in Der Naturforschung," 491.

82
Portmann, "Mythisches in der Naturforschung," 477–79.

Conclusion

After World War II, there was an effort to introduce the natural sciences at Eranos, reflecting Fröbe-Kapteyn's goal of cultural regeneration and the integration of science and religion. While all the scientists who were invited shared an interest in philosophical and religious questions, Portmann stood out for his emphasis on aesthetics as a bridge between different areas of culture. This focus stemmed from his biological work on the appearance of organisms, which he saw as a fundamental feature of the natural world. For Portmann, aesthetics was not just one domain among others but a fundamental dimension of both nature and culture. In nature, it manifested in the complex interplay of expression and perception among organisms. In human culture it appeared as the "imaginative" tendency that was the counterpart of rationality. Portmann believed that good science required both and feared that modern science was becoming unbalanced in its emphasis on the rational. The Eranos meetings were important for Portmann because they provided a place where these approaches could reconnect. At the same time, his

lectures reveal a more complex position than simply calling for their integration. While he saw both rational and imaginative tendencies as essential parts of human nature, he also emphasised that they were in tension, and at times warned against fully breaking down the boundaries between them. This complex stance reflected his unique position at Eranos: although he shared the meetings' broader critique of modern rationality, he also sought to preserve the distinctive contributions of different ways of understanding the world.

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Vestiges of the Sacred: Mircea Eliade on Desacralization, Modern Art, and Surrealism

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Abstract
This article critically evaluates the historian of religion Mircea Eliade's claim that even (apparently) secular modern art can be considered a locus of survival for the sacred in a desacralized age. It analyzes Eliade's theory of desacralization, arguing that Eliade's writings contain two distinct but rarely explicitly differentiated variants. This article also interprets the implications of Eliade's claim regarding the arts in light of these theories. Subsequently, early surrealism is used as a case study to assess the validity of an Eliadean approach to modern art. In particular, surrealism's interest in the unconscious and its embrace of automatism are read in light of Eliade's theories of desacralization. However, this article asserts that surrealism's creative practice offers considerable critical resistance to Eliade's attempt to include (surrealist) art in the history of religions. Finally, a summary reference to surrealism in Eliade's writings is analyzed, which yields the conclusion that Eliade's particular perspective as a historian of religions, rather than shedding new light on surrealism, blinds him to a number of essentially modern characteristics of the movement.

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Introduction

In a short text from 1978, reflecting on his intellectual development, Mircea Eliade admits—at the risk of disqualifying himself as a "serious thinker"—that his scholarly pursuits and his creative literary writing were never entirely separate:

> I know . . . from my experience that some of my literary creations contributed to a more profound understanding of certain religious structures, and that, sometimes without my being conscious of the fact at the moment of writing fiction, the literary imagination utilized materials or meanings I had studied as a historian of religions.[1]

In Eliade's scholarly oeuvre, the formative importance of literature and the arts is further evidenced by the many references it contains to both classical literature and works of contemporary modernists and avant-gardists, as well as by numerous, usually brief essays on individual artists and artworks. Remarkably, though, the relation between religion and the arts never truly becomes an object of reflection in any of Eliade's major works. A number of relatively marginal remarks make it clear, nonetheless, that Eliade considered artistic and literary creation to be a valid object of inquiry for the historian of religions. More than just a personal source of inspiration, art and literature constitute "an instrument of knowledge"[2] because they capture essential aspects of man's existential situation, including his relation to archetypes, myth, and the sacred.

In this respect, *modern* art and literature are particularly important for Eliade. In a number of places in his work (some of which will be addressed in detail below), Eliade claims that even though in modernity, religion and the arts have gone their separate ways, beneath their secular appearance the arts often retain a relation to the sacred. In an increasingly desacralized age, the arts are thus a locus of survival for the sacred and merit their place in the history of religions, giving Eliade permission to bring his religious erudition to bear on them. In this article, I propose unpacking and critically evaluating this incorporation of (apparently) secular modern art and literature into the history of religions. Two complementary questions will inform my analysis. First, how does Eliade think art can inform us about the hidden presence of the sacred in the desacralized West? And, conversely, what does an Eliadean history of religions bring to the study of modern art? Can we better understand the particularity of art and literature that understands itself as emancipated from religion if we approach it from the perspective of an Eliadean history of religions?

To answer these questions I will first briefly consider Eliade's approach to the sacred, and subsequently, in more detail, how it informs his understanding of desacralization. I will argue that Eliade holds two different, but rarely differentiated theories of desacralization, which have different implications for his claim that the sacred remains "unrecognizably" present in secular modern art. I then propose early surrealism as a test case to evaluate the usefulness of Eliade's approach for the study of modern art. My discussion of surrealism consists of two parts: first, a general analysis of a number of characteristic as-

1 Mircea Eliade, "Literary Imagination and Religious Structure," in *Symbolism, the Sacred & the Arts*, ed. Diane Apostolos-Cappadona (New York: Continuum, 1985), 173. [First published in *Criterion* 17, no. 2 (1978): 30–34.]

2 Eliade, "Literary Imagination and Religious Structure," 174.

pects of the movement against the background of Eliade's theories; second, a more detailed critical reading of a single passage by Eliade that addresses surrealism in a context of religious practices and ideas. I conclude that Eliade's desire to include modern art in the history of religions is ultimately more detrimental than beneficial to an understanding of both surrealism and the nature of desacralization.

Eliade's Anti-Reductionism and Phenomenology of the Sacred

Despite the serious and justifiable critiques that Eliade's work and personal life have elicited in recent decades, many scholars of religion grant the importance of his anti-reductionism for the development of their discipline.[3] Like his influential predecessors Rudolf Otto and Gerardus van der Leeuw, Eliade emphasized the importance of studying religious phenomena in their "proper modality, that is to say . . . as something religious,"[4] and he criticized approaches that explain the religious phenomenon away by reducing it to non-religious factors supposedly causing or determining it: "To try to grasp such a phenomenon by means of physiology, psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics, art, etc. is to betray it; it misses the one unique and irreducible element in it, that is to say, the element of the sacred."[5] By claiming an irreducibility, a sui generis element for the religious phenomenon, Eliade also argued for the autonomy of religious studies, which should employ a proper methodology, in turn irreducible to that of the other sciences.

In the context of the relation between the sacred and modern art, it is interesting that Eliade frequently illustrates the irreducibility of the sacred with a comparison between the religious phenomenon and the work of literature. He often refers, in particular, to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, a novel whose critical reception has largely revolved around claims of literary and stylistic irreducibility. Thus, explaining a religious phenomenon by means of non-religious elements would be "as futile as thinking you could explain *Madame Bovary* by a list of social, economic and political facts that are certainly true, but inconsequential for the work of literature in itself."[6] Or, elsewhere, attacking psychoanalytic reductionism: "A myth is 'produced' by the unconscious in the same way in which we could say that *Madame Bovary* is the 'product' of an adultery."[7] Like the autonomous work of art, religion was not to be reduced to, and could impossibly be satisfactorily interpreted through anything outside its "proper modality."

Eliade struggled, however, to clearly and unambiguously define this "proper modality," this "unique and irreducible element" of the religious phenomenon. As many scholars have noted, Eliade wavered between a *realist* (or *ontological*) and a *phenomenological* determination of the sacred, with many passages in his works that can be read either way.[8] The realist approach posits the existence of the sacred on an absolute, ahistorical, and transcendent plane, from which it sometimes descends to "incarnate" in concrete and temporal hierophanies and to become an object of human experience. The phenomenological approach, on the other hand, considers the sacred to be an irreducible intentional structure in human consciousness, a particular "modality of experience" and "being in the world."[9] The sacred, in this view, names an intentionality that allows a relative and temporal object to

3
Especially prominent Eliade scholar Douglas Allen has done much to emphasize this aspect of Eliade's thinking. See, among other publications, *Religion and Myth in Mircea Eliade* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3–57; "Phenomenology of Religion," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, ed. John Hinnells (New York: Routledge, 2005), 194–95, 197. See also Wayne Elzy, "Mircea Eliade and the Battle Against Reductionism," in *Religion and Reductionism*, ed. Thomas A. Idinopulos and Edward A. Yonan (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 82–94.

4
Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris: Payot, 1970), 11.

5
Eliade, *Traité*, 11.

6
Eliade, 11.

7
Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Harcourt: Orlando, 1987), 210. See also Eliade's preface to *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*: *The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper, 1960), 14: "It is when the psychologist 'explains' a mythological Figure or Event by reducing it to a process of the unconscious, that the historian of religions—and perhaps not he alone—hesitates to follow him. At bottom, such explanation by reduction would be equivalent to explaining *Madame Bovary* as an adultery. But *Madame Bovary* has an unique existence in its own frame of reference, which is that of a literary creation, of a creation of the mind. That *Madame Bovary* could only have been written in Western bourgeois society of the nineteenth century, when adultery constituted a problem sui generis—that is quite another problem, belonging to the sociology of literature, but not to the aesthetics of the novel." Eliade used the example of *Madame Bovary* in his university lectures as well; in his journal from 1963, describing a seminar with Norman O. Brown, he writes that he "emphasized, *once again*, the distinction between *Madame Bovary* and adultery . . ." *Journal*, vol. 2, *1957–1969*, trans. Fred H. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 185. (Emphasis added).

8
For discussions of this ambiguity, and suggested solutions to it, see Allen, *Myth and Religion*, 70–71, 74; Bryan Rennie, *Reconstructing Eliade: Making Sense of Religion* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 17–25; Randal Studstill, "Eliade, Phenomenology, and the Sacred," *Religious Studies* 36, no. 2 (June 2000): 177–94, esp. 181–84. For a good overview of the difficulties involved in defining phenomenology in the context of religious studies, see Jonathan Tuckett, "Clarifying phenomenologies in the study of religion. Separating Kristensen and van der Leeuw from Otto and Eliade," *Religion* 46, no. 1 (2016): 75–101.

appear as a manifestation of something transcendent, absolute, and eternal (i.e., a hierophany). It is mostly Eliade's ontological claims that have drawn criticism from scholars, who argue that these make him more of a theologian than an "objective" scholar of religion. Eliade-apologists in turn often emphasize the phenomenological aspects of his work to counter such critique.[10] I tend to believe that, like the sacred itself, the ambiguity in Eliade's work is irreducible, and that interpretations of his methodology as "essentially phenomenological"[11] therefore unjustifiably disregard a large number of evidently ontological claims in his writings. Nonetheless, I do think that Eliade's remarks on the decline of the sacred in modern life, to which we will turn now, are most fruitfully approached from a phenomenological angle. While, in the following, I propose a phenomenological reading of a modern desacralization, this should therefore not be understood as reflecting a belief on my part that Eliade's work on the whole is "essentially" phenomenological.

Desacralization as a "Second Fall"

Eliade never wrote the definitive treatment of "the sole, but important, religious creation of the modern Western world . . . the ultimate stage of desacralization,"[12] which he announced in the first volume of *A History of Religious Ideas*. But there are numerous places in his work where he addresses the theme more or less succinctly. The most developed and best-known of these is the final subchapter of *The Sacred and the Profane*, titled "Sacred and Profane in the Modern World."[13] Here, Eliade first describes modern man in terms that place him diametrically opposite *homo religiosus*:

> It is easy to see all that separates this mode of being in the world [i.e., that of *homo religiosus*] from the existence of a nonreligious man. First of all, the nonreligious man refuses transcendence, accepts the relativity of "reality," and may even come to doubt the meaning of existence . . . Modern nonreligious man assumes a new existential situation; he regards himself solely as the subject and agent of history, and he refuses all appeal to transcendence. In other words, he accepts no model for humanity outside the human condition as it can be seen in the various historical situations. Man *makes himself*, and he only makes himself completely in proportion as he desacralizes himself and the world. The sacred is the prime obstacle to his freedom. He will become himself only when he is totally demysticized. He will not be truly free until he has killed the last god.[14]

In his behavior and his beliefs, modern nonreligious man negates everything that, in the analyses preceding this passage, Eliade had identified as essential to *homo religiosus*: a life oriented toward a sacred transcendent pole revealed and instituted by a particular hierophany. However, Eliade quickly points out that this negation, though modern man prides himself on it, is not as complete or definitive as he would like to believe; indeed, for Eliade, modern man "continues to be haunted by the realities that he has refused and denied" and he "cannot help

9
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 14. See also Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 1, *From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), xii: "The 'sacred' is an element in the structure of consciousness . . ."

10
Both the ontological and phenomenological approaches allow Eliade to take seriously religious phenomena outside the sphere of institutional religions, including various heterodox spiritualities and magical practices. However, his understanding of the sacred as transcendent and absolute—either ontologically or as the correlate of an intentional structure of human consciousness—excludes spiritualities and practices that do not imply a belief in a transcendent reality. In Eliade's view, then, a religious experience of immanence is a contradiction in terms. The implications of this for his understanding of desacralization and secular modern art will be taken up in detail below.

11
Studstill, "Eliade, Phenomenology and the Sacred," 178.

12
Eliade, *History*, xvi.

13
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 201–13.

14
Eliade, 202–3.

preserving some vestiges of the behavior of religious man, though they are emptied of religious meaning."[15]

Eliade then proceeds to enumerate examples of such "vestiges" to show that the "majority of the 'irreligious' still behave religiously, even though they are not aware of the fact."[16] I will cite but a few examples: in New Year's festivities he discerns a "degraded" ritual of renewal; cinema and literature still employ recognizable "mythical motives"; the great ideologies present "mythological structures" and "eschatological content"; and even a reductionist practice like psychoanalysis preserves an "initiatory pattern."[17] Furthermore, for Eliade, irreligious man remains connected to the sacred in his unconscious: "The unconscious activity of modern man ceaselessly presents him with innumerable symbols, and each of them has a particular message to transmit, a particular mission to accomplish, in order to ensure or to re-establish the equilibrium of the psyche."[18] These symbols are still religious "from the point of view of form" in that "religion is the paradigmatic solution for every existential crisis"[19]; however, they differ from *homo religiosus's* religious and mythical symbolism because they fail to "rise to the ontological status of myths" and are not "experienced by the *whole man*" since modern, irreligious man encounters them only in dreams and reveries.[20]

All those examples serve to illustrate that modern man is religious without being aware of it. The sacred lurks in places modern man considers to be entirely profane. This brings us to Eliade's thesis of modern desacralization: the degradation of the sacred in modern times has less to do with secularization—which, Eliade has suggested, is much less extensive than we would like to think—than with a decreased *awareness* of our religiosity. But this raises a number of questions. First, does this not impute *etic* knowledge of religion to *homo religiosus*? To be sure, a pre-modern religious individual is *consciously* engaging in religious behavior, e.g., he knows very well that he is sacrificing an animal to a god, but this does not imply that he is also *aware of the religious nature* of that activity. He does not necessarily possess the second-order knowledge that allows Eliade to see the similarities between contemporary New Year's celebrations and the rites of renewal analyzed in *Myth and Reality*.[21] Second, and more importantly for our purposes, is the question of whether the similarities, between certain forms of modern secular behavior and religious behavior that Eliade points out, necessarily imply that this secular behavior is still religious. Similarity, after all, does not equal identity. Granted, Eliade does not claim full identity, since modernity is characterized by "degraded" forms of religious behavior, but one still feels that a more precise criterion is needed to determine a given behavior's religious nature. If, for example, a periodic return, as with New Year's celebrations, suffices to qualify something as religious, then this most secular of behaviors—filling in one's tax returns—might also rightfully be termed religious. To be sure, the concept of the sacred, the irreducible "modality of experience" defining man's religious life, could help avoid such overgeneralizations, but Eliade makes surprisingly little use of this concept in the final subchapter of *The Sacred and the Profane*, referring instead to "vestiges" of symbolism and myth in modern life. This raises the more fundamental question of the relation between symbolism, myth,

15
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 204.

16
Eliade, 204.

17
Eliade, 205–8.

18
Eliade, 211.

19
Eliade, 211.

20
Eliade, 210–12.

21
See "Myths and Rites of Renewal," the third chapter in Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper, 1963), 39–53.

and the sacred as an intentional structure of human consciousness.[22] When, for example, Eliade discerns "traces of the 'nostalgia for Eden' "[23] in modern nudism, these traces can only support his thesis of desacralization if their relation to the sacred is explicated. Eliade, however, at least in these pages, does not do so.

Instead, in the final paragraph of *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade introduces a second, more radical version of the desacralization thesis and compares modern nonreligion to a "second fall":

> . . . nonreligious man has lost the capacity to live religion consciously, and hence to understand and assume it; but . . . in his deepest being, he still retains a memory of it, as, after the first "fall," his ancestor, the primordial man, retained intelligence enough to enable him to rediscover the traces of God that are visible in the world. After the first "all," the religious sense descended to the level of the "divided consciousness"; now, after the second, it has fallen even further, into the depths of the unconscious; it has been forgotten.[24]

A first "fall" has separated the sacred and the profane, thus opening up an existential space for *homo religiosus* and making religion possible.[25] A second "fall," which seems to correspond more or less to the arrival of Modernity, deprives man of his conscious relation to the sacred, making modern nonreligion a possibility. If we take seriously Eliade's remark that modern man's religious sense is to be found in "the depths of the unconscious," he is here proposing a different interpretation of desacralization from the one discussed above: there, modern man was said to be *unaware* of the religious nature of much of his behavior; here, Eliade implies that in modernity, religious experience as such has descended into the *unconscious.*

It seems, then, that Eliade holds what one might call a *weak* and a *strong* theory of desacralization. The weak theory, though it may not allow for an entirely satisfactory distinction between *homo religiosus* and modern man, is easily understood within Eliade's phenomenological approach to the sacred. While the sacred first and foremost relates to a particular intentionality of human consciousness, then desacralization is the historical process whereby Western man has lost the language, symbolism, and institutions to differentiate between experiences informed by this intentionality and other, "profane" experiences. If modern man does not think of New Year's celebrations in religious terms, it is because the language and images to do so are no longer available to him; however, this religious aphasia does not preclude religious experience as such. Modern man still has access to a sacred "modality of experience," but it no longer shapes the culture in which he lives, because the language and symbols required for this are no longer widely shared. The sacred is still a part of modern experience, but it has become unrecognizable because it can only be articulated in the all-pervasive language of the profane. In this view, modern man is in essence still *homo religiosus*, but modern culture does not provide him with images and narratives to articulate his religious experiences as being of a different nature than ordinary profane life.

Eliade's strong theory goes considerably further. It postulates that,

22
The question as to whether Eliade's central concepts of the sacred, myth, and symbolism interrelate coherently has been taken up by scholars better qualified than I to do so. See, among many others: Allen, *Myth and Religion*, xiv–xv, 65–66, 129–33, 179–88; Rennie, *Reconstructing Eliade*, esp. 47–78; Stephen J. Reno, "Hiérophanie, symbole et expériences," in *Cahier de l'Herne: Mircea Eliade* (Paris: L'Herne, 1978), 59–74.

23
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 207.

24
Eliade, 212. For the notion of modern godlessness as the result of a "second fall," see also: Eliade, *Journal*, 2:156, and "The Sacred in the Secular World," *Cultural Hermeneutics* 1 (1973): 112.

25
See also Eliade, *Journal*, 2:67, "Religion is indeed the result of the 'fall,' 'the forgetting,' the loss of the state of primordial perfection. In paradise, Adam knew nothing of religious experience . . ."

if modern man no longer thinks of himself as having experiences of a religious nature, this is not because he does not have the *language* available to him to articulate his experiences as religious, but because the sacred has descended into his unconscious and he therefore no longer has truly *conscious* religious experiences. According to this theory, contemporary New Year's celebrations are not truly religious experiences, but "degraded rituals," in that they are only superficially evocative of *homo religiosus's* rites of renewal, but are not informed by sacred intentionality. These "vestiges" of religious behavior still recall man's religious past, but only as empty ruins, as sad reminders of a mode of experience tragically lost to modern consciousness. They are, as Eliade puts it, "empty of religious meaning."[26]

However, Eliade's strong theory, while it allows for a more neatly defined differentiation between modern man and *homo religiosus*, presents a number of difficulties to understanding it. It is important to note, first of all, that even in this theory, modern nonreligion does not imply a complete loss of the sacred. The sacred's retreat into the unconscious does not mean that all contact with it is lost—only that the site of this contact has been relocated: "Modern man's only real contact with cosmic sacrality is effected by the unconscious," as Eliade notes in a footnote in *Myth and Reality*.[27] The difficulty, then, is to reconcile Eliade's phenomenological approach to the sacred—which links it inextricably with hierophany, that is, with *conscious* religious experience—with his claim that the sacred has been relocated to the *unconscious*. In other words, if the sacred is "an element in the structure of consciousness,"[28] how can it become *unconscious* without ceasing to exist in any meaningful sense?

Eliade sometimes suggests that the dream, as a liminal phenomenon between conscious experience and the unconscious, might hold an answer to this question.[29] But at the same time he is clearly aware that the dream, as a locus for the survival of the sacred in modern life, has important limitations: the symbols and narratives encountered there are not "experienced by the *whole man*," and therefore cannot take on a truly religious function. Precisely because they do not constitute a fully conscious hierophanic experience, dreams, like New Year's festivities, are only religious "from the point of view of form"[30]—meaning that they, in fact, *do not* offer real contact with the sacred, but are only reminiscent of it. Ultimately, then, the dream only reaffirms the problem: if hierophany, i.e., conscious experience of the sacred, is precluded, does a meaningful non-hierophanic relation to the sacred remain possible? Or must modern man content himself with mere "vestiges" and profane echoes of the sacred?

26
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 204. Elsewhere, however, Eliade seems to contradict this reading of contemporary New Year's festivities when he remarks that they, "though apparently secular, still preserve a mythical structure and *function*." *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, 28.

27
Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 77.

28
Eliade, *History*, xii.

29
Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 77; *Sacred and Profane*, 211–12.

30
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 211.

Modern Art and the Sacred

In *The Sacred and the Profane*, Eliade does not explore this question any further, but he revisits it in a short, lesser-known article from 1964, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist."[31] In this text, Eliade investigates modern artistic practice as another potential locus of survival for the sacred in modern times, even if he concedes that the presence of the sacred in modern art is not always immediately apparent. He first articulates this idea along the lines of his weak theory of desacralization:

31
First published in French as "Sur la permanence du sacré dans l'art contemporain," *XXe Siècle* 26 (1964): 3–10. I will be citing the English translation published in Eliade, *Symbolism, the Sacred & the Arts*, 81–85.

> [I]t is evident that, for more than a century, the West has not been creating a "religious" art in the traditional sense of the term, that is to say, an art reflecting "classic" religious conceptions. In other words, artists are no longer willing to worship "idols"; they are no longer interested in traditional religious imagery and symbolism.
>
> This is not to say that the "sacred" has completely disappeared in modern art. But it has become *unrecognizable*; it is camouflaged in forms, purposes and meanings which are apparently "profane." The sacred is not *obvious*, as it was for example in the art of the Middle Ages. One does not recognize it *immediately* and *easily*, because it is no longer expressed in a conventional religious language.[32]

Eliade here presents the desacralization of modern art as essentially a crisis of religious language, as an all-pervasive iconoclasm. Like New Year's festivities, modern art *seems* an entirely secular affair, because almost nothing in it explicitly evokes religious experience in familiar terms. However, Eliade maintains that the sacred is there, but hidden, "camouflaged." The process of desacralization, as such, does not primarily affect the sacred, but the language and symbolism meant to convey it. But one should not deduce from this that all modern artists are engaged in a "conscious and voluntary camouflage" of the sacred in their works.[33] Artists are not *hiding* their faith behind opaque forms and images. To be sure, some artists—Eliade refers to Chagall[34]—are actively dismantling and repurposing traditional religious imagery to create a new artistic language for their faith, which, to the untrained eye, can seem like "voluntary camouflage." But this, Eliade notes, is not true for the "majority of artists," at least in the sense that they are, unlike Chagall, "not consciously 'religious' " and thus not consciously seeking a new, nontraditional language to convey their relation to the sacred.[35] At this point in the text, and without signaling it explicitly, Eliade's reflections shift from his weak to his strong theory of desacralization. The seemingly unreligious nature of Chagall's work can be explained in light of a crisis of religious language alone: the sacred dimension of his art is not *immediately recognizable*, because it is presented in a nontraditional way, but this does not preclude a hierophanic element per se. Chagall, in other words, might still stand by a *conscious* relation to the sacred in his work. But, when Eliade claims "that the sacred, although unrecognizable, is present"[36] in the works of *not consciously* religious artists, this proposition cannot be adequately defended by a theory of desacralization as a crisis of religious language alone. In these cases, the hierophanic potential of modern art itself is challenged.

Eliade presents these artists, who are not consciously religious, as exemplifications of modern man in general, subject to desacralization according to the strong theory—I cite the passage in full, as it is one of Eliade's most developed treatments of it:

> [M]odern man has "forgotten" religion but the sacred survives, buried in his unconscious. One might speak, in Judaeo-Chris-

32 Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," 81–82.

33 Eliade, 82.

34 Eliade, 82. See also Eliade, "Beauty and Faith," a reply to Marc Chagall's text "Why Have We Become So Anxious" in "A Dialogue with Marc Chagall," in *Symbolism, the Sacred and the Arts*, 86–92 (91–92 for Eliade's reply).

35 Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," 82. To be compared, however, with Eliade's remark in "Beauty and Faith" that the "revelations of childhood" captured by Chagall in his painting "are most certainly of a religious order—even though the artist is not always conscious of this fact." *Symbolism, the Sacred and the Arts*, 92.

36 Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," 82.

> tian terms, of a "second fall." According to the biblical tradition, man lost after the fall the possibility of "encountering" and "understanding" God; but he kept enough intelligence to rediscover the traces of God in nature *and in his own consciousness*.[37] After the "second fall" (which corresponds to the death of God proclaimed by Nietzsche) modern man has lost the possibility of experiencing the sacred at the conscious level, but he continues to be nourished and guided by his unconscious . . . [I]f what we are saying is true of Western man in general, it is *a fortiori* still more true of the modern artist.[38]

The prototypical modern artist, like the prototypical modern man, no longer experiences the sacred "at the conscious level," but something of the sacred remains present in his unconscious. And Eliade suggests that the modern artist is more in touch than the average man with this unconscious sacred element, because "the artist does not act passively . . . in regard to the unconscious. Without telling us, perhaps without knowing it, the artist penetrates—sometimes dangerously—into the depths of the world and his own psyche."[39] Artists actively, though perhaps unwittingly, seek out the unconscious dimensions of their psyche and draw inspiration from them. Presumably, this "active" relation to the unconscious, engaging "the *whole* man" is what differentiates the creative process from the dream, making the former a potentially more valuable locus for the sacred in modern times.

Where Eliade had previously used Chagall to exemplify the *consciously* religious modern artist, he now turned to his compatriot Constantin Brancusi, who, in light of the passage just cited, we can assume will exemplify the modern artist who is *not* consciously religious, but who nevertheless maintains a connection to the sacred in his unconscious. Eliade evokes Brancusi's creative process in the following terms:

> In certain instances, the artist's approach to his material recovers and recapitulates a religiosity of an extremely archaic variety that disappeared from the Western world thousands of years ago. Such, for example, is Brancusi's attitude towards stone, an attitude comparable to the solicitude, the fear, and the veneration addressed by a neolithic man towards certain stones that constituted hierophanies—that is to say, that revealed simultaneously the sacred and ultimate, irreducible reality.[40]

And a little further on in the text:

> Nothing could convince Brancusi that a rock was only a fragment of inert matter; like his Carpathian ancestors, like all neolithic men, he sensed a presence in the rock, a power, an "intention" that one can only call "sacred."[41]

Like in Chagall's work, the presence of the sacred is not "obvious" in Brancusi's modernist sculptures, but Brancusi's creative practice is nevertheless rooted in a hierophanic experience comparable to that of Neolithic *homo religiosus*.

37
I have italicized what I think is an important addition to Eliade's earlier formulation of the "second fall" in *The Sacred and the Profane*: ". . . the primordial man, retained intelligence enough to enable him to rediscover the traces of God that are visible in the world." Cf. note 36.

38
Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," 82–83.

39
Eliade, 83.

40
Eliade, 83.

41
Eliade, 84.

However, the problem with this example is clear: Brancusi's susceptibility for an "intention" that one can only call "sacred" immediately disqualifies him as an illustration of Eliade's strong thesis of desacralization. Brancusi may not be *aware* that his creative practice recapitulates an "extremely archaic" form of religious experience, but it does not follow that his engagement with the sacred is of an *unconscious* nature. Indeed, in Eliade's description Brancusi exemplifies the weak desacralization thesis even better than Chagall: in his creative practice he consciously senses a sacred "presence in the rock," but, as a modern man, he feels that traditional religious language fails to adequately express this presence. As a consequence, the sacred intentionality is covered up, "camouflaged" by a superficial desacralization—but, in Eliade's description of it, we have no reason to believe that Brancusi's artistic process engages with the sacred in "the depths of the unconscious."[42]

How, then, is one to understand Eliade's claim that the sacred remains present in the works of those artists who have no conscious experience of the sacred? What would an artistic practice look like whereby the artist *consciously* experiences his artistic practice as fully profane, but *unconsciously* taps into the sacred? Eliade does not give his readers any examples that might illustrate his position. It is, however, not so difficult to find artists who considered themselves and their art to be entirely irreligious, and who actively sought to ground their artistic practices in the workings of their unconscious. In the following, I will explore surrealist art as an example of this, in order to get a better sense of what an artist's relation to the sacred might be according to Eliade's strong desacralization thesis, that is, after the "second fall."

Surrealist Automatism, the Unconscious, and the Sacred

It is somewhat surprising that Eliade does not himself refer to surrealism in this context, given the movement's well-known interest in the unconscious and the fact that he knew several of its members personally.[43] This is not to say that surrealism is completely absent from his writings, but Eliade's references to the movement are generally quite summary and tend to group it indistinctively with cubism and dada in an illustration of modern art's collective destruction of traditional artistic and religious language.[44] Surrealism's characteristic interest in the unconscious is thereby largely ignored. This means that Eliade never turns to surrealism as an illustration of his strong desacralization thesis, though the movement would seem to be an obvious candidate. Before we explore this any further, it is necessary to flesh out the surrealist approach to the artistic process. Given the scope of this article, I will limit myself to the early writings of André Breton (1896–1966), the founder and leading theoretician of the movement.

First, it is clear that the young Breton, unlike Chagall, was not *consciously* religious.[45] Eliade's description of modern man in *The Sacred and the Profane* as refusing transcendence, accepting the relativity of reality, and doubting the meaning of existence captures quite well what we know about Breton in his formative years.[46] With regard to religion, his position was unambiguously dismissive. Already in 1922, Breton

42
Whether or not Eliade's description is truthful to Brancusi's actual practices and beliefs is beyond the scope of this article. For a discussion of Brancusi's spirituality, see Roger Lipsey, *The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Dover, 2011), 225–46.

43
The personal library of André Breton, founder and *de facto* leader of the surrealist movement, contains various of Eliade's writings, including a 1948 edition of *Techniques du Yoga* and a copy of Laurette Séjourné's *El Universo de Quetzalcóatl* (1962), prefaced by Eliade, both with handwritten dedications by Eliade to Breton. (Scans of these dedications are available on https://www.andrebreton.fr). Eliade mentions meeting Breton, along with Aimé Patri and Michel Carrouges, two surrealist sympathizers, in Paris in 1946 in his *Autobiography*, vol. 2, *1937–1960: Exile's Odyssey*, trans. Mac Linscott Ricketts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 116. Additionally, in *Religion after Religion: Gershom Scholem, Mircea Eliade and Henry Corbin at Eranos*, Steve M. Wasserstrom points out that Eliade personally knew Benjamin Fondane, a compatriot of Eliade and another early companion de route of the surrealist movement. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999), 101.

44
E.g., *Myth and Reality*, 190; Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 4.

45
I am aware that this and the following paragraphs are at odds with much of the recent scholarship on surrealism, which has been at pains to show how the movement's postwar embrace of the esoteric was less a "turn" than a continuation of a strand that was already present in the 1920s. While this has generally proven a very fruitful endeavor, which has rescued numerous important surrealist works and artists from oblivion, I disagree with this revisionist reading, with regard to Breton in particular. I do not consider the evidence of a significant esoteric or occult strand in Breton's thinking in the 1920s compelling—and this includes, for me, the call for "occultation" in the *Second Manifesto* (1929). However, given the scope and focus of this article, this is not the place to argue my point. I limit myself therefore to two remarks: first, the argument for an early "esoteric Breton" is certainly not universally accepted, and seems to be limited to anglophone scholarship mostly. Recent francophone studies of Breton are much more sympathetic to the idea of an esoteric "turn" in his work. For example, the catalogue to the *L'invention du surréalisme* exhibition at the BnF (Paris: BnF, 2020), featuring contributions from numerous prominent contemporary surrealism scholars, does not include an entry on esotericism or the occult, and considers the influence of early psychiatry much more informative than that of spiritism or metapsychics for the "invention" of automatism (pp. 56–59). Second, even if esoteric concerns were more decisive in Breton's formative years than I am willing to admit, this would hardly affect

declared in an autobiographical essay, "La confession dédaigneuse" [the disdainful confession], that he considered the "comfort of belief" to be "vulgar."[47] And in his first substantial text on the visual arts, *Surrealism and Painting*, he states that:

> I have always wagered against God and I regard the little that I have won in this world as simply the outcome of this bet . . . Everything that is doddering, squint-eyed, vile, polluted and grotesque is summoned up for me in that one word: God![48]

Even if Breton's anti-religious sentiment most frequently manifests itself as an attack on Christianity, and on Catholicism in particular, it must be stressed that his anticlericalism is grounded in a staunch refusal of transcendence as such. On "surreality," for example, the rather elusive objective of the surrealist enterprise, he writes, also in *Surrealism and Painting*:

> All that I love, all that I think and feel predisposes me towards a particular philosophy of immanence according to which surreality would be embodied in reality itself and would be neither superior nor exterior to it.[49]

This "particular philosophy of immanence"[50] takes shape against the backdrop of a general sense of disillusionment with absolute values and principles. In "Lâchez tout" [drop everything], another short text from 1922, in which Breton declares his departure from dada, he writes, "[T]here are no good and bad ideas, ideas just are . . . Forgive me for thinking that, contrary to ivy, I will die if I attach myself to anything."[51] And again in "La confession dédaigneuse," he cites with approval the observation by Maurice Barrès that "the main issue of the preceding generations was the passage from the absolute to the relative," and claims that "not a single truth deserves to remain exemplary."[52] The world Breton inhabits is one of radical relativity, where meaning and value are not fixed. In a word, Breton's conscious experience is very much that of modern man as defined by Eliade.

This can help to explain some of the attraction that the unconscious activity of the mind had on Breton. If conscious life takes place in a sphere of relativity and homogeneity, lacking an "absolute fixed point"[53] of orientation, exploring the unconscious becomes appealing indeed. A number of techniques were developed by Breton (and others) to tap into the unconscious, the most significant being "psychic automatism," which Breton included in his definition of surrealism in the first *Surrealist Manifesto* from 1924:

> SURREALISM, *n.* Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought. Dictation by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.[54]

A few pages later in the *Manifesto*, Breton gives instructions for obtaining

the issue under scrutiny here, i.e., the conceptual (in)coherence of Eliade's claim that the sacred, in his particular understanding of the term, persists in modern secular artistic practices rooted in unconscious activity. Moreover, it should be stressed that the embrace of esoteric themes by modern artists does not *necessarily* endow their works with a hierophanic element (though it certainly can). With regard to Breton's interest in magic, a similar case has been made by J. Edgar Bauer in "L'envers du décor," in *Le Défi magique*, vol. 2, ed. Massimo Introvigne and Jean-Baptiste Martin (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1994), 279–89.

46
Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 203. See note 14 for the full quotation.

47
André Breton, "La Confession dédaigneuse," in Œuvres complètes, vol. 1, ed. Marguerite Bonnet (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 194.

48
Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor (Boston: MFA, 2002), 10.

49
Breton, *Surrealism and Painting*, 46.

50
In 1932 Breton still stressed that the otherness of the dream is of a "poetic" and not of a "transcendent" order: "No mystery in the final analysis, nothing that could provoke any belief in some transcendent intervention occurring in human thought during the night. I see nothing in the whole working of the oneiric function that does not borrow clearly from the elements of lived life, provided one takes the trouble to examine it: nothing (I cannot state this strongly enough), except for those elements that the imagination uses poetically, that would contain any appreciable residue held to be irreducible. From the point of view of the poetic marvelous, something perhaps; from the point of view of the religious marvelous, absolutely nothing." *Communicating Vessels*, trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 45.

51
André Breton, "Lâchez tout," in Œuvres complètes, 1:263.

52
Breton, "La Confession dédaigneuse," 194, 197.

53
Cf. Eliade*, Sacred and Profane*, 21: "The hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center."

54
André Breton, *Manifesto of Surrealism*, in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1969), 26. (Translation modified.)

this "dictation by thought":

> Put yourself in as passive, or receptive, a state of mind as you can . . . Write quickly, without any preconceived subject, fast enough so that you will not remember what you're writing and be tempted to reread what you have written. The first sentence will come spontaneously, so compelling is the truth that with every passing second there is a sentence unknown to our consciousness which is only crying out to be heard.[55]

Automatism, practiced by Breton primarily as automatic writing, is thus an attempt to let the unconscious express itself as freely and purely as possible. Breton was very concerned with the "purity" of products of automatism, refusing to correct or otherwise edit automatic texts and chiding other surrealists for meddling with their texts and images to improve their aesthetic appeal.[56] Hence the importance of speed of execution: when writing automatically, the surrealist must write so fast as to be unable to reread or even retain the words that are being written. In this way, they enter only minimally into the surrealist's conscious mind, and censure due to moral or aesthetic personal preferences can be avoided.

This approach to the creative process, with its emphasis on the purity and alterity of the automatic product, has important implications for its relation to the sacred. Even if we suppose, with Eliade, that the sacred remains present in modern man's unconscious, surrealist automatism does not allow it to manifest itself in a way that can be reconciled with conscious experience, that is, with hierophany, since the practice of automatism depends precisely on the extent to which the frontier between conscious and unconscious activity is maintained. The better and the more authentically automatism is performed, the less its practitioner's conscious mind will be aware of the unconscious depths that are expressed through it. To be sure, one could argue that automatism brings to the surface certain "contents and structures of the unconscious," which for Eliade stand in "close relation [to the] values of religion."[57] But once drawn, painted, or written down, these unconscious elements merge with the profane reality of everyday conscious experience and are taken up in its economy of relativity and homogeneity.[58] In automatism, the moment of "revelation," where the sacred would show itself as "something wholly different from the profane,"[59] is by definition eclipsed, so that the surrealist, once the artistic process has reached its end, is left with texts and images that he may not recognize as his own, but which are not necessarily qualitatively "different from the profane." The striking, sometimes disturbing alterity of the automatic product manifests itself *within* the radical immanence of modern life, rather than above it, in the transcendent sphere of the sacred.[60] The experience they elicit are fully "profane epiphanies," to borrow a term from Walter Benjamin.[61] Even if mythical tropes or religious symbolism can be identified in automatic poetry and art, these are not necessarily any more religious than the "vestiges" of the sacred in New Year's festivities.

55
Breton, *Manifesto*, 29–30.

56
See for example, Breton, *Manifesto*, 24.

57
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 211.

58
This can be illustrated by a long footnote in the first *Manifesto*. Breton writes: "I would like to know how the first punishable offenses, the Surrealist character of which will be clearly apparent, will be *judged.* . . . [T]he accused has published a book which is an outrage to public decency. Several of his 'most respected and honorable' fellow citizens have lodged a complaint against him, and he is also charged with slander and libel. There are also all sorts of other charges against him, such as insulting and defaming the army, inciting to murder, rape, etc. The accused, moreover, wastes no time in agreeing with the accusers in 'stigmatizing' most of the ideas expressed. His only defense is claiming that he does not consider himself to be the author of his book, said book being no more and no less than a Surrealist concoction which precludes any question of merit or lack of merit on the part of the person who signs it; further, that all he has done is copy a document without offering any opinion thereon, and that he is at least as foreign to the accused text as is the presiding judge himself." (*Manifesto*, 44.) This passage clearly shows how the automatic (here: "surrealist") product is assimilated by a relative and immanent, rather than absolute and transcendent order. Even if the act of automatic writing places the surrealist temporarily beyond the sphere of moral relativity, the resulting product does not retain this absolute alterity, and can simply be dismissed ("stigmatized") by its author on grounds of its low, and therefore relative, moral value. The surrealist book in this example, though presumably an unadulterated product of the unconscious, does not provide its author with "an absolute fixed point, a center" to mitigate the relativity of his existence.

59
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 11.

60
Hans Blumenberg has defended a similar interpretation of surrealism, usefully summarized by Willem Styfhals: "The artist can change, alter, and reinvent the order of nature by means of imagination and fantasy. In this respect, the prefix 'sur' does not refer to any vertical, mystical transcendence beyond this world; rather, it refers to the new, Surrealistic world that literally 'survives' the artistic decomposition of nature. Therefore, Blumenberg interprets Surrealistic transcendence as a kind of horizontal or immanent transcendence." Styfhals, "The Gnostic 'Sur' in Surrealism: On Transcendence and Modern Art," in *The Marriage of Aesthetics and Ethics*, ed. Stéphane Symons (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 292.

61
Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: Last Snapshot of

Eliade on Surrealist Nostalgia and the Coincidence of Opposites

This means that we are still no closer to understanding how the modern artist's "active" relation to the unconscious creates a locus of survival for the sacred after the "second fall." I believe this is, in fact, an important blind spot in Eliade's thinking about desacralization, one that, moreover, casts doubt on the usefulness of his concept of the sacred for discussing modern art. To make this point, it will be helpful to consider one more passage from Eliade, the only one, I believe, where he mentions surrealism's specific interest in the unconscious. In "Crisis and Renewal in the History of Religions,"[62] an article from 1965, re-edited as the fourth chapter of *The Quest*, Eliade argues that contemporary artistic experiments can be of interest to the historian of religion, and gives the following example:

> It is not without interest to note, for example, that in their revolt against the traditional forms of art and their attacks on bourgeois society and morality the surrealists not only elaborated a revolutionary aesthetic but also formulated a technique by which they hoped to *change* the human condition. A number of these "exercises" (for example, the effort to obtain a "mode of existence" that participates in both the waking and sleeping states or the effort to realize the "coexistence of the conscious and the unconscious") recall certain Yogic or Zen practices. Moreover, one deciphers in the early *élan* of surrealism, and notably in the poems and theoretical manifestos of André Breton, a nostalgia for the "primordial totality," the desire to effect *in concreto* the coincidence of opposities [*sic*], the hope of being able to annul history in order to begin anew with the original power and purity—nostalgia and hopes rather familiar to historians of religions.[63]

Eliade rightly points out that surrealism cannot be reduced to a particular aesthetic, and that its ultimate objective is to change life itself. However, he also subtly misrepresents the surrealist project in at least two ways, which I believe are indicative of the blind spot I have just alluded to. The first involves the effort he imputes to the surrealists to "realize the 'coexistence of the conscious and the unconscious.' " Quotation marks notwithstanding, this phrase is not a direct citation from Breton (or any other surrealist that I know), but one assumes that Eliade had in mind this often anthologized excerpt from the *Surrealist Manifesto*:

> I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*, if one may so speak. It is in quest of this surreality that I am going, certain not to find it but too unmindful of my death not to calculate to some slight degree the joys of its possession.[64]

In contrast to Eliade's paraphrase, Breton's *Manifesto* does not mention the "coexistence," "coincidence," or even "resolution" of the con-

the European Intelligentsia," in *The Challenge of Surrealism: The Correspondence of Theodor W. Adorno and Elisabeth Lenk*, ed. Susan H. Gillespie (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 19–20, 27, 29.

62
Mircea Eliade, "Crisis and Renewal in History of Religions," *History of Religions* 5, no. 1 (Summer, 1965): 1–17

63
Eliade, *The Quest*, 65.

64
Breton, *Manifesto*, 14.

scious and the unconscious. When the *Manifesto* puts forward the "future resolution" of waking life and the dream state, the latter cannot be equated with the unconscious as such; the dream, as we have pointed out (with Eliade), is a liminal phenomenon, a "spark," so to speak, produced in consciousness by the friction between the conscious and the unconscious mind. To the extent that the dream is an experience, it partakes in consciousness and cannot be aligned with the unconscious. An experience of the unconscious is a contradiction in terms, as Louis Aragon points out in his *Paysan de Paris*: to have "a veritable sense of the unconscious is unimaginable." Surrealism's true objective, then, was to get a "sense of the threshold"[65] between consciousness and the unconscious and to integrate this liminal experience into everyday life, thereby transforming it by opening it up to other impulses and intuitions than those of logic and utility. But surrealism never proposed a "coincidence" of the conscious and unconscious mind, which, in surrealists' understanding of these concepts, is simply an impossibility.

The second misrepresentation concerns the "nostalgia" for a "primordial totality" that Eliade reads in Breton's early writings. The problem lies not with the nostalgia as such, which is indeed a salient feature of much surrealist literature and art,[66] nor with the fact that Eliade immediately qualifies the object of this nostalgia as a "coincidence of opposites." Both of Breton's *Manifestoes* indeed put a *coincidentia oppositorum* firmly on the surrealist agenda.[67] The misrepresentation appears in Eliade's final sentence, where he writes that the surrealist nostalgia is "rather familiar to historians of religion." This phrase implies that the surrealist interest in a coincidence of opposites is in some sense similar to that of *homo religiosus*. The question, then, is to determine the ground of this similarity: do both "nostalgias" betray a fundamental relation to the sacred; or is the surrealist nostalgia for a "primordial totality," like modern man's New Year's celebrations, merely a "vestige" of irrevocably lost religious behavior?

Homo religiosus's attitude toward the coincidence of opposites is defined by his general existential condition. As we have seen, religious man lives in a world that is profane and relative, but in which "traces" of the sacred can still be identified in specific places, narratives, or persons. These hierophanic traces provide *homo religiosus* with an "absolute fixed point" around which to organize his individual life, structure society, and elaborate a cosmology, thus avoiding the overwhelming relativity that characterizes modern man's existential situation.[68] In this context, the *coincidentia oppositorum*, functions as a "minimal definition of divinity"[69]; it is a defining structural element of hierophany, indicating the sacred's "*ganz andere*" nature as compared to ordinary human existence. *Homo religiosus's* nostalgia should be understood in this light. When the "sage" or "the ascetic of the East" strives to overcome the opposites of experience in his spiritual practices, to transcend "pleasure and pain, desire and repulsion, cold and heat, the pleasant and unpleasant, etc.,"[70] it is because he experiences his existence as an exile from the sacred and because he desires to be "*in* the sacred or in close proximity [to it]."[71] He knows, however, that the coincidence of being and the sacred was realized in a mythical past, at the time of Creation or in a Golden Age. *Homo religiosus's* desire for the sacred is therefore articulated with a nostalgic inflection,

65
Aragon, *Le paysan de Paris*, 155–57.

66
For a recent scholarly exploration of surrealist nostalgia for childhood, see David Hopkins, *Dark Toys: Surrealism and the Culture of Childhood* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2021).

67
Breton, *Manifesto*, 14; *Second Surrealist Manifesto*, 123–24.

68
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 22.

69
Eliade, *Traité*, 352.

70
Eliade, 352.

71
Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, 12.

and hierophany—with *coincidentia oppositorum* as one of its defining aspects—is experienced as a reconnection with a primordial situation that lifts the subject above his concrete existence in historical time.[72]

Surrealism, as a modern phenomenon after the "second fall," developed in a different existential situation. If we follow Eliade's strong desacralization thesis, the surrealists' world is devoid of "absolute fixed points," and the sacred no longer pierces through the relativity and homogeneity of the real. We have seen that this corresponds to Breton's assessment of existence, and all of the above has evidently not prevented a sense of nostalgia and a fascination with the coincidence of opposites from developing in surrealism. But the object of nostalgia, as well as the nature of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, cannot remain unaltered in a desacralized age. Most importantly, in surrealism, the coincidence of opposites is dissociated from hierophany and from the foundational past reactualized by the hierophanic moment. The passage from the *Manifesto* cited can illustrate this. There, Breton states his belief in a resolution of opposites that is perhaps evocative of a religious *coincidentia oppositorum*, but from which it differs in two important respects: first, the "absolute reality"[73] that corresponds to this "resolution" of opposites is not presented as *a-historically given*, but firmly and exclusively situated in the future. As of yet, no hierophanic experience corresponds to this *coincidentia*, since neither automatism nor the dream can effect it, as we have seen. Second, one must assume that, even if a hierophanic experience of surreality were to befall Breton, he would still be hesitant to grant it a "world-founding" function, given his conviction that the surreal is "neither superior nor exterior" to reality. This is perhaps the reason why he immediately adds that he will not "find" surreality in his lifetime. Granted, surrealism looks forward to an experience of "resolution," but, unlike *homo religiosus*, it cannot organize its practices and beliefs around it, because the surrealist *coincidentia* does reactualize a sacred foundational past, which surrealism does not recognize or presuppose. The surrealist *coincidentia* is not the mark of a return of the sacred, but an empty protention of an undefined (and perhaps unacceptable) alterity.

It follows that surrealist nostalgia, too, should not too hastily be assimilated with that of religious man. Surrealist nostalgia has many objects: childhood, the Gothic, the primitive, perhaps even the animal and the inanimate, but none of these can univocally be subsumed under a heading of a mythical past or a "Golden Age."[74] To do so would be to neglect the particularity of the context in which surrealism developed, which is that of an age in which those notions have ceased to function as poles for existential and societal orientation. A close reading of Breton's early "poems and theoretical manifestos" would therefore also reveal that there is no systematic association between the various objects of surrealist nostalgia and the *coincidentia oppositorum* put forward as surrealism's objective in those same manifestoes. The surrealist future, in other words, need not be seen as "recover[ing] some 'Great Time' or other"[75] as Eliade all too quickly suggests; instead, it holds the promise of something radically new, beyond the always already given object of renewal.

Eliade, however, disregards these differences between the surrealist and *homo religiosus*. This is when a phenomenological definition of

72
Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper, 1959), 95–86.

73
Breton, *Manifesto*, 14. Cf. note 72.

74
On this see Georges Sebbag's insightful article "La edad de oro de los surrealistas," in *Luis Buñuel y el surrealismo*, ed. Emmanuel Guigon (Teruel: Museo de Teruel, 2000), 81–95. (The original French text can be found on Sebbag's website, at https://www.philosophieetsurrealisme.fr/lage-dor-des-surrealistes/).

75
Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, 33.

the sacred, i.e., as conscious hierophany, combines with Eliade's strong desacralization thesis, which posits the sacred's retreat into the unconscious. This results in a blind spot that masks the particularity of the surrealist position, and, perhaps, by extension, that of the modern artist in general. In both "The Sacred and the Modern Artist" and in his scattered remarks on surrealism, Eliade is unable to satisfyingly illustrate his claim that "the sacred, although unrecognizable, is present in [modern art] works,"[76] if one understands this unrecognizability to be the result of the sacred's descent into the unconscious of modern man. His suggestion that the modern artist engages with his unconscious, and thereby re-establishes a relation to the sacred, fails to resolve the issue, as this relation must either abandon art's hierophanic potential or downplay the "unconsciousness" of the sacred in modernity. Unwilling to do the former, Eliade cannot avoid the latter. This is apparent in his misrepresentation of surrealism's nostalgia and its interest in the coincidence of opposites. Eliade's understanding of the sacred as "an element in the structure of consciousness"[77] makes it impossible to fully explore the implications of his claim that the sacred has relocated to modern man's unconscious, and leaves the analogy with *homo religiosus* as the sole, but ultimately unsatisfying way to approach the particularity of the modern artist's existential situation.

76
Eliade, "The Sacred and the Modern Artist," 82.

77
Eliade, *History*, xii. Cf note 76.

Conclusion

Throughout his writings, Eliade suggests that there are parallels between the religious phenomenon and the work of art or literature. Because of these parallels, religion and art can in some cases "clarify reciprocally,"[78] making the creative process, the work of art, and the esthetic experience all valid objects of inquiry for the historian of religions. Our excursion into surrealism has shown, however, that the "clarification" might be less reciprocal than Eliade believed. In the case of surrealism, the attempt to understand the artistic process as hierophany has effectively obscured some of the movement's distinguishing and most radical characteristics from Eliade's analysis. More importantly, the emphasis on hierophany also undermines Eliade's strong theory of desacralization, rendering it difficult to take up the religious and artistic implications of modernity in an Eliadean framework.

The fundamental question, then, is why Eliade believed it necessary to approach modern art from the perspective of the sacred, especially those works in which, by his own admission, no sacred presence is "recognizable." What drove him to find—or at least presuppose—evidence of the sacred in works that, by his strong definition of modernity, stand out as modern precisely because they lack any engagement with hierophany? Answering these questions would involve making explicit the metaphysical and theological presuppositions behind Eliade's history of religions, a task which I will not take up here.[79] Instead, in conclusion, I want to briefly revisit the analogy between the religious phenomenon and *Madame Bovary*, which Eliade was so fond of. Without exception, references to this novel in Eliade's works serve to illustrate his belief in a *sui generis* quality of the religious phenomenon. Eliade's love for literature and the hard-won yet well-established

78
Eliade, *Quest*, 65.

79
See Bryan Rennie, "The Influence of Eastern Orthodox Christian Theology on Mircea Eliade's Understanding of Religion," in *Hermeneutics, Politics, and the History of Religions*: *The Contested Legacies of Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade*, ed. Christian K. Wedemeyer and Wendy Doniger (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), 197–214.

reputation of *Madame Bovary* as an autonomous work of art made it an almost obvious analogue. It seems, however, that despite its reputation, the analogy only operated in one direction, and that, in reality, literary and artistic irreducibility for Eliade were subordinate to that of the sacred. For although he was adamant that the sacred should not be approached via the arts (or any other discipline other than the history of religions),[80] Eliade persistently approached the arts via the sacred. At least in the case of surrealism, this led him to misunderstand and misrepresent a number of important characteristics of the movement. This is unfortunate, and one can now only speculate what surrealism might have contributed to Eliade's analysis of "the sole, but important, religious creation of the modern Western world"—if he had granted surrealist art and literature the same artistic autonomy as he did Flaubert's classic novel.

80 Eliade, *Traité*, 11. Cf. note 79.

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Literature and Writers at Eranos: Overview of a Missed Appointment

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Abstract
This article offers an overview of the place held by literature and writers at Eranos from the early occult era, at the beginning of the 1930s, to the end of its first phase in 1988. Using both the guestbook and the texts of the conferences published in the *Eranos-Jahrbücher*, the analysis below offers a comprehensive overview of the writers who attended Eranos, whether as members of the audience or as speakers—whether or not they spoke of literature. It also explores how literature was addressed as a conference topic in its own right, whether by writers or academics. The various complications that arose from emphasizing interdisciplinarity and from enduring hesitations as regards the status of arts at Eranos made writers both welcome and irrelevant. However, this ambiguity did not prevent the emergence of a form of coherence in the way literature was discussed—i.e., as an illustration of philosophical, psychological, and/or theological theories—and in the reasons that encouraged writers to attend: they did so mainly because they lived nearby and were interested in spiritual matters, and not because they were artists seeking inspiration.

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Introduction

It is a well-known fact that Eranos intended to explore the importance of spirituality, symbolism, and myth in modern culture, following the path of German romanticism in its fight against disciplinary barriers. In addition, its major distinctive feature was its openness towards imagination; as the years went by, its original focus on the study of religion, in particular the interchange between "Eastern" and "Western" forms of spirituality, widened and became inclusive of psychology, art history, music, and natural science.[1] One might spontaneously conclude, from this whole picture, that it was consistently open to the arts. However, it seems that Eranos never truly adopted a clear and coherent attitude towards them, and the point of this paper is to try and explain why. Focusing on its first phase (1933–1988), it will explore its diverse and rich relationship with *literature* as a topic of discussion tackled by writers and non-writers, and *writers* as both speakers and members of the audience—thus sidelining music and the visual and plastic arts. This original research is based on archival materials such as the guestbook held in the Eranos Foundation at Ascona, and the texts of the lectures published in the *Eranos-Jahrbücher*.

There have been three successive steps in the history of Eranos's relationship with literature. In its early "Bailey" phase, between 1930 and 1933, it was open to the occult and the arts. However, things deeply changed between 1933 and the end of World War II. Under the influence of Carl Gustav Jung, who wanted to give the event a distinctly academic veneer, speakers were reluctant to discuss literature, even though writers still attended the event. Eventually, during the post-war period, literature made a comeback and became a legitimate topic. The difference with the beginning of the 1930s was that from then on, the lecturers were all academics. Probably because writers had ended up feeling out of place, far fewer attended the event. A glance at the chronology therefore shows that throughout its history, Eranos theoretically welcomed writers among its audience members, and literature as a topic of discussion—as long as it had anything to do with Eranos's concerns—while at the same time giving the impression that writers were irrelevant because of the academic nature of the event, and the accent put on both spirituality and psychology.

1 Hans Thomas Hakl, *Eranos: An Alternative Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2013), 11. The historical details of this article come from Hakl's monography, especially the introduction and the first four chapters.

Eranos Before Eranos: The Ghost of the *Salon* Tradition

The uncertain status of literature at Eranos originates from the early hesitations of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn regarding the organization of the conferences and the type of people to invite. Her initial idea was not to dismiss the arts at all, and during the first occult Bailey phase, several writers attended as speakers. Violet Tweedale, a Scottish writer and spiritualist, presented her occult novel *The Cosmic Christ* at the first meeting in 1930.[2] The Anglo-Irish writer James Henry Cousins signed the guestbook three times between 1930 and 1933. The way Hans Thomas Hakl sums up Fröbe-Kapteyn's thoughts on the project right after the death of her father aptly illustrates this point: "With the inherited wealth, she could now enter fully into the role which she had long felt called, namely to invite artists, poets, and people of esoteric interest to her home. She was free to pursue her religio-philosophical

2 Hakl, *Eranos*, 29.

interests and her theosophical inclinations."[3] There is no reason to believe that in the early vision she had of annual gatherings organized in her home, she thought of the artistic and the spiritual as incompatible.

Fröbe-Kapteyn's spontaneous openness towards literature during the pre-Eranos phase is directly related to what she had been doing in the previous twenty years. In 1909, she married a Croatian orchestra conductor of Austrian parentage called Iwan Fröbe, who later died in an air crash in 1915.[4] When she was married, she regularly took part in artistic gatherings which were close to traditional literary *salons*. Together with her husband, she first lived in Munich before moving to Wannsee, in the suburbs of Berlin. At that time, the Dutch-German philologist André Jolles also lived there with his family. Jolles had known Fröbe-Kapteyn's parents and had gathered around him a circle of friends that included painters, musicians, and writers, who would meet once a week for readings or musical performances.[5] After the death of her husband, Fröbe-Kapteyn relocated to Zurich where she kept the *salon* tradition alive and organized readings. She was friends with several poets and literary enthusiasts, like the Swiss writer and academic Robert Faesi, André Germain, and Alastair. Later on, in 1926, she met the Dutch poet Adriaan Roland Host at the *Semaine européenne* in Lausanne. Among all the artists and writers with whom she mingled over these years, the most important remains Ludwig Derleth,[6] whom several women of good society are said to have worshiped as a spiritual guide. Because Fröbe-Kapteyn had feelings of love towards him, she was deeply influenced by him, especially in the 1920s.[7]

After the departure of Alice Bailey, apparently related to an argument regarding her daughters' erotic adventures with residents of the nearby Monte Verità,[8] Eranos moved away from the esoteric "Summer School" atmosphere and adopted a different tone under the influence of C. G. Jung. This turning point is of course connected to his vision and personal preferences, but it would be over-simplistic to analyze it merely as a sign of Fröbe-Kapteyn's passivity. It is indeed indisputable that when she launched the first phase of Eranos in 1930, she wanted to start something new. She was then a 50-year-old woman who had been a widow for fifteen years, and who had been living in almost complete solitude in Ascona for some ten years.[9] During this long period of seclusion, she explored and deepened her interest in spiritual issues, which took precedence over the artistic ones. Hermann von Keyserling's Schule der Weisheit,[10] where she met C. G. Jung for the first time in 1930,[11] became a model. She also made her intention to break free from the past particularly obvious when she burnt all her old letters and photographs at the beginning of the 1930s.[12]

However, despite a firm shift towards the academic and the spiritual, Eranos remained open to literature, particularly under the influence of Fröbe-Kapteyn. She was engaged in creative writing at the beginning of the 1930s, for instance authoring fairy tales for adults such as *Die Gleichnisse*.[13] In the years following the end of World War II, at a moment when the *salon* model seemed like a distant memory, she is said to have left Talbot Mundy's occult novels in her the rooms of her guests.[14] It might have been an attempt to indirectly support the idea that literature was an excellent source of spiritual exploration and

3 Hakl, *Eranos*, 16.

4 Hakl, 13.

5 Hakl, 13.

6 Hakl, 17

7 Hakl, 20.

8 Hakl, 31.

9 Hakl, 25.

10 The German for "School of Wisdom."

11 Hakl, *Eranos*, 38.

12 Hakl, 17. Hakl takes this piece of information from Catherine Ritsema's *L'Œuvre d'Eranos*, which I was unable to find and consult.

13 Hakl, 43.

14 Hakl, 153, 170.

as such had a rightful place at Eranos.

What Did it Mean to "Talk about Literature" at Eranos?

Canonic Authors and Ambitious Projects

During Eranos's Jungian era, after the occult was set aside, so were the arts. They disappeared completely from the lecture topics because they had become out of place in this new context. In the course of these dozen editions, the only lecture dedicated to an artistic topic was that of Carl Moritz Cammerloher in 1934, on the place of art in the "contemporary psychological worldview."[15] As for literature specifically, no one spoke about it over those years.

When literature made its comeback at the end of the war, it was addressed by the lecturers according to roughly two principles. On one hand, they would never challenge the literary canon, meaning they always chose famous, widely-discussed authors. Graham Goulder Hough, a scholar and a poet who taught at the University of Cambridge between 1966 and 1975,[16] epitomizes this tendency. He attended Eranos in 1971 to discuss W. B. Yeats's poetry[17] and spoke about Shakespeare's last plays in 1973.[18] In third place after these emblematic figures, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was one of the most popular authors discussed. Paul Schmitt, a Swiss publisher and journalist, wrote a text on Goethe, for instance, in comparison with Saint Augustine for the volume offered to C. G. Jung on his seventieth birthday,[19] and delivered a conference in 1946 on the concepts of nature and spirit in Goethe, in relationship with the natural sciences.[20] After an absence of twenty-five years, Goethe was back on the scene in 1972 when Shmuel Sambursky, a German and later Israeli physicist and historian of science, offered a lecture on Goethe's theory of light and color.[21] Other famous literary figures could be added to these, but they tended to be lone wolves. For instance, Yves-Albert Daugé, a French Latin teacher who attended in 1983, gave the only Eranos lecture dedicated to Virgil.[22]

On the other hand, lecturers could take a step back from the texts and engage in broad considerations, with the risk of firmly favoring content over form and literariness. It was commonplace for these academics to embrace sweeping views and come up with extremely ambitious goals. David Lee Miller, a lecturer on nine occasions between 1975 and 1988, did not hesitate to choose topics as far-reaching as "modern literature"[23] or even "language and literature."[24] Sir Herbert Read, who also spoke nine times between 1952 and 1964, offers many examples of a similar type of ambition. He wrote the following lines in his 1956 speech entitled "Poetic Consciousness and Creative Experience": "To answer all these questions would require a treatise even more comprehensive than Aristotle's, and my ambition does not extend so far! This lecture cannot attempt much more than a definition of the problem of poetic creation . . ."[25] In the context of Eranos, "the problem of poetic creation" could therefore seem like a reasonable topic of discussion and one appropriate for lectures. However, speakers were sometimes aware of this tendency, and open to self-criticism, as can be seen in the 1988 lecture of David L. Miller, in a passage where he offers three reasons for why he has "taken the first half of [his] presen-

15
Carl Moritz Cammerloher, "Die Stellung der Kunst im psychologischen Weltbild unserer Zeit: Ein Beitrag zur Funktionenlehre," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch 1934: Ostwestliche Symbolik und Seelenführung*, ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (Zurich: Rhein-Verlag, 1935), 449–86.

16
Peter Schwendener, "In Quest of Graham Hough," *The American Scholar* 67, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 139.

17
Graham Hough, "W. B. Yeats: A Study in Poetic Integration," in "Die Lebensalter im Schöpferischen Prozess," ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 40 (1971), 51–83. In this article, Hough discusses the creative evolution of Yeats's poetry. He points out that all his works tend to seek inspiration in the different stages of life, namely childhood, youth, and the stability characteristic of maturity.

18
Graham Hough, "Nature and Spirit in Shakespeare's Last Plays," in "Die Welt der Entsprechungen," ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 42 (1973), 43–77. Focusing on his plays (i.e., leaving aside his poetry), especially on *The Tempest*, Hough reflects on Shakespeare's "implicit philosophy" and the meaning of magic in his writing.

19
Paul Schmitt, "Archetypisches bei Augustin und Goethe," in "Studien zum Problem des Archetypischen: Festgabe für C. G. Jung zum siebzigstens Geburtstag am 26. Juli 1945," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 12 (1945), 95–115.

20
Paul Schmitt, "Natur und Geist in Goethes Verhältnis zu den Naturenwissenschaften," in "Geist und Natur," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 14 (1946), 332–84.

21
Shmuel Sambursky, "Licht und Farbe in den physikalischen Wissenschaften und in Goethes Lehre," in "Die Welt der Farben," ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 41 (1972), 177–216.

22
Yves A. Daugé, "Circuits de la lumière: la transfiguration chez Virgile," in "Physische und geistige Körperwelt," ed. Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 52 (1983), 113–56. This article offers an esoteric, Shaykhist, and Buddhist reading of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

23
David L. Miller, "Prometheus, St. Peter and the Rock: Identity and Difference in Modern Literature," in "Gleichklang oder Gleichzeitigkeit," ed. Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 57 (1988), 75–123.

tation in reviewing a twenty-five-hundred-year philosophical tradition and repeating a theoretical argument from twenty-five years ago that are already known."[26]

The lecturers had reasons for making conventional author choices and embracing "universal" literary issues. The vastness of the discussion was a way to fit into the Eranos lecture style in general, regardless of the topic. As for the use of literary figures known by all, it might have been a rhetorical strategy. People could not be led astray by details and would keep their focus on the main point of the lecture, which was not literary, but rather spiritual. Discussing a writer whom everyone in the audience had probably read extensively might also have been a way to create a feeling of community among the audience members.

Precedence of Theory Over Style and Aesthetics

The specialist of Sufism and Persian poetry Fritz Meier unofficially and unwittingly launched an analytical scheme for literature at Eranos with his 1944 conference on "The Spirit Man" in Farid ud-din-i 'Attar's *Ilāhīnāma*.[27] Meier uses this long narrative poem to illustrate an argument related to Islamic mysticism. The order in which he makes his various points reveals the precedence he intends to give to the spiritual over the artistic: only after lingering over the theological problem in the ten pages of the first section does he mention 'Attar's name and text for the first time. In spite of this clear hierarchy, Meier does not neglect the text's literariness and precise content. Following a lengthy summary, he extensively quotes from it; of the 6500 verses of the *Ilāhīnāma*, he copies around 400 (footnotes included). He does not hesitate to highlight its cultural importance: "This poem . . . in terms of form and content, is one of the masterpieces of world literature."[28] However, although Meier was aware of the aesthetic significance of this text and did not intend to downplay it, he preferred to treat it as a document illustrating a spiritual truth, rather than a piece of art, because this perspective was more consistent with his line of argument.

Meier was no isolated case, as demonstrated by Read's lectures, which also offer various examples of a strong taste for theory. He for instance proposed several theoretical distinctions: between the *intensive* and *extensive* aspects of poetry in 1956[29] and between *form* and *composition* in 1960.[30] Another of his tendencies is his longing to embrace literature in the pseudo-universal manner common among scholars of the time; i.e., by focusing only on the great male writers of the Western world. In this context, Read enjoys drawing up literary catalogs transcending languages and historical eras. In "The Poet and his Muse" (1962),[31] he offers an overview of how the theory of inspiration evolved from the classical allegory of the Muses to a modern and psychological conception (i.e., brain waves directly originated by the unconscious). To illustrate this historical summary, he quotes Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, William Blake, Percy B. Shelley, William Wordsworth, Edgar Allan Poe, and Paul Valéry. He presents them as perfect illustrations of his meditation on consciousness in the creative process. It is hard not to compare these kinds of "literary" genealogies with the "ancient wisdom narratives" so popular in the Renaissance[32] that found their way late into the nineteenth century.[33]

24
David L. Miller, "From Leviathan to Lear: Shades of Play in Language and Literature," in "Das Spiel der Götter und der Menschen," special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 51 (1982), 59–109. In this article, Miller focuses on the concept of "mockery," jumping from Shakespeare to Montaigne, from Plautus to Job and Plato, from Pascal to Thoreau.

25
Sir Herbert Read, "Poetic Consciousness and Creative Experience," in "Der Mensch und das Schöpferische," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 25 (1956), 357–89.

26
David L. Miller, "Prometheus, St. Peter and the Rock: Identity and Difference in Modern Literature," 90–91.

27
Fritz Meier, "Der Geistmensch bei dem persischen Dichter 'Aṭṭār," in "Der Geist," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 13 (1945), 283–354.

28
Fritz Meier, 293–94: "Die Dichtung . . . gehört in Gestalt und Gehalt zu den Meisterwerken der Weltliteratur." Unless otherwise specified, translations are mine.

29
Sir Herbert Read, "Poetic Consciousness and Creative Experience," 360.

30
Sir Herbert Read, "The Origins of Form in Art," in "Mensch und Gestaltung," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 29 (1960), 183–206.

31
Sir Herbert Read, "The Poet and his Muse," in "Der Mensch, Führer und Geführter im Werk," ed. Adolf Portmann, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 31 (1962), 217–48.

32
Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7–12.

33
One of the most famous examples is Édouard Schuré, *Les Grands Initiés: Esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions; Rama, Krishna, Hermès, Orphée, Pythagore, Platon, Jésus* (Paris: Librairie Académique Didier Perrin, 1889).

Another example of these literary catalogs could already be found in "The Flower of Peace" (1958).[34] After having summed up Tolstoy's fifty-page epilogue at the end of *War and Peace*, Read calls it "a penetrating *essay* by a great man who had given the best of his thought and genius to this problem";[35] that is, he presents it as theoretical, not literary. He then speaks of Wilfred Owen's poem entitled "Insensibility" as a modern rephrasing of Homer's thought that "man can fight against man, but he cannot fight against war."[36] In the second section of his conference, he successively quotes Henry Vaughan, George Herbert, William Blake, John Milton, and Edmund Spencer's *Faerie Queene*. Later on, Shelley is said to be "the reincarnation of Plato in English poetry."[37] Read was confident that he could have gone on much longer than he did: "We could spend a very pleasant hour tracing these archetypical images throughout classical and modern literature . . ."[38] He constantly minimizes the "literary" side of writers and prefers treating them as essayists or theoreticians. For instance, Yeats is not discussed as a poet or a playwright. In "Nihilism and Renewal in the Art of Our Time" (1959),[39] he is presented only as the theoretician who synthesized the complex system exposed in *A Vision*—and other speakers did as well. When Read talks about Schiller in the second part of "The Dynamics of Art,"[40] it is only as an essayist on aesthetics. Eventually, Read uses literature as a hat from which one can pull out countless illustrations for various theories. In "Beauty and the Beast" (1961),[41] when he quotes a line of Persius's *Satires* from Burke, he analyzes it by saying: "a line . . . which might be taken as a still earlier anticipation of the Freudian unconscious."[42] In the same text, he offers an interpretation of Madame Leprince de Beaumont's popular fairy tale in terms of a "dramatic symbolization of the four functions of consciousness,"[43] in line with Bruno Bettelheim's project in *The Uses of Enchantment*.[44]

Sir Herbert Read's Hesitation Between Conformism and Rebellion

The features I have just described could seem quite predictable if one reads what Kathleen Raine said about Read's intellectual identity in her first Eranos conference of 1968.[45] Raine might have intended to pay him tribute by reminding her audience how much he had influenced her when she was a student at the University of Cambridge; for when the conference took place that year, Read had only been dead for a couple of months. According to her, this era was marked by the complete disagreement of Read and T. S. Eliot on the definition of culture and creativity. In this context, she preferred what she calls Read's "psychological theory"[46] over Eliot's conservatism. Read indeed made constant references to psychology; at Eranos, he even regularly adopted the role of a teacher who reminded any ignorant listeners about some of the most famous concepts of psychoanalysis: in 1957, he offered a lengthy explanation of Jung's concept of individuation[47] and even once thought it would be useful to remind his audience of what psychoanalysis is all about.[48]

Read thus undoubtedly accepted tackling literary issues "in the manner" of other Eranos speakers. However, there are multiple ways of challenging the idea that he had come to Eranos to uniformly pres-

34
Sir Herbert Read, "The Flower of Peace," in "Mensch und Frieden," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 27 (1958), 299–332.

35
Read, "The Flower of Peace," 299. The problem under discussion is obviously that of war and peace. Italics mine.

36
Read, 305.

37
Read, 331.

38
Read, 321.

39
Sir Herbert Read, "Nihilism and Renewal in the Art of Our Time," in "Die Erneuerung des Menschen," ed. Olga-Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 28 (1959), 345–76.

40
Sir Herbert Read, "The Dynamics of Art," in "Mensch und Energie," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 21 (1952), 255–84.

41
Sir Herbert Read, "Beauty and the Beast," in "Der Mensch in Spannungsfeld der Ordnungen," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 30 (1961), 175–210.

42
Read, "Beauty and the Beast," 183.

43
Read, 200.

44
Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976).

45
Kathleen Raine, "Poetic Symbol as a Vehicle of Tradition: The Crisis of the Present in Modern Poetry," in "Tradition und Gegenwart," ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 37 (1968), 357–409.

46
Raine, "Poetic Symbol as a Vehicle of Tradition," 370. See 367–73, in particular 368–69 for the whole story about Read's and Eliot's opposition: "Herbert Read based his own thought upon romantic tradition . . . Thus while Eliot made his plea for tradition rest upon historic transmission, Herbert Read appealed to the permanent nature of the human imagination, and found his support in the then novel psychology of Freud and of Jung . . . It was in relation to Jung that Herbert Read defined his position . . ."

ent a "psychological" understanding of poetry and literary creation in line with what others did there. Regarding theory, while insisting on its importance, he criticized it for being artificial. After having theorized on the above-mentioned distinction between intensive and extensive aspects of poetry, he added:

> We now distinguish these aspects thanks to our powers of reflection, and on the basis of the poetic material that has accumulated in historical times. In other words, the distinction we make is artificial, as is the whole academic science of poetry, poetics in the Aristotelian sense. It is our failure to preserve a sense of poetry as a primordial activity of consciousness, distinct from poetic thinking or myth-making, that has so often led to a misunderstanding of the nature and function of poetry today, especially among psychologists.[49]

Read's relationship to psychology appears to not be as simple as Raine portrays it in her 1968 lecture. It could be labeled as conflictual, considering that on more than one occasion Read jibed at psychologists, hardly failing to be perceived as provocative given the composition of the audience. In "Poetic Consciousness and Creative Experience," he challenged the capacity of psychology to develop a relevant discourse on the creation of poetry:

> I do not think that any modern philosopher or psychologist would be so rash as to claim that he had solved the age-long mystery. But I think he would claim that the concept of the unconscious, and more particularly the concept of the archetypes, have thrown much light, if not into the sources of poetry, at least on the mechanism of poetic experience, the formative process in the imagination. The psychologist has penetrated some distance into the recesses of the poet's subjectivity and found there, not darkness, but a clever piece of machinery . . . A light, a glory, a fair luminous mist—we cannot find more precise words to describe the experience of poetry. But what we have to insist on, against the theologians on the one side and the psychologists on the other side, is the originality and integrity of the process . . . We have to admit that the illumination cast by modern psychology on these "fundamental problems" of creativity is almost nil.[50]

A few years earlier, in 1952, he offered the same type of criticism about art in general:

> Any discussion of the psychology of art must begin with an affirmation that is not always acceptable to the psychologist; or, if acceptable, is often conveniently forgotten. This is the fact that the work of art exists as such, not in virtue of any "meaning" it expresses, but only in virtue of a particular organization of its constituent material elements.[51]

In 1958, Read even went so far as to offer advice regarding the future

47
Sir Herbert Read, "The Creative Nature of Humanism," in "Mensch und Sinn," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 26 (1957), 315–50. See in particular 332–33 for this passage.

48
Sir Herbert Read, "The Poet and His Muse," 234: "Psycho-analysis, as a theory and a therapy, rests on the hypothesis of a divided mind—part conscious, part unconscious."

49
Sir Herbert Read, "Poetic Consciousness and Creative Experience," 360.

50
Read, "Poetic Consciousness and Creative Experience," 381, 383.

51
Sir Herbert Read, "The Dynamics of Art," 255.

developments of psychology, which should work towards becoming a "human literature":

> A humanism of this kind is as necessary today as it was in the fifteenth century. Modern psychology may be compared to medieval scholasticism: it is an extensive corpus of expert knowledge for the most part written in a repulsive jargon, and before it can become human, a truth accessible to individual men, it must clarify its imagery and refashion its vocabulary. A science cannot renounce its technical terminology, but the meaning that is inherent in the jargon of psychology—ids, egos, superegos; sublimation, projection, individuation; all this hasty verbalization of an empirical science must be transformed into a *human literature* before it can have any wide effect on humanity.[52]

Ultimately, Read wanted to make it clear that psychology, as interesting as it might be for the study of literature, was wholly different and in no way could be called superior:

> The essential truth of the poetic experience is contained in the basic doctrine of Jungian psychology, but we must proceed to make distinctions, for poetry is not identical with dream, nor even with myth.[53]

The Difficult Assertion of the Writer's Identity

Read sometimes used literature in the Eranos style as a mere source of examples for psychological concepts, and sometimes talked about it while wearing the hat of a poet, thus presenting it as a superior form of expression that would never be exhausted by intellectual discourses; in this way, he firmly defended literature against theoreticians. To throw a bit of light on this paradox, I would argue that some of the writers who came to Eranos as lecturers were not content with the setting they found themselves in. They tried to fit in, but somehow failed to fully reach this goal. Whether they were academics or not, some of the speakers seemed like they would have preferred to give preference to the aesthetic over the spiritual, but this forced them into an impossible position. They therefore gave up on discussing their own experience as writers. Read might be the only one who chose to share what he went through as a creator of poetry: "I shall speak as a poet who is under the illusion that he has had authentic experiences of poetic creation."[54] He wrote a more detailed account in "The Poet and His Muse" (1962). This example is somewhat tricky because he asserts his identity as a poet while illustrating the psychological dimension of creation, ending up blurring the distinction between a poet's and a psychologist's perspective:

> I know, from personal experience supported by the evidence of other poets, that in the rare moments when I am writing poetry, I am in a "state of mind" totally distinct from the state of mind in which I composed this lecture, or am now reading this lecture; totally distinct, too, from the state of mind in which I go about my

52 Sir Herbert Read, "The Creative Nature of Humanism," 318. Italics mine.

53 Sir Herbert Read, "Poetic Consciousness and the Creative Experience," 369.

54 Read, "Poetic Consciousness and the Creative Experience," 373.

practical activities while awake—that is to say, while conscious.[55]

Moreover, that writers tended to embrace rhetorical self-deprecation constitutes another hint of this feeling of being out of place. Read himself was no stranger to this:

> But before I venture into this [i.e., a return to one of Plato's myths in the work of Yeats], to me, unfamiliar territory, let me explain that I do so with the hesitation and modesty, not only of one who is profoundly ignorant of the esoteric tradition of which it is a part, but also as one who is skeptical of all attempts to explain human phenomena by recourse to superhuman agencies.[56]

Read was, however, not an isolated case. In the first lines of the lecture he delivered at Eranos in 1956 on "The Creative Pattern in Primitive Africa,"[57] Laurens van der Post also spontaneously adopted the rhetorical mask of the humble man who does not know what he is doing there and whether or not he is entitled to speak:

> I have only one qualification for appearing before you today and that is that my own life, at many points and in many places, has touched the life of my time . . . I have very little learning, not much book knowledge, and precious little philosophy to offer to you. All I can do is to try and pass on to you an individual experience of the primitive pattern of creation . . .[58]

While downplaying his expertise and expressing doubts concerning the relevance of his status as an Eranos speaker, van der Post indirectly asserts his identity by adopting the role of the fascinating tale-teller who embodies a transmission between "Africa" and Western white scholars. His conference is indeed, at least for half of it, the retelling of tales he says he learned while staying with Bushmen in the Kalahari Desert. He complacently claims that he knows a great deal about their secrets because these people ended up trusting him with their beliefs. In this text, he offers an overview of his talent when it comes to blurring the frontier between fiction and reality. His pride in being an artist, and not a scholar, is glimpsed in the conclusion. After quoting a poem that a Bushman composed as a lament about a magician friend who was killed, he draws a comparison with the popular Eranos topic of Goethe:

> I had hoped to be able to show you the creative pattern as behavior, as human conduct in the Bushman society that I knew so well in the Kalahari. But I have just time to show you that all this material surging at the back of the primitive mind can be transformed into poetry. You will remember that Goethe spoke about *Gefühlsfaden*.[59]

Coherence and Continuities: The Example of Kathleen Raine

Besides the conflicted figures of Read and van der Post, Kathleen

55
Sir Herbert Read, "The Poet and His Muse," 233.

56
Sir Herbert Read, "Nihilism and Renewal in the Art of our Time," 346.

57
Laurens van der Post, "The Creative Pattern in Primitive Africa," in "Der Mensch und das Schöpferische," ed. Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 25 (1956), 417–54.

58
van der Post, "The Creative Pattern in Primitive Africa," 417.

59
van der Post, 452.

Raine provides a different model. She proved that it was possible to make the effort to reconcile academic and artistic viewpoints by adopting the ethos of both a poet and a critic and, to a lesser extent, by playing the role of a figure at the crossway of a network involving several writers and poets, directly or indirectly related to Eranos. She did not revolutionize the standard way of tackling literature at Eranos: she chose canonic authors who had already been discussed by previous speakers and was not primarily interested in aesthetics. Her point was to discuss large issues related to civilization and history. In both her conferences, she tried to reconcile literature and psychology. When analyzing Blake's "devils," "the inspirers of poets," she called them "the irrational energies of the Unconscious."[60] She insisted on the similarity of her own spiritual and literary interests, and those of Eranos:

> Yeats arrived at a concept similar to Jung's collective unconscious independently, through his early studies of the techniques of magic . . . For Yeats magic was less a kind of poetry than poetry a kind of magic. The symbols of poetry and the other arts have the power to evoke those universal forms which they embody.[61]

For several reasons, she represents a form of continuity at Eranos. By speaking about Yeats, on whom her work remains to this day an indispensable reference, she is of course connected to Read, but also to the pre-Eranos phase, through James Cousins—who had known Yeats and been part of the circle which included George William Russell (Æ)—and through Shri Purohit Swami, who signed the guestbook of Eranos in 1933, when he was working with Yeats on a translation of *The Ten Principal Upanishads*.[62]

Literature Made Invisible: Side Function of the Writer's Hat

Because Eranos speakers attended as scholars and not as artists, there was no need for them to mention their writing activities—which does not mean they did not exist. This is the case for some of the most famous figures who spoke there. Mircea Eliade was a novelist and an important figure in Romanian literature. Standard anthologies include texts by Eliade,[63] usually insisting on the importance of myths, folklore, and the fantastic in his work,[64] and most of all on his taste for Oriental and erotic themes.[65] Although it is rarely mentioned, Gershom Scholem was also a poet. Some fifty of his poems written between 1914 and 1974 were recently published together with some of his translations and theoretical considerations on poetry.[66] In continuity with Laurens van der Post as a teller of fairytales, or with Read's interpretation of "Beauty and the Beast," Martin Buber was interested in Hasidic tales and legends. As a young man, he felt that his vocation was to become a poet and a writer, and he was an ardent admirer of Hugo von Hofmannsthal.[67]

Some of the Eranos speakers could therefore be writers, but would not be perceived as such in that specific setting. This was also the case of lesser-known figures, like Max Pulver, a German-speaking Swiss writer especially interested in graphology and writing symbolism. He

60
Kathleen Raine, "Mental Worlds of Blake and Yeats: Two Diagrams," in "Die Vielheit der Welten," ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 44 (1975), 133–65. See 139 for these quotes.

61
Kathleen Raine, "Poetic Symbol as a Vehicle of Tradition: The Crisis of the Present in Modern Poetry," 392.

62
The Ten Principal Upanishads, put into English by Shree Purohit Swāmi and William Butler Yeats (London: Faber & Faber, 1937).

63
Andreia Roman's bilingual anthology of Romanian literature includes an extract of *Huliganii*. See Andreia Roman, *Literatura Română/Littérature roumaine*, vol. 3, t. 3, *Perioda interbelică/L'Entre-Deux-Guerres* (Paris: Éditions Non Lieu, 2010), 377–85.

64
Roman, *Literatura Română/Littérature roumaine*, 3.3:379.

65
See George Călinescu's critical approach of Eliade's literay texts in *History of Romanian Literature* (Milan: Unesco; Nagard, 1988), 825–38. He calls Eliade "the most complete (and servile) embodiment of Gideism in our literature" and mentions his "refuge in exoticism" (827). He envisions the ubiquitous presence of erotic themes in his oeuvre in a negatively critical way: "What do Mircea Eliade's experiences consist in? Almost exclusively in feeling sexual sensations . . ." (828).

66
Gershom Scholem, *Poetica: Schriften zur Literatur, Übersetzungen, Gedichte* (Frankfurt: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag, 2019), 11: "Nur wenige wissen, dass derjenige, der vielen Wissenschaftlern als einer der Begründer der Historiografie der Mystik und als Entdecker der häretischen Kabbala gilt, zeitlebens auch als Übersetzer und als Autor von Gedichten und Aufsätzen zu Sprache, Literatur und Übersetzung tätig war." ("Only few people know that the man who is considered by many scholars to be one of the founders of the historiography of mysticism and the discoverer of the heretical Kabbala was also active throughout his life as a translator, and as an author of poems and essays on language, literature and translation.")

67
Maurice Ruben-Hayoun, *Martin Buber, une introduction* (Paris: Pocket, 2013), 18.

gave five conferences at Eranos between 1940 and 1945, mainly on gnosis. He remained an active participant for about twenty years as he signed the Eranos guestbook a dozen times between 1933 and 1950, which means he attended both before and after the meetings to which he came as a lecturer. Pulver's most famous work might be his 1931 *Symbolik der Handschrift*,[68] but he was first and foremost a poet, before and after Eranos, albeit to a lesser degree. His first collection was published in 1916 in Leipzig,[69] and his last in Zurich thirty years later.[70] Has was also a translator of nineteenth-century French literature into German, for instance of texts by Émile Zola[71] or Théophile Gautier.[72] Because Pulver's presence at Eranos had nothing to do with his involvement in creative writing, it was not conspicuous to those who did not know his oeuvre as a whole.

Writers Among the Audience Members

It should not be forgotten that writers were not only presenters but also members of the audience—as shows with great precision the guestbook of Eranos kept in Ascona, especially regarding the first years. The habit of signing it unfortunately started to recede from the 1950s onwards. In spite of this, it is possible to argue that there was a gradual decrease in the attendance of writers over the years, undoubtedly related to the lasting shift of Eranos towards a more academic organization. Overall, the writers who attended Eranos do not seem to have been interested in it from a literary point of view.

Eranos was no trendy venue for big stars of the literary world; if they are related to Eranos, it is only in an indirect way.[73] The fact that several women related to famous, "canonic" writers attended the event does not mean they were even indirectly interested in literature. Mia Hesse-Bernoulli attended Eranos twice, in 1932 and 1935, when she was no longer married to Hermann Hesse. Ninon Hesse, the latter's third wife, came three times between 1941 and 1943, but she lived nearby in Ticino. Christiane Zimmer, the only daughter of Hugo von Hofmannsthal, attended Eranos several times because she accompanied her husband, the speaker Heinrich Zimmer.[74] It would be unfair to forget that, apart from being or having been married to Hermann Hesse, Mia Hesse-Bernoulli was a photographer and Ninon an art historian; but the question of the place allotted to women at Eranos is a vast topic beyond my scope.[75]

It was not rare that writers attended as neighbors. The above-mentioned case of Mia Hesse-Bernoulli, and that of Erich Maria Remarque, who attended in 1953, are relevant in this regard. The former lived in Ascona and the latter had been a resident of the Casa Monte Tabor in Porto Ronco since 1931,[76] which was only one kilometer from Eranos, and a place where Fröbe-Kapteyn herself had shortly lived before him.[77] Anne de Valenti-Montet, who went in 1941 (that is, during World War II, when far fewer people were able to attend), was a Swiss photographer and writer who lived in Switzerland. Aline Valangin, a Swiss psychoanalyst, pianist, poet, and novelist, attended eight times over twenty years, probably because she lived in Ascona from the 1940s on.

What most interested the guests were the topics under discus-

68
Max Pulver, *Symbolik der Handschrift* (Zurich: Orell Füssli, 1931).

69
Max Pulver, *Selbstbegegnung* (Leipzig: Kurt Wolff, 1916).

70
Max Pulver, *Übergang* (Zurich: Orell Füssli, 1946).

71
Émile Zola, *Die Bestie im Menschen*, trans. Max Pulver (Munich: Kurt Wolff, 1927).

72
Théophile Gautier, *Fortunio*, trans. Max Pulver (Munich: Drei Masken Verlag, 1922).

73
Claudio Belloni, "Thomas Mann e le origini di Eranos," in *Pioniere, Poeten, Professoren: Eranos und der Monte Verità in der Zivilisationsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Elisabetta Barone, Matthias Ridl, and Alexandra Tischel (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004), 45–55. See 45 in particular: "È indubbio che Thomas Mann abbia subito influssi anche molto significativi dalla costellazione spirituale di Eranos, e, questo nonostante la mancata partecipazione diretta agli incontri di Ascona." ("There is no doubt that Thomas Mann was also very significantly influenced by the spiritual constellation of Eranos, and that notwithstanding his lack of direct participation to the Ascona meetings.") Belloni focuses on Mann's relationship with Karl Kerényi and Heinrich Zimmer, but he also attended the meetings in Darmstadt.

74
Christiane Zimmer attended Eranos in 1934, 1938, and 1939. The fourth time she came, in 1948, Zimmer was not a lecturer.

75
It is worth pointing out that less than 5% of speakers at Eranos between 1933 and 1988 were women (7 out of 154). They almost exclusively spoke in the 1930s (Charlotte A. Baynes in 1937, Vera C. C. Collum in 1938, Caroline A. F. Rhys-Davids every year between 1933 and 1936) and in the 1970s (Marie-Louise von Franz in 1978 and 1985, Aniela Jaffé four times between 1971 and 1975, Kathleen Raine in 1968 and 1975, and Hildemarie Streich four times between 1973 and 1979). Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn had a reputation for being particularly ill-disposed towards women. Antoine Faivre recounts in his unpublished diary on August 29, 1974, that she once asked Mrs Scholem to leave the room, while the latter was immersed in her conversation, for women had "nothing to discuss with the professors" (Hakl, *Eranos*, 95). Hakl himself, being a man of his generation, was not always particularly critical of standard gender clichés, stating for instance that the continuation of the *salon* tradition at Eranos had to do with the fact that "the female sex simply has more social skills than the male" (Hakl, *Eranos*, 5).

sion: while the 1933 attendee Hans Bethge was a poet, he was also a sinologist who earned a PhD in Romance studies and could therefore have been interested in a "meeting place for East and West."[78] Efraim Frisch, who attended in 1934, was a novelist who had undertaken studies to become a rabbi during his youth and conveniently lived in Ascona—there could of course be a combination of the different factors I am describing. Ernst Wilhelm Eschmann, who attended several times at the beginning of the 1950s, was a German playwright but also a sociologist. The case of theopoetics as a field of study combining theology and poetic analysis[79] developed by Stanley Romaine Hopper, who was a lecturer once in 1965,[80] is an excellent example of a go-between linking the spiritual and the literary.

My point is that Eranos was not particularly sought out by writers for artistic inspiration, although this could have been the case for various reasons—the picturesque setting, the content of the lectures, and the ensuing discussions. In this regard, it is significant that many of the writers who signed the guestbook attended when they had completely ceased to write. Cordula Poletti, who came in 1933, was an Italian feminist and a poet who felt unable to write during the fascist period. At the time, she was absorbed in her spiritual and theosophical interests.[81] Frances Külpe might be the best example of this category. A German Baltic writer, she signed the guestbook every year between 1930 and 1935. Her attendance is not exceedingly surprising if we consider that she had decided a few years before to settle down in Ascona. Moreover, she clearly did not envision Eranos as a potential source of inspiration for her writing, because she stopped publishing exactly in those years after a thirty-year-long career. In her 1935 signature, however, she decided to add the word *Schriftstellerin*[82] after her name. She might have done this to remind people of her status, assuming that perhaps her name would not suffice; it is also possible that she felt the need to assert her specific identity in this group where a large variety of profiles coexisted.

Finally, are there any examples of writers who might have been interested in the meetings to spark their literary inspiration? This might have been the case of Raja Rao, who signed the guestbook in 1932 when he was only 23, of David Luschnat, or of Hans Sterneder, an Austrian writer defined as both a poet and a mystic by one of the few recent publications dedicated to his oeuvre;[83] he attended in 1949.

Concluding Remarks

Literature had a paradoxical status at Eranos. To some degree, it was everywhere—in Fröbe-Kapteyn's life, in the content of the conferences, in the lives of the keynote speakers, and to a significant though irregular extent, in the lives of the attendees. Although literature ended up playing a minor, non-central, and non-coherent role at these meetings, the domination of the academic tone never quite succeeded in reducing to complete silence what was mostly due to early hesitations regarding the place of arts at Eranos. These were never completely fixed because of the interdisciplinarity entailed in the *salon* model.

Alongside these uncertainties, there is a form of coherence in the way literature was generally approached by speakers. They were not

76
Thomas Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque: Ein Chronist des 20. Jahrhunderts; Eine Biographie in Bildern und Dokumenten* (Bramsche: Rasch Verlag, 1991), 7.

77
Hakl, *Eranos*, 16.

78
Hakl, 29.

79
The Way of Transfiguration: Religious Imagination as Theopoiesis, ed. Stanley Romaine Hopper, R. Melvin Keiser, and Tony Stoneburner (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1992).

80
Stanley Romaine Hopper, "Symbolic Reality and the Poet's Task," in "Form als Aufgabe des Geistes," ed. Adolf Portmann and Rudolf Ritsema, special issue, *Eranos Jahrbuch* 34 (1965), 167–218.

81
Alessandra Cenni, "Ritratto di un'Amazzone italiana: Cordula Poletti (1885–1971)," in *Fuori della norma: Storie lesbiche nell'Italia della prima metà del Novecento*, ed. Nerina Milletti and Luisa Passerini (Torino: Rosenberg & Sellier, 2007), 43–71.

82
The German for "writer."

83
Thomas Eich, *Hans Sterneder, Dichter und Mystiker: Leben und Schaffen eines außergewöhnlichen Schriftstellers* (Werlenbach: Eich, 2008).

interested in literature for its own sake; that is, its stylistics or aesthetics. Because literature served rhetorical purposes independent of it, it was mainly envisioned as a tool serving as an example in the context of a theological, psychological, and/or philosophical argument.

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Reminiscences of Eranos in Naja Marie Aidt's Novel *When Death Takes Something from You Give It Back: Carl's Book*

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Abstract
Danish author Naja Marie Aidt tragically lost her 25-year-old son Carl in 2015. Her book *When Death Takes Something from You Give It Back: Carl's Book* (2017) is a powerful example of trauma literature. But it is also a spiritual exploration of loss of meaning and language and the process of creating new meaning. On the cover of *Carl's Book* is a meditative drawing by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, *The Central Spiritual Sun.* Aidt thanks the Fondazione Eranos, Ascona for the permission to reproduce the drawing, but otherwise does not mention Eranos in the book. Nevertheless, this paper argues that Eranos provides a key to understanding Aidt's criticism of New Age metaphysics and strategies of re-enchantment. Apart from the obvious reference to Eranos on the cover, the paper explores the following four themes connected to Eranos: "Antiquity and Myth," "Jungian Dreams and the Romantic Unconscious," "The Vision in the Rothko-Chapel (Perennialism, Synchronicity)," and "Shamanism."

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Naja Marie Aidt (b. 1963) is one of the most acclaimed living Danish authors. In 2008, she received the Nordic Council Literature Prize for the collection of short stories *Baboon* (*Bavian,* 2006), and in 2022 she received the Swedish Academy's Nordic Prize (the so-called "little Nobel Prize"). In 2017, Aidt published the autobiographical book *When Death Takes Something from You Give It Back: Carl's Book* about the tragic death of her 25-year-old son, Carl Emil. The book appeared in an English translation by Denise Newman in 2019 and was longlisted for the National Book Award the same year. Aidt portrays both Carl and her relationship with him and the experience of devastating grief following his death in March 2015, but *Carl's Book* is also a meta-poetic novel about the loss of language in the face of trauma and the tentative and fragmented process towards being able to write again. The novel is a mosaic of different genres combining diary pages, poems, prose, dictionary entries, dreams, messages, recollections, and Carl's notes. Graphically, the book is experimental since it uses a wide variety of different fonts and layouts.

Fig. 1. Naja Marie Aidt and Carl twenty-years-old. Private photo of the author.

There are, however, narrative elements that create progression in the seemingly shattered pieces. Firstly, there is a chronological progression in Aidt's motherly recollections of her son, from the uterine stage until his death at the age of twenty-five and thereafter. (Although the book is not strictly chronological.) The primary progressive element, however, is the description of the primal trauma of receiving the message of Carl's death. In the first half of the book, the description of this specific dreadful evening is set in italics and is repeated again and again, each time adding more text. This structure mimics the process of grief itself where flashbacks of the primal trauma haunt the victim repeatedly.[1] In the second half of the book, the events following the evening of the message are narrated (graphically indicated by the continuous use of italics).

Carl's Book is characterized by an ambivalence concerning the

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The page's numbers in parentheses after citations refer to: Naja Marie Aidt, *When Death Takes Something from You Give It Back: Carl's Book*, trans. Denise Newman (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2019).

1

Auður Aðalsteinsdóttir, "Tavshed og skrift(emål): Ar og lidelsens gentagelse i Auður Avas værker," *Nordica* 35 (2018): 23–35.

spiritual or mythical as such (which is positively connotated) and spiritual *explanations* or *justifications* (which are negatively connotated). In a book about grief, this is understandable. The loss implies a radical sense of meaninglessness and disenchantment. The emotional response to the loss is grief, depression, and anger. And Aidt's anger is directed at soothing frameworks of meaning of *any* kind, which is the reason why she graphically "screams" her anti-religious creed in capital letters:

> I BELIEVE IN NOTHING, NOT IN HEAVEN, HELL, GOD, HEALING, PAST LIVES, I SPIT ON ALL FOOLISH NOTIONS, I DON'T BELIEVE IN HADES, THE LAW OF KARMA, AFTERLIFE, TRANSMIGRATION, I SPIT ON ALL OF IT, I RAGE WITH THE DEEPEST CONTEMPT, I DON'T BELIEVE IN FATE, ASTROLOGY, CONTACT WITH THE DEAD, GHOSTS, ANGELS, I VOMIT OVER ALL OF IT, I SCREAM FULL OF THE DEEPEST CONTEMPT, I SAY FUCK THAT SHIT, THERE'S ONLY LIFE AND DEATH, LIFE AND DEATH, I ONLY BELIEVE IN GENTLENESS, WHEN WE CARE FOR THE DEAD BODY, WHEN WE ARE FORCED TO PART WITH IT; THE COMMUNITY.

This stylistically and orthographically raw passage is an example of what Aidt calls "shock-language"—it is a consequence of her grief sentiment: "Nothing is real. Language is emptied of meaning" (72). Aidt's anti-creed can be interpreted as a criticism of New Age metaphysics, but not of all spirituality. It is an outburst of anger comparable to another passage—also in uppercase—where Aidt writes:

> "I AM FURIOUS OVER BEING ISOLATED IN MY SORROW I HATE ART I HATE EVERYTHING I'VE WRITTEN ABOUT DEATH IN THE PAST OFTEN I STAY IN THE APARTMENT THE WHOLE DAY I SIT IN THE DARK I SIT IN THE DARK I DON'T READ I DON'T WRITE I DON'T LISTEN TO MUSIC" (28).

Here, Aidt describes how she—in her sorrow—hates art, literature, and reading. Just as the anti-creed, this passage must be taken *cum grano salis*. Aidt rejects inauthentic art, spirituality, and even her own earlier writings on death. Nevertheless, in a situation of unbearable loss, Aidt finds a path back to meaning and writing through spiritual and "re-enchanting" literature. In this paper, I will look at Aidt's strategies of re-enchantment. My thesis is that Eranos might provide a key to understanding these strategies.

The connection with Eranos stems from the cover of *Carl's Book,* a drawing by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn. On the copyright page, Aidt credits the Fondazione Eranos, Ascona for granting permission to reproduce the painting. Most readers will hardly notice this reference, but "the spirit of Eranos" might help us understand the spirituality of the novel.[2] The founder of Eranos was Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881–1962) who was born to Dutch parents but lived most of her life in Ascona in Switzerland on the shores of Lago Maggiore. From 1933 onwards, she

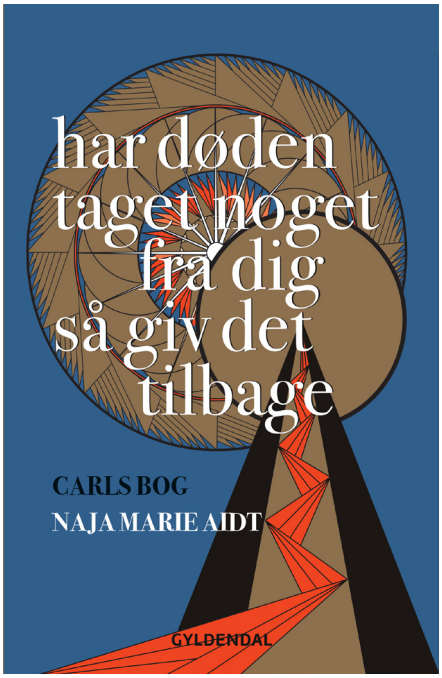

Fig. 2. Cover of *Har døden taget noget fra dig så giv det tilbage: Carls bog*, Naja Marie Aidt, 2017.

2 Eranos was, of course, not entirely homogenous. However, a spiritual understanding of the psyche and an openness to mystical experiences (also in an East-West perspective), along with a critique of materialist reductionism and rationalism, seem to have been generally accepted premises.

held yearly gatherings in her stately villa in which many of the most prominent scholars of religion took part. The most important figure until the end of World War II was the Swiss psychologist C. G. Jung. After World War II, famous scholars such as Joseph Campbell, Gershom Scholem, Henry Corbin, and Mircea Eliade attended the yearly meetings. From 1933 to 1937, the Eranos meetings were dedicated to a comparatist East-West perspective. From 1938 to 1944, the theme was "Gnosis and the Mysteries." In 1945 to 1946, the theme was "Spirit and its Relation to Nature." From 1947 to 1962, the year of Fröbe Kapteyn's death, the theme was "The Human Being."[3]

Fröbe-Kapteyn, Jung, and the other scholars of Eranos shared a vision of cultural and spiritual renewal. They combined "the widespread nostalgia for an enchanted worldview with strong emphasis on an 'inner' spiritual dimension as a means of escape from [in Eliade's words] 'the terror of history.' "[4] Eranos could help us understand Aidt's aversion towards New Age metaphysics. According to Wouter Hanegraaff, "modern forms of occultism such as Theosophy and Anthroposophy or its countless 'New Age' derivations are profoundly *explanatory* systems of thought. They promise to explain exactly, often in meticulous detail, how everything works at all levels of reality, both visible and invisible."[5] This ideal of "becoming an adept and attain a state of perfectly enlightened consciousness in which ultimately no question will remain unanswered" differs from the "spirit of Eranos," which was not explanatory but profoundly *hermeneutic*. Its concern was not to explain but to *understand*, for whereas explanatory approaches are driven by a desire for ultimate epistemic closure, Eranos was motivated by hopes and experiences of *disclosure*."[6] Throughout *Carl's Book*, Aidt's spirituality is in accordance with the attitude of Eranos. She never *explains* spiritual events, maintaining an open, probing, inquiring approach and remaining always willing to put any model of reality into question.

The following five elements are tied together through thematical proximity to the spiritual project of Eranos:

a) The Fröbe-Kapteyn-Cover of the Book (*The Central Spiritual Sun*)
b) Antiquity and Myth
c) Jungian Dreams and the Romantic Unconscious
d) Rothko Chapel (Perennialism)
e) Shamanism

All these five elements constitute an attempt at re-enchantment, of returning to writing, of creating new meaning.

Fröbe-Kapteyn's Cover of the Book (*The Central Spiritual Sun*)

The cover of *Carl's Book* is a "meditative drawing" by Fröbe-Kapteyn, *The Central Spiritual Sun*.[7] The painting stems from Fröbe-Kapteyn's theosophical phase where she collaborated with Alice Ann Bailey, who produced theosophical books channeled by the so-called Tibetan—a non-physical master—and which have been influential in theosophical and, later, new age movements.[8] The paintings Fröbe-Kapteyn

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According to Hanegraaff, the themes were less homogenous from 1963 to 1988. Cf. Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Generous Hermeneutics: Hans Thomas Hakl and Eranos," *Religiographies* 2, no. 1 (2023): 72.

4
Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Western Esotericism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 67.

5
Hanegraaff, "Generous Hermeneutics," 73.

6
Hanegraaff, 73.

7
The drawing was used in the call for papers and posters for the conference: "The Eranos Experience: Spirituality and the Arts from a Comparative Perspective," November 17–19, 2022, at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore) in Venice. The conference was organized jointly by Fondazione Giorgio Cini (Francesco Piraino) and the Centre for the History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents (Marco Pasi) in collaboration with the Chair for Literature and Cultural Studies at the ETH (Andreas Kilcher), Zürich.

8
On the connection between Bailey's Theosophy and New Age, cf. Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 95, 157.

produced between 1926 and 1943 seem to combine two-dimensional geometrical forms with esoteric symbolism—reminiscent of Hilma af Klint, whose style was also characterized by the cultural code of esotericism, especially Theosophy, geometrical shapes, and an artistic process involving mediumship or at least, in the case of Fröbe-Kapteyn, meditation.[9] In a broader context, Fröbe-Kapteyn belongs to the well-documented nexus of modern art and esotericism, which was the theme of the two great pioneering exhibitions: *The Spiritual in Art*[10] at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1986, and *Okkultismus und Avantgarde* in Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt am Main in 1995.[11] As in the case of Vassily Kandinsky, the role of the artist was comparable to a seer or clairvoyant conquering new frontiers in the vast totality of the universe. This worldview—where the limit between the seen and the unseen, the visible and invisible—is not fixed. For it was conceived by the spiritual modernists as a holistic alternative to scientific materialism and to the radical dualism between immanence and transcendence in traditional monotheism and institutionalized religion.[12]

The title of Fröbe-Kapteyn's meditative painting, *The Central Spiritual Sun*, is closely connected with the theosophist Bailey and her reception of Madame Blavatsky. In the appendix of *Esoteric Astrology* from 1936, Bailey quotes passages about the "central spiritual sun" from *The Secret Doctrine* by Blavatsky. Blavatsky's ideas about the sun sound like a kind of esoteric Platonism: the physical Sun is regarded as "only a reflection of *the Central Spiritual Sun*,"[13] and "the dwelling or the vehicle of a god, and a host of gods."[14] The physical sun is also called *shadow*—a rather obvious reference to Plato's allegory of the cave. Only here, Plato's divine metaphor, the sun itself, is split into a "central spiritual" version and an earthly "shadow" version. It would, however, be simplistic to reduce the Theosophic cosmogony to its dualistic Platonic aspect. Most spiritual worldviews from the nineteenth century until New Age and modern spiritualities have been monistic—not in the sense of monistic scientific "materialism," but in the sense of a Duo-Unity comprised of a sensuous and a supersensuous half where the limit of perception is not fixed once and for all.

Fröbe-Kapteyn's meditative drawing does, indeed, refer to Blavatsky's cosmology in the sense that it depicts two versions of the sun: one modest circle and, behind it, a more luminous and visually complex circular form, the so-called "central spiritual sun." Striving towards the earthly sun, there is, in the foreground, a volcanic symbol where, in the middle of the triangular shape, red magma is zigzagging upwards.

Choosing this image as the front page of her book is a spiritual signal. However, the theosophical background should not be overstressed. Rather, the drawing should be seen as a spiritual artwork in a more general way. Hence, the "central spiritual sun" could be interpreted as the divine essence of Aidt's son Carl. This is further accentuated by the butterfly on the title page (which is even promoted to the front page in the American edition). In the book itself, Aidt explains: "The Greek word for butterfly is psyche, which also means soul. And so when Socrates speaks about the soul, the butterfly follows along. A beautiful shadow fluttering inside the word soul. / *Metamorphosis* /

9
Hilma af Klint's works were widely unknown to the public—I am, therefore, not talking about influence. It is, however, no coincidence that the two female artists have been exhibited together as pioneers of abstraction in art, e.g., at the ambitious exhibition "Women in Abstraction" at the Centre Pompidou in 2021.

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Tuchman Maurice et al., eds., *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1986).

11
Veit Loers, ed., *Okkultismus und Avantgarde: Von Munch bis Mondrian, 1900–1915* (Ostfildern: Edition Tertium, 1995). Exhibition catalog, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, June 3–August 20 1995.

12
Cf. Gísli Magnússon, "Visionary Mimesis and Occult Modernism in Literature and Art Around 1900," in *The Occult in Modernist Art, Literature, and Cinema*, ed. Tessel M. Baduin and Henrik Johnsson, Palgrave Studies in New Religions and Alternative Spiritualities (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 49–66.

13
H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. 1, *Cosmogenesis* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1988), 100.

14
H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, 1:479.

Transformation" (37); whereby the central spiritual sun and the butterfly seem thematically connected in as far as they both point to the transition from the physical to the immaterial or spiritual. And this ancient Greek theme leads us to the next chapter.

Myth and Antiquity

The second element connecting Aidt with Eranos is her interest in myth and antiquity. To Jung, Eliade, Campbell, and Kerényi—and the circle of Eranos as such—myth was no mere relic of the past nor an expression of dangerous irrationality. Rather, they considered the revival of myth "a kind of 'therapeutic' necessity for modern man"—as Wouter Hanegraaff formulates it.[15] The need for this therapy arose from the utterly depressing wasteland of positivism, the strong belief that anything but disenchanted scientific truth could be reduced to superstition and wishful thinking.

15
Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 305.

Fig. 3. Naja Marie Aidt and Carl one-year-old. Private photo of the author.

Having lost her son in a terrible way, Aidt is confronted with the question of her culture's ability to deal with death and grief. If Aidt had been satisfied with the existing Christian rites or scientific lack of rites, she would hardly have started her ambivalent spiritual search. Aidt does not polemize against the mechanical rites of Christianity nor the meaninglessness of disenchanted modern reality. Her criticism of culture expresses itself in another way: she sets out on a search for authentic spirituality and finds it in spiritual poetry, art, dreams, myths, and ancient philosophy. She explores Socrates's notion of the soul and what survives death. She seeks solace in the ancient Mesopotamian epic of *Gilgamesh*. The deep significance of this earliest literature about grief for Aidt is unquestionable—it is one of the most elaborate accounts of reading in her novel. She writes: "Gilgamesh has immense power. The text has traveled through thousands of years, and it's hard to fathom how it still carries so much clarity and strength. It's blazed through time like a literary fireball, full of passion and desperation, bearing

witness to the fact that as far back as four thousand years, people considered the pain of loss and death the hardest, most significant experience in a person's life" (67). We find a similar appraisal of the power of myth for modern man in Joseph Campbell's *Myths to Live By*: "Our outward-oriented consciousness, addressed to the demands of the day, may lose touch with these inward forces; and the myths, states Jung, when correctly read, are the means to bring us back in touch. They are telling us in picture language of powers of the psyche to be recognized and integrated in our lives, powers that have been common to the human."[16]

The family mythology seems to be ancient Greek rather than Christian. At the funeral, Aidt's eldest son, Frederik Heurlin Aidt, used the description of the tragic hero from the *Poetics* of Aristotle to characterize Carl: "The tragic element begins when the hero commits *hamartia*, a fatal flaw or a fatal miscalculation . . . When Carl purchased and grew his own hallucinogenic mushrooms, it was not his intention to take his life or do any harm. Carl had taken mushrooms before with positive effects. Now he wanted to go one step further and grow completely organic ones, to obtain a true and natural high. But the miscalculation in the tragedy is the triggering factor for *peripeteia*—a reversal of fortune . . . Carl's reversal of fortune occurred when his homegrown organic mushrooms triggered a drug-induced psychosis. During his psychosis, he undressed, opened the window, took a running start, and jumped out into the night. A seemingly harmless action started a cascade of events that ended in his death" (73–74). Carl's elder brother interprets Carl's life as a tragic hero's journey and thereby evokes the classical tragic feelings of "pity" and "terror," the prerequisite of catharsis. This framing endows the otherwise meaningless with tragic meaning, which in this context is an alternative to the state mythology of Denmark: Lutheran Christianity.

Greek mythology appears frequently in *Carl's Book.* Aidt apostrophizes Carl to tell him about the Greek goddess Mnemosyne, Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, and Hades, the realm of death. She commends him not to drink from Lethe, for he would then have to be reborn, but to rest and enjoy Elysium's green fields of eternity. Aidt's family gave Carl a coin for the ferryman, but Aidt adds that they do not believe anything ("and yet we gave you a coin," 101). Aidt continues her apostrophe, telling Carl about the Orphic gold tablet found in Hipponion, Calabria, where the text guides the dead to drink from Mnemosyne's pool. Aidt even takes the Greek notion of reincarnation and applies it to the modern world, which is described in a pessimistic Schopenhauerian or Buddhist way as a "noisy stage, this aimless place of desire and greed, meaninglessness and repression, violence, and the endless repetition of folly and stupidity, naiveté, and gruesomeness. Generation after generation. May you not be reborn, may you not have to start over with empty shining eyes, learning everything all over, only to die again" (103). But again, she adds that she does not believe in anything. This is the Romantic/postromantic interpretation of myth: it is not a belief system but rather a symbolic way of transcending rational knowledge. And this was the way the Eranos scholars Jung, Campbell, Eliade, and Kerényi conceived of myth as well.

16 Joseph Campbell, *Myths to Live by* (New York: Penguin Compass, 1993), 14.

Jungian Dreams and the Romantic Unconscious

Despite her skepticism and ambivalence towards many forms of spirituality (especially New Age metaphysics), Aidt does perceive literature and dreams as ways of reaching knowledge beyond the limits of the rational intellect and the scientific paradigm of natural science. This line of tradition originated in antiquity with the idea of the *poeta vates*, the poet-seer or prophetic poet. During the era of Romanticism and later in Symbolism, the *poeta vates* became an important figure. One could mention William Blake, Novalis, Nerval and symbolist poets such as William Butler Yeats, Stefan George, and Rainer Maria Rilke.[17] And there is no doubt that this interpretation of the poet lived on in the Eranos circle. In the Eranos Yearbook from 1951, the psychologist and Jung student Erich Neumann quoted a passage from the mytho-poetical *Duino Elegies* by Rainer Maria Rilke about the earth "re-arising" invisibly in us: "The need of his times works inside the artist without his wanting it, seeing it, or understanding its true significance. In this sense he is close to the seer, the prophet, the mystic. And it is precisely when he does not represent the existing canon but transforms and overturns it that his function rises to the level of the sacral, for he then gives utterance to the authentic and direct revelation of the numinosum."[18] Aidt aligns directly with the *poeta vates* tradition when she chooses a central passage from Rilke's *Tenth Duino Elegy* about the "Land of Lament" (the realm of the dead) for the motto of *Carl's Book*.[19]

Where should we situate Aidt's perception of the unconscious in the spectrum of psychological theories? Micha Brumlik summarizes the differences between the "Enlightenment" theories and "Romantic" theories as follows:

- Whereas the Enlightenment theories of depth psychology claim a sharp border between the conscious and the unconscious, the Romantic theories assume gradual transitions.

- Whereas the Enlightenment theories assume that a subjectivity worthy of its name is based on conscious . . . self-transparency, the Romantic theories build on a physical-mental-spiritual unity whose components can, of course, temporarily separate, but are in principle controlled by a *single* law of development.

- Whereas the Enlightenment theories primarily consider the unconscious a threat and a force that restricts autonomy, the Romantic theories perceive it as a motivational background that enables and guides conscious action.

- Finally, the Romantic theories see an enriching potential for expression in the unconscious, whereas the Enlightenment theories examine its expression more as a corrupt text.[20]

If we juxtapose the Freudian and Jungian traditions, it should be easy to discern that it is Jung's Romantic unconscious rather Freud's understanding of the unconscious as repressed instincts which leads to Naja Marie Aidt's accounts of prophetic poems and precognitive dreams.

17
On this specific line of tradition, see Martina Kind, *Pilger und Prophet: Heilige Autorschaft bei Rainer Maria Rilke* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 77–83.

18
Joseph Campbell, ed, *Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, vol. 3, *Man and Time* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 13.

19
The constellations of the Land of Laments can be perceived as a link between the realm of the living and the dead. One of the constellations is "The Mothers"—an archetype which is highly symbolic for Carl's Book. Thus, important themes of the book are inherent in the motto: Grief and its transformation to poetry (constellations), and the contact between the living and the dead: "And higher, the stars. The new stars of the land of grief. / Slowly the Lament names them:—Look, there: / the *Rider*, the *Staff*, and the larger constellation / called *Garland of Fruit*. Then, farther up toward the Pole: / *Cradle*; *Path*; *The Burning Book*; *Puppet*; *Window*. / But there, in the southern sky, pure as the lines / on the palm of a blessed hand, the clear sparkling *M* / that stands for Mothers . . . —" Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Vintage International, 1989), 209.

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Micha Brumlik, *C. G. Jung zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2004), 32–33. My translation from German.

On her prophetic poetry, Aidt writes: "I read the two poems out loud at your funeral. I realized that as early as when you were one year old, I received a sign in my dream that you would vanish from me. As early as when you were sixteen years old, I saw you hiding in death's dark hood. That I had already predicted the eternity that would replace your life, the eternity I now live with, and which you are absorbed by. Just as I dreamed that you fell and hurt yourself shortly before you fell to your death from the fifth floor" (113). Aidt adds: "But images and signs cannot be interpreted before they're played out in concrete events. You only understand them in retrospect. That's why omens can only be expressed. As language, as poetry. It becomes an experience that belongs to the future, which can express, though it is not yet experienced in reality. That's what poetry does sometimes. And it's one of its most beautiful qualities. It's also what makes poetry dangerous and portentous. The feeling of knowing something that you can't understand yet or connect to anything in reality. As if poetry makes it possible to move freely in time, as if linear time is suspended while you write and a corner of the future becomes visible in a brief and mystical moment" (113–14). Jung expresses a similar perspective when he characterizes dreams in the following way: "That the prospective function of dreams is sometimes greatly superior to the combinations we can consciously foresee is not surprising, since a dream results from the fusion of subliminal elements and is thus a combination of all the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings which consciousness has not registered because of their feeble accentuation . . . With regard to prognosis, therefore, dreams are often in a much more favorable position than consciousness."[21] Clearly, Aidt does not subscribe to the enlightenment theories that primarily consider the unconscious a threat and a power that restricts autonomy; rather, she subscribes to the Romantic theories that consider the unconscious to be a motivational background that enables and guides conscious action.[22]

21
Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 8, *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Adler and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 255.

22
Cf. Gísli Magnússon, "Spirituelle Psychologie," in *Dichtung als Erfahrungsmetaphysik: Esoterische und okkultistische Modernität bei R. M. Rilke* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009), 238–53.

Rothko Chapel and Perennialism

It is structurally significant that Aidt, right after the anti-spiritual creed in capital letters, where she denies all spiritual attempts of making sense of Carl's death, writes an account of a visit to Mark Rothko's Chapel in Houston, Texas. Aidt writes that the "trip took place many months before I began to write a single word" (50). The experience is in other words a prerequisite for being able to be an author again—after the trauma robbed her of literary language altogether. *The Central Spiritual Sun* by Fröbe-Kapteyn likely served a similar purpose. Here, the connection to Eranos is at least obvious. Aidt describes the chapel as the artist's *opus magnum*. The fourteen paintings of the chapel were finished from 1964 to 1967. The chapel was finished in 1971, a year after Rothko's suicide. As are Rothko's paintings in general, they are monochrome and, therefore, well suited for meditation. Aidt writes: "As the light changes during the course of the day, the appearance of the paintings keeps shifting" (51).

Aidt describes the chapel as a perennialistic space: "The chapel is exceptional because it isn't associated with any specific religion. It's for everyone, believers and nonbelievers, Christians, Muslims, Jews,

Buddhists, atheists, Hindus, and so on—it's for all people on earth. There's nothing in the chapel except Rothko's paintings and a few wooden benches placed around the room. In a side entrance, the sacred texts of different religions are set out on a table. Rothko was not religious. People come here to meditate, pray, grieve, relax. And they come to see Rothko's work" (51). Perennialism is the idea that there is a common spiritual core behind the exoteric veil of the different religious traditions. Undoubtedly, the specific Rothkoian perennialism is indebted to Romanticism during which art for the first time took the place of religion, a re-enchantment that has been available to artists ever since.[23] According to Aaron Rose in the art magazine *Apollo*, Rothko "hoped his works would spark significant spiritual encounters in the manner of the great religious masterpieces of the past."[24] Aidt describes the contemplation of the Rothko paintings as a journey into the visionary realm of imagination: "I sat down on a bench and looked at the paintings. I sat there for two hours. After the first glance, shapes gradually began to emerge. I saw birds, the sea, fish. I saw skulls and faces. I saw trees and clouds. A long row of people bent over. And then I saw Carl. Half-turned away, his long hair down his back. I wanted to crawl into the painting to him. Then he disappeared, and I saw the moonlight, deer, and turtles. Giant flowers, their whiteness vibrating in the similarly vibrating darkness . . . I was thinking maybe the figures that emerged from Rothko's paintings reminded me of how one sees while hallucinating" (51). In a meditative state, staring at a painting, she established a kind of visionary contact with Carl; she could "see" him. Here, the cultural context of Eranos provides a framework that can help us understand what Aidt means when she writes about "seeing while hallucinating." The visionary technique of Aidt can be related to Carl Gustav Jung whose active imagination is a means of accessing subconscious contents of the psyche. Images and artworks can trigger active imagination—as the Rothko paintings do in Aidt's case. Active imagination has been described as akin to the hypnagogic state between waking and sleeping: "Although reflective self-consciousness, the ability to exert effort, logical thinking, and reality-testing are always suspended as advanced hypnagogic states blend into sleep, active imagination reverses the process of relaxation by initiating conscious interaction with the unconscious manifestations. Active imagination may be considered a lucid hypnagogic state, whose relation to ordinary hypnagogia compares with the relation of lucid dreams to ordinary dreams."[25] According to Jung's autobiography, this technique also allowed him to communicate with a non-physical being, Philemon, a guru-like figure he experienced as a separate intelligence whom he was able to communicate with and receive guidance from.[26]

Another way of interpreting the art-induced vision can be found in the works of the Eranos scholar Henri Corbin. Based on his knowledge of Sufi spirituality, he coined the term *mundus imaginalis*, an "imaginal" world that mediates between the sensory and divine realms. The latter can be accessed through active imagination, which needs images (e.g., mandalas and symbols). Rothko's abstract spiritual artworks are also well suited for this purpose. The *mundus imaginalis* is the realm where a vision of the deceased can occur without being dismissed as mere phantasy. The *mundus imaginalis* has been linked

23
In early ("Jena") romanticism, religion was detached from church and dogma and aestheticized. This also meant that artists and artworks were perceived in a new way. Instead of being subordinate to the rite and religious teaching, the artwork spiritually became an end in itself. Spiritual art was taken out of church and out of the marketplace and placed in a temple devoted to the religion of art. Art is, thus, not a means to a religious end, but the object of worship itself. When Wackenroder writes that the artworks should not be brought back into the churches, but should receive their own temples, he designates a line of tradition that leads to Rothko's "art chapel" in Houston. This postconfessional worship of art and music in museums and concert halls is not alien to many museum guests and concertgoers today. Cf. Stefan Matuschek, *Der gedichtete Himmel: Eine Geschichte der Romantik* (München: C. H. Beck, 2021), 145–63.

24
Aaron Rosen, "Leap of faith—how Mark Rothko reimagined religious art for the modern age." https://www.apollo-magazine.com/rothko-chapel-houston-modernism-religion/.

25
Dan Merkur, *Gnosis: An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993).

26
Carl Gustav Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989): Jung describes how "Philemon" arose from the unconscious: "Philemon was a pagan and brought with him an Egypto-Hellenistic atmosphere with a Gnostic coloration" (182). It was important to Jung that Philemon was not just his own fiction: "Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life. Philemon represented a force which was not myself. In my fantasies I held conversations with him, and he said things which I had not consciously thought" (183).

to Aidt's self-proclaimed "family religion": shamanism. Within this interpretative framework, spirits are regarded as an intrinsic part of reality. In a trance state, shamans are thought to be able to perceive and interact with spirits.[27] In the words of Richard Noll, "[t]hose beings are not imaginary in the sense of not being real, pure phantasy, or artificially made up. They are *imaginal*, existing in a realm of experience in which they inhabit a reality of their own, a *mundus imaginalis* or 'imaginal world,' as Henri Corbin (1972)[28] deems it, which is co-existent with the mundane experiential world of our ordinary state of waking consciousness."[29] The vision of Aidt could—and this is emphasized by her strong emotional reaction to the vision—be interpreted as an encounter taking place in the mesocosmos, the *mundus imaginalis*.

The Jungian analyst and scholar Marie Louise von Franz made an interesting observation about the phenomenology of active imagination: "There is a chance that markedly synchronistic events will occur."[30] This means that practice of active imagination makes it more likely for meaningful coincidences to happen.[31] And Aidt describes a synchronistic event occurring right after the vision of Carl: "I could not stop crying. But it was a welcomed crying after many weeks of suppression. It had been necessary to suppress my tears to do the book tour. I needed to cry. I got up and went out and started looking at the books that were set out. I picked up *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* and opened it to a page at random and read the section, 'The helplessness as you observe your living family.' It is about how the dead are unable to make contact with the living. I went out into the sunshine, out in the Texan heat, walking across the lawns, I cried and cried" (51). *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* was written by Sogyal Rinpoche in 1992 and presents core ideas from *Tibetan Book of the Dead* or *Bardo Thödol* in a modern way.[32] Aidt owns a copy of the same book in her residence in New York: "When I got home, I saw that Carl had dog-eared that exact passage in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* when he plowed through it while staying with us in New York. 'The helplessness as you observe your living family.' I was thinking that it's we who are helpless, because we cannot hear our dead. I read, according to the book of death, you become part of the wind, after going through several stages of becoming a soul. // *Are you part of the wind*?"[33] (52). The artworks of Rothko mediate contact with Carl that is accentuated by the "meaningful coincidence" of mother and son "communicating" through the same passage from *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. Aidt could not have known beforehand that Carl had dog-eared the exact same passage in her own copy of the book. Accordingly, Aidt seems to indicate a framework of interpretation resembling the Jungian notion of *synchronicity*, acausal connectedness.[34] The whole concept of synchronicity is aimed at the rational worldview, which relies on causality and natural laws. It is part of Jung's criticism of spiritual culture.[35] Jung presented the concept at the 1951 Eranos conference—a cultural setting where he would be certain to be received positively. In an interview with Mircea Eliade, who as a scholar of religion was also closely connected to Eranos, Jung described the phenomenon in the following way: "Religious experience is numinous, as Rudolf Otto calls it, and for me, as a psychologist, this experience differs from all others in the way it transcends the

27
Cf. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (London: Arkana, 1989), 88.

28
Henri Corbin, "Mundus imaginalis, or The imaginary and the imaginal," *Spring: An annual of archetypal psychology and Jungian thought* (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 1972), 1–19.

29
Richard Noll, "The Presence of Spirits in Magic and Madness," in *Shamanism: An Expanded View of Reality*, ed. Shirley Nicholson (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1987), 52.

30
Marie-Louise von Franz, "On Active Imagination," in *Methods of Treatment in Analytical Psychology*, ed. Ian F. Baker (Fellbach: Verlag Adolf Bonz, 1980), 80. Quoted from Merkur, *Gnosis*, 43.

31
In the words of Dan Merkur: "[T]he practice of active imagination increases the likelihood that random coincidences will be found personally meaningful and regarded as providential miracles." Merkur, Gnosis, 43–44.

32
Bardo Thödol means "Liberation in the Intermediate State Through Hearing" in Tibetan.

33
The probing way in which Aidt asks if Carl "is the wind" testifies to her non-dogmatic attitude towards religious belief systems.

34
In a collaboration with the quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli, Jung developed a theory about "acausal connectedness": "Jung did provide some paradigmatic clinical experiences about synchronicity. His most famous example was of a young woman whose analysis was in a bit of impasse based on her resistance to the notion of unconscious process until she had a dream that included a golden scarab (as a piece of jewelry). In discussing the dream, Jung was alerted to a tapping sound at his window, which he opened. He caught a rose chafer, a Scarabaeid beetle, that he gave to the woman, apparently breaking through her resistance." Joseph Cambray, *Synchronicity*: *Nature and Psyche in an Interconnected Universe* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 7.

35
Roderick Main highlights the cultural critical aspect of synchronicity: "[S]ynchronicity suggests that there are uncaused events, that matter has a psychic aspect, that the psyche can relativise time and space, and that there may be a dimension of objective meaning accessible to but not created by humans. The implications of all or any of this are far-reaching. If there are uncaused events, particularly at the level of ordinary human experience, this means that our familiar forms of explanation in terms of later events being caused by earlier ones will have to be supplemented. If matter has an

ordinary categories of space, time, and causality. Recently I have put a great deal of study into synchronicity (briefly, the 'rupture of time'), and I have established that it closely resembles numinous experiences where space, time, and causality are abolished."[36] Here, Jung establishes a connection between synchronicity and numinous experience that sheds light on Aidt's epiphany and subsequent synchronicity. Aidt's cathartic response bears witness to the deep emotional and spiritual impact of the vision.

Shamanism

One of the most obvious correspondences between Eranos and *Carl's Book* is shamanism. Shamanism entered the spiritual context of Eranos through the work of Mircea Eliade. His monograph *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* exerted an enormous influence that endures to this day.[37] In a conversation with Eliade at the Eranos Conference in 1952, Jung said that the "modern world is desacralized, that is why it is in a crisis. Modern man must rediscover a deeper source of his own spiritual life."[38] By synthesizing different traditions of shamanism, Eliade anticipates the *neoshamanism* that would flourish from the 1960s onwards. Since Aidt does not define a specific shamanistic tradition, she is aligned with this modernized version of shamanism.

Since Aidt is a poet, it is also interesting that the poet has been interpreted as a kind of shaman—a role not so different from the *poeta vates*. One prominent example is the *Glas Bead Game* from 1943 for which Hesse received the Nobel Prize in literature. Here, he lets his *magister ludi* (bead game master) remember or imagine an earlier existence as a shaman.[39] Without a doubt, Hesse sought to outline similarities between the shaman, the bead game master, and the poet.

In *Carl's Book*, Aidt narrates how for three generations, there has been a shamanic tradition in her family—especially on the paternal side: "A week before you died you went on your first shamanic journey, your first dream journey. Your grandfather guided you. Since I was a teenager, we have traveled in this way in my family, because my father was into it in the 1980s. Shamanism can be used for a lot of things. We used it especially for healing, both mental and physical. Once, when your older brother was still a boy, he had a huge cluster of warts on his hand. My father helped him find the animal that could remove the warts. It was a rat. During a dream journey, your older brother saw a rat biting off the warts. The next morning all the warts fell off in the sink as he washed his hands" (31). Aidt also describes a shamanic dream of a friend of Carl who had trained as a shaman. During this dream journey, as Aidt calls it, the friend sees Carl walking "*in the green forest with a tiger*" (31). Aidt writes: "When I was pregnant with you I saw that you were a baby tiger. A week before you died you went on your first shamanic journey. You saw that your totem animal was a tiger" (32). Aidt narrates this in a matter-of-fact way, which might surprise the reader in light of the anti-creed. The reason is the *experiential* character of shamanistic spirituality. It is clear from the rat dream that shamanistic dreams are healing people in the real world. It is not about *explanatory* metaphysics.

The primary examples of Aidt's own shamanism are related to sig-

inalienable psychic aspect, then scientific descriptions of the world that aspire towards completeness can no longer be framed solely in material terms but will have to take account of psychic properties of meaning and value. If the psyche can relativise time and space, then it becomes possible for temporally and spatially distant events somehow to involve themselves in the here and now without any normal channel of causal transmission. If there is a dimension of objective meaning, this implies that the meaning we experience is not always or entirely our subjective creation, individually or as a species, but that we may be woven into an order of meaning that transcends our human perspective." Roderick Main, *The Rupture of Time Synchronicity and Jungs Critique of Modern Western Culture* (Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), 2.

36
From Mircea Eliade's 1952 interview with C. G. Jung in 1952. Cf. W. McGuire and R. F. C. Hull, *C. G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 230.

37
Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris: Payo, 1951), english translation: *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon, 1964). Eliade's scholarly methods have been criticized by later scholars of religion: "Eliade's method is to uncritically utilize an enormous amount of published ethnographic material of varying quality that is slotted into a series of categories. He treats shamanism as the ur-religion of the distant past, and it seems unlikely that he ever met a functioning shaman. Eliade's work, in English translation, led to the popularity of his romanticized depiction of shamans among intellectuals in North America." Jordan Paper, *The Mystic Experience: A Descriptive and Comparative Analysis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 38.

38
McGuire and Hull, *C. G. Jung Speaking*, 230.

39
Hesse wrote the story "The Rainmaker" in 1934, i.e., in the early phase of the work on the novel.

nificant and symbolic dreams. We have heard about the precognitive dreams and prophetic poetry, but the shamanic dreams serve another purpose in *Carl's Book*: they are a means of contact with the dead, with Carl—just as Aidt's vision of Carl in Rothko's Chapel. As Aidt describes shamanism, it is a means of crossing the border between the physical and spiritual dimensions. Here, dream journeys play an important role. The shamanistic dreams occur with regular intervals from Carl's death on March 14, 2015, until May 16, 2016. The dreams range from somber to consoling moments of intimacy. Aidt started writing the first fragments since Carl's death on November 9. She was "rewarded" with a shamanistic or symbolic dream on November 10: "Carl is very much alive, very close to me. He is like a wheat field. The stalks blowing in the wind. Golden, strong, and ripe" (33). As if to emphasize the shamanistic element, Aidt—in a diary entry from December 9—adds: "It's his spirit I feel now. He is like a huge bird or no—his presence is heavy and strong. And also light and springy. Yes, springy. He is standing behind me, he puts his arms around me, his long hair and bare chest" (34).

The Eranos scholar Joseph Campbell described the shamanic ritual as a "spontaneously precipitated rupture with the world of common day, revealed in symptoms analogous to those of a serious breakdown: visions of dismemberment, fosterage in the world of the spirits, and restitution."[40] In the case of Aidt, the rupture leading to "a serious breakdown" was Carl's death. The British poet laureate Ted Hughes described "shamanistic suffering as a painful stage on the way to regeneration, which can be called psychic equilibrium of the shaman's community."[41] Maybe his account of the poet-shaman T. S. Eliot can be applied to Naja Marie Aidt. Ted Hughes talks about the "shaman's crucial initiatory experience of visionary dismemberment," and only "after that 'death' (and after being reassembled by divine beings) the conventional shaman can begin to turn his abnormal powers and susceptibilities to account and launch out on his poetic, dramatic, visionary, healing-trance enterprise for the benefit of his people." Carl's death was a personal disaster for Aidt and a "tribal" disaster for the close family. By writing her book, Aidt shows "the creative, redemptive activity of poetry"—as Ted Hughes calls it.[42]

Conclusion

Aidt established a connection between *Carl's Book* and Eranos when she placed *The Central Spiritual Sun* on the cover. Although there exists no such thing as a homogenous spirit of Eranos, there are common cultural and critical themes that occurred in the twentieth-century heyday of Eranos through the lectures and works of Jung, Eliade, and Campbell. *Carl's Book* is a testimony to the fact that—for contemporary authors such as Aidt—these existential and spiritual questions have not been adequately answered. Aidt, the grieving mother, was not susceptible to any metaphysical shortcuts. Aidt's anti-creed and declarations of non-believing concern *any* literal mythological belief system. She does, however, find solace in ancient myths and philosophy, spiritual poetry and art, trauma literature, and shamanistic visions and dreams.

40
Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God*, vol. 1, *Primitive Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 265.

41
Ewa Panecka, "Ted Hughes: The Poet Laureate as a Shaman," in *Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis: Studia Romanica* 3, folia 49 (2008): 58.

42
Ewa Panecka, "Ted Hughes," 58.

The Imaginal Geography of Philip Pullman's Novels

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Abstract
This paper explores the "imaginal geography" of Philip Pullman's two famous novel trilogies, *His Dark Materials* and *The Book of Dust*, especially the significance of the North, the North's relationship to the East, and the South. The word "imaginal" is used in the sense coined by Henry Corbin. In the first half of this paper, I introduce *His Dark Materials* and, briefly, Pullman's latest (unfinished) trilogy, *The Book of Dust*, which serves as both prequel and sequel to *His Dark Materials*. To appreciate the significance of the correlation between the North and the East, I argue, we need to look to Corbin's short book, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, and his redefinition of "orient," and "orientation," and even "orientalism." In the second half of the paper, I turn briefly to the imaginal South, to the Mediterranean city of Citàgazze, and the "subtle knife" (which lends its name to the second novel of *His Dark Materials*). The technology of the subtle knife is revealed to be something of a sin against the nature of reality itself, threatening the integrity of the universe. The South is not quite the scene of *original* sin, but of a subsequent sin, the sin of human hubris.

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fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus

This paper explores what I am calling the "imaginal geography" of Philip Pullman's two famous novel trilogies, *His Dark Materials* and *The Book of Dust*, especially the significance of the North, the North's relationship to the East, and the South.[1] As I explain below, I am using the word "imaginal" in the sense coined by the scholar of Islam and comparative philosopher Henry Corbin. In the first half of this paper, I introduce *His Dark Materials* and, briefly, Pullman's latest (unfinished) trilogy, *The Book of Dust*, which serves as both prequel and sequel to *His Dark Materials*. This first part focuses on the imaginal North; that is, the northern realm in that alternate world to which we are introduced in *Northern Lights* (also known as *The Golden Compass*), the first novel of *His Dark Materials*. It is a realm of armored polar bears, warring clans of witches, political intrigue reminiscent of the "Great Game," secret experiments of a diabolical church, and most importantly, the *aurora borealis* or Northern Lights themselves, which prove to be a porous portal to other worlds. This North, however, is very much correlated to the East, as evidenced in Pullman's latest novel, *The Secret Commonwealth*, second in the unfinished *The Book of Dust* trilogy. To appreciate the significance of the correlation between the North and the East, I argue, we need to look to Henry Corbin's short book, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, and his redefinition of "orient," and "orientation," and even "orientalism." But even as Corbin helps us appreciate Pullman's imaginal geography of the North and East, and the notion of the self as a unity-in-duality, it is important to register that Pullman, especially in his latest novel, *The Secret Commonwealth*, explores the theme of the self's alienation from itself in a manner that seems to go beyond Corbin, and might hint at the influence of Carl Jung.

In the second half of the paper, I turn briefly to the imaginal South, to the Mediterranean city of Citàgazze, and the "subtle knife" (which lends its name to the second novel of *His Dark Materials*) forged there by a group of philosophers who unwittingly unleased a power that threatens consciousness across all worlds. Every time the subtle knife cuts a portal between one world and another, it creates a shadowy being called a "spectre," made almost of anti-matter, which feeds on Dust. Even as the heroes of *His Dark Materials* defeat the Authority and thwart the Magesterium's diabolical aims, the "spectres" remain a wound on the conscious cosmos, whose only suture is to close all portals between worlds. The South, then, is the source of this spectral wound, and plays an imaginal counterpart to the North.

The Imaginal North

Philip Pullman's first and much-celebrated trilogy is *His Dark Materials*: it tells the story of a young girl named Lyra Belacqua, living in a world (we come to learn) that is adjacent to our own. She is at the center of a struggle for liberation, for freedom of thought and the expansion of consciousness—for her own world and for others—against the forces of a dying deity called the "Authority" and his minions, especially a repressive church called the "Magesterium." *His Dark Materials* consists of three novels: *Northern Lights* (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (1997), and *The Amber Spyglass* (2000). The trilogy introduces

1 All references to *His Dark Materials* are from the 2011 Everyman's Library edition (London, UK). *The Book of Dust* includes *La Belle Sauvage* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017) and *The Secret Commonwealth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019). This paper combines two shorter papers I gave at two conferences hosted at the Giorgio Cini Foundation in Venice: the first was entitled "The Eranos Experience: Spirituality and the Arts in a Comparative Perspective"; the second was entitled "Occultural Transfers Between North and South." I would like to thank the organizers of both conferences for the opportunity to develop this idea on both occasions, and the editors of *Religiographies* for the opportunity to publish them together as one article.

Lyra at a very particular time in her life, on the cusp of puberty, which becomes significant for the plot.

The second trilogy, *The Book of Dust*, is underway but incomplete—two of the three novels have been released. The first, *La Belle Sauvage* (2017), is set earlier than the original *His Dark Materials* trilogy, when Lyra is only an infant. The second, *The Secret Commonwealth* (2019), is set later, when she is an undergraduate at Oxford. The third has yet to appear. Once again Lyra finds herself in a struggle against the Magesterium, and yet it is not entirely clear from *The Secret Commonwealth* what forces exactly are arrayed against her, and why, and what are the stakes, for her own world, or for others.

In Lyra's world, everyone has a "daemon"; that is, an externalized second self—fully conscious and articulate—and the two of them together constitute a single person, a kind of "unity-in-duality," or what Corbin will call a *unus-ambo*.[2] A daemon is almost always the opposite gender of the human, and it can shapeshift among different animal forms until a child reaches puberty, at which point it settles into its permanent, theriomorphic form. A human and daemon are not thought to be separable; they typically can only stand to be a few yards apart from each other. But, in fact, the forced splitting of a human and his or her daemon, or a human's own excruciating separation and alienation from his or her daemon, becomes a major theme in both trilogies.

The range of themes and figures across the two trilogies reads like an encyclopedia of western esotericism: the daemon or *daimôn* as a second self; the importance of symbols and the faculty of imagination; a repressive ecclesial structure stifling *gnosis* and crushing dissent; a world, or indeed, many worlds—porous to each other—inhabited by angels and aliens, shamans and alchemists, witch clans and at least one cowboy; an imaginal geography in which the far North and the East are mysteriously and mystically aligned; psychedelic visions and Persianate poems; animate worlds and a "secret commonwealth" in which some animals, and also fairies and fey folk, and even rivers and other natural bodies, reveal themselves to be fully conscious persons, characters in a drama that includes but is not exhausted by our mortal, human selves—all of this playing out against the backdrop of a cosmic battle over a mysterious kind of matter called "Dust," which holds the key to mind in the universe.

Pullman's first novel was published in the UK in 1995 with the title, *Northern Lights*; a US edition followed the next year with the title, *The Golden Compass*. The new title has come to overshadow the original: witness the 2007 film, *The Golden Compass*. As best as I can surmise, the shift in title anticipated the second and third novels in the series, so that all three of them named an important and specific artifact in each story: the golden compass, the subtle knife, and the amber spyglass. But as we will see, something crucial was lost in this translation from (British) English to (American) English.

Northern Lights begins in Lyra's Oxford—the Oxford of *her* world, not ours—where she has lived since infancy as a special charge of Jordan College (probably named after Giordano Bruno). In the second chapter, entitled "The Idea of North," Lyra hides in a cabinet and overhears a private presentation by her uncle, Lord Asriel, whom she later learns is in fact her father. He has just returned from an expedi-

2 Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Pearson (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1978), 7. Originally published as *L'Homme de lumière dans le soufisme iranien* (Paris: Librairie de Médicis, 1971).

tion to the far North and is sharing the fruits of his research with his colleagues. Asriel was far enough north as to be surrounded by the *aurora borealis*, or Northern Lights. He aims to show his colleagues what is beyond this play of light, what is visible to our eyes of fire and not our eyes of flesh.[3] He shows them a pair of photographs of two different scenes, the second photograph of each scene is done with a new filter (or an emulsion) he has devised. The first photograph is of his manservant standing bathed in moonlight; in the second photo, with the new filter applied, however, "the man had altogether changed: he was bathed in light, and a fountain of glowing particles seemed to be streaming from his upraised hand."

> "That light," said the Chaplain, "is it going up or coming down?"
>
> "It's coming down," said Lord Asriel, "but it isn't light. It's Dust."[4]

With the mention of "Dust," a tense hush falls over the assembled experts. All talk of "Dust" is illicit: dismissed by some as a fiction of theoretical physics, and regarded by others as a dangerous heresy, this alleged particle, or field, cannot be spoken of under the Magisterium's strict prohibition.

Nevertheless, despite his colleagues' intrigued unease, Asriel persists, and shows them a third and fourth photograph, the same scene but again in two filters. The third photo is of the Northern Lights, what Pullman describes as "Streams and veils of light hung like curtains, looped and festooned on invisible hooks hundreds of miles high or blowing out sideways in the stream of some unimaginable wind."[5] The fourth is of the same scene, but "in the middle of the Aurora, high above the bleak landscape, Lyra could see something solid . . . As she gazed, her wonder grew, because there in the sky was the unmistakable outline of a city: towers, domes, walls . . . buildings and streets, suspended in the air! She nearly gasped with wonder."[6] Two things should be highlighted in this opening episode: first, that in the far North one can more easily see that there exists a source of illumination above and beyond our earthly sun, a particle or field called "Dust" that (we will come to learn) settles on matter and conveys on it something like mind or consciousness; second, that in the far North one can see that the boundary between this world and others is thin, indeed perhaps porous.

In the final chapter of *Northern Lights*, entitled "Bridge to the Stars," after a series of battles and daring rescues in the far North, Lyra and her friend Roger find refuge with her father Lord Asriel in the remote and frigid wastes. But Asriel has different, and sinister plans, of which they know not. In the dead of night, he kidnaps Roger and uses technology developed by the Magisterium to sever the boy from his daemon. The severing or "scission" releases an enormous burst of energy, which energy he harnesses to create a bridge between his world and the other. He crosses that bridge, content to sacrifice a child's life in search of the secret of Dust. Lyra catches up to him too late and watches this unfold, unable to save her friend; she and her daemon Panteleimon decide to follow her father, in hopes of discovering the se-

3
This is an allusion to Henry Corbin's late essay, "Eyes of Flesh and Eyes of Fire: Science and Gnosis," *Material for Thought* 8 (1980): 5–10. Originally given in June 1978 as the opening address at the Université St. Jean de Jerusalem.

4
Pullman, *Northern Lights*, 24.

5
Pullman, 25.

6
Pullman, 26.

cret of Dust themselves, and to prevent him from doing further harm.

I detect a deep resonance between Pullman's treatment of the North and the writings of Henry Corbin, and of other authors associated with Eranos, including Carl Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Gerschom Scholem. I speak of "resonance" rather than "influence" because I have not been able to confirm which, if any, authors associated with Eranos Pullman is known to have read. Novelists are often rather coy about their influences—they prefer to show rather than tell, and literary influences tend to suffuse their storytelling. In Pullman's own, limited self-reporting, there is no obvious evidence that he read authors associated with Eranos. The closest contenders are those "adjacent" to Eranos: he mentions books such as Hans Jonas's *The Gnostic Religion* or Frances Yates's *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*.[7] And yet Pullman's two connected trilogies, for which he is most famous, resonate deeply with Eranos, and specifically with the work of Henry Corbin.

I do suspect there is more than resonance, and that Pullman was influenced by Corbin when writing *Northern Lights*. Much of the drama of *His Dark Materials* circles around a mystical North in a world that is revealed to be adjacent to our own, familiar, and yet fantastical. But what do I mean by labeling Pullman's novels and their geography "imaginal"? In a famous essay entitled "*Mundus Imaginalis*, or The Imaginary and the Imaginal," Corbin coined the term imaginal as an alternative to imaginary. The latter is the realm of fiction, of fantasy—in a word, unreal.[8] For Corbin, however, the imaginal realm, or *mundus imaginalis*, is very much real—more real, in fact, than our "physical sensory world." He coined the Latin phrase *mundus imaginalis* to name the visionary realm of the soul and the subtle body, which he believed that medieval esoteric Islamic texts, especially in the *ishraqi* or "illuminationist" tradition (which he also labels "theosophy"), sought to initiate readers into, guided along the way by a kind of second self, or an angelic counterpart (what I have called the "divine double").[9] If the world of sense perception purports to be our consensual reality, then that consensus is false. The sensory world is only one of three, according to this tradition. Above the sensory is the suprasensory "imaginal" world, and above that is "the universe of pure archangelic Intelligences." And "to these three universes correspond three organs of knowledge: the senses, the imagination, and the intellect, a triad to which corresponds the triad of anthropology: body, soul, and spirit."[10] The imaginal world, therefore, is quite real, and the imagination is understood as the faculty of perception that allows us to see, know, and navigate this level of reality. Corbin devotes most of his time and energy to this intermediate world, between the senses and the intellect, because he is convinced that the imaginal is the world we have lost contact with, and imagination the faculty that we have left to wither. Without it, we cannot ascend beyond our sensory flatland, cannot come to know ourselves as ever more divine and doubled, and so cannot come to know the intellect, or spirit, which is to say divine mind or consciousness.

But still, why should I label Pullman's novelistic world(s) and its geography "imaginal"? After all, aren't these novels *fiction*? And so shouldn't we think of his novelistic world and its peculiar geography as imaginary rather than imaginal? The copyright page of his novels

7
The 2011 Everyman's Library edition of *His Dark Materials* includes a Chronology of Pullman's "Life and Works," "Historical Background," and "Literary Influences." Pullman is the author of the Chronology, and on p. xxiv he says that in 1966 he read Yates's book and in 1969 Jonas's book.

8
In order to preserve the reality of the "imaginal," Corbin is often dismissive of literary fiction, labeling it fantasy, unreal, "imaginary" rather than "imaginal." Obviously, there is a vast literature on the theory of fiction. See, for example, James E. Miller Jr., ed., *Theory of Fiction: Henry James* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1972).

9
Charles M. Stang, *Our Divine Double* (Harvard: University Press, 2016).

10
Henry Corbin, "*Mundus Imaginalis*, or The Imaginary and the Imaginal," in *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam* (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1995), 8. Originally published as "*Mundus imaginalis* ou l'imaginaire et l'imaginal," *Cahiers internationaux du symbolisme* 6 (1964): 3–26. Reprinted in *Face de Dieu, face de l'homme: Herméneutique et soufisme* (Paris: Flammarion, 1983).

include this very clear statement: "This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously." Is this a statement put forward by Pullman, or his publisher's lawyers? In any case, I might concede the point if it were only *Northern Lights*. That novel takes place entirely in Lyra's world, which the reader is led to believe is fantasy: yes, Lyra's world is very much *like* our world (it has an Oxford, for example), but it appears to be an *alternate* reality, which is to say, not really *real* at all, but a tall tale. At the beginning of *The Subtle Knife*, however, we come to understand that what we thought was a safely fictional world, Lyra's, is in fact adjacent to, and accessible from, our own. The effect of this is to call our world into question: is our consensual reality real? Are there other realities equally real? What do we mean by "real" anyway? And, finally, what is gained by learning of, and navigating through, those other realities? I submit that Pullman's novels function as imaginal fiction in so far as they draw the reader out from his or her sensory flatland, and into these other worlds, where we find all the enchanted peoples and places, flora and fauna, that we have banished from our own. They function to reintroduce us to a reenchanted world of the soul, and to encourage us to embark on an adventure into the imaginal, much as Lyra does. Perhaps all fiction functions imaginally, but Pullman's seems almost to insist on doing so.

So much for my case for understanding Pullman's novels as imaginal fiction. But what about my more specific focus, namely the imaginal *geography* in these novels? The four cardinal directions seem to have peculiar significance, which cuts across the different worlds. And here too I suspect the influence of Corbin, and the tradition for which he presumes to speak. Corbin understands himself as a kind of initiate into the Persian *ishraqi* or "illuminationist" tradition, associated most obviously with Suhrawardi (1154–1191), a tradition which quite literally "orients" itself to a mystical East that is not in the geographical East. To be an *ishraqi* is to journey toward and into that mystical East, led by a succession of guides who are understood as ever more transcendent dimensions of oneself. This is, in brief, Corbin's theory of the angel.[11] These guides appear in various guises, and they have been named differently in different traditions: Zoroastrianism, Platonism, Hermeticism, Manichaeism, and Gnosticism—to name those traditions that most drew Corbin's attention. I have treated some of these in my own book, *Our Divine Double*, including the Platonic tradition and its various interpretations of Socrates's guide, his *daimôn* or daemon.

Suhrawardi's redefinition of the East allows for interesting ambiguities and reversals. The terms "oriental" and "occidental" come to refer, first and foremost, not to a person's geographical position, but to their position relative to this mystical East and its calling. So, there can be many so-called geographical "Easterners" among Suhrawardi's contemporaries, for example, who are in fact "Westerners" when it comes to their existential orientation: they have turned away from the true source of light. And of course, there can be "Westerners" who are in fact "Easterners," occidentals who are rightly oriented to that source. The Arabic term *mustashriq* means literally "one who turns to the East," and is the common name for a European "orientalist"; that is, an alleged expert in the languages and civilizations of the East—

11 For more on Corbin's angelology, see Charles M. Stang, "Apophasis and Angelology: Henry Corbin's Neoplatonism," in Kurt Almqvist and Louise Belfrage, eds., *Ideas and Influences on Eranos* (forthcoming).

which is to say, those that are east of Europe. No doubt, Corbin was a *mustashriq* in this sense. But the ambiguity in what constitutes the "East" allows Corbin to lay claim to the other meaning of *mustashriq*: while he is geographically occidental, he is an *existentially* oriental.

The theme of a mystical East and the illumination it offers is evident throughout Corbin's writings. In *The Man of Light*, however, he explains how this mystical East also includes the North, indeed the far North. And that is where it bears on Pullman's novels. In Corbin's view, to turn East, to heed the call of the suprasensory sun, is to recognize one's own transcendental dimension, personified and effected by a series of guides or heavenly counterparts. This awakens what he calls the "vertical" or the "polar dimension" of the human, raising him out of the flatland of the four cardinal directions.[12] Just as the East is bivalent, so too the North: it names one of the four cardinal directions, of course, but more importantly, it names a fundamental orientation "up" and even "out" of the horizontal field, the flatland.

Three quotes from the very first pages of *The Man of Light* give a sense of Corbin's imaginal geography, and also his distinctive, almost initiatory prose:

> This suprasensory, mystical Orient, the place of the Origin and of the Return, object of the eternal Quest, is at the heavenly pole; it is the Pole, at the extreme north, so far off that it is the threshold of the dimension "beyond." . . . The *Orient* sought by the mystic, the Orient that cannot be located on our maps, is in the direction of the *north*, beyond the north. Only an ascensional progress can lead toward this cosmic north chosen as a point of orientation.[13]

> . . . to find again the northern dimension with its symbolic power, capable of opening the threshold of the beyond. This is the North which was "lost" when, by a revolution of the human presence, a revolution of the mode of presence in the world, the Earth was "lost in the heavens." "To lose sight of the North" means no longer to be able to distinguish between heaven and hell, angel and devil, light and shadow, unconsciousness and transconsciousness. A presence lacking a vertical dimension is reduced to seeking the meaning of history by arbitrarily imposing the terms of reference, powerless to grasp forms in the upward direction, powerless to sense the motionless upward impulse of the pointed arch, but expert at superimposing absurd parallelepipeds.[14]

> In our turn, let us pause to consider what a light can signify which is neither eastern nor western, the northern light: midnight sun, blaze of the aurora borealis. It is no longer a question of day succeeding night, nor night, day. Daylight breaks in the middle of the night and turns into day a night which is still there but which is a Night of light. *Et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis.*[15] This already suggests the possibility of an innovation in philosophical anthropology: the need to situate and interpret in an entirely new way the opposition between East and West,

12 Corbin, *The Man of Light,* 7.

13 Corbin, 2.

14 Corbin, 3

15 Psalm 138:11 (Vulgate): "And night shall be my light in my pleasures."

> Light and Darkness, in order finally to discover the full and unforeseen significance of the northern light, and consequently of Nordic man, the man who "is at the north," or who is going toward the north because he has come from the north.[16]

16 Corbin, *The Man of Light*, 4.

How does this imaginal geography help us better understand the episode from Pullman's *Northern Lights*? On the surface of Pullman's narrative, it is the geographical North that serves as the point of access to the "beyond"; literally, the *aurora borealis* or Northern Lights. But the "beyond" to which Asriel creates a bridge is itself ambiguous: is it that other world, that city, glimpsed through the special filter? Or is the "beyond" rather the Dust that somehow makes possible the consciousness permeating this world *and* that, a source of illumination beyond both worlds' suns? Asriel tips his hand at the end, when he says, "Look at that light up there: that's the sun of another world! Feel the warmth of it on your skin, now!" Although Asriel is after the secret of Dust, he fixates on that other world and its sun—although it is just one of many—and thereby, I suggest, fails to become what Corbin will call a "man of the north." In other words, when presented with the prospect, Asriel grasps too quickly at the reality of another world, without recognizing that it is, like this one, just another world with its own four cardinal directions. He goes on, in subsequent novels, to travel to that other world, and many others besides, ostensibly in search of Dust's secrets, and to do battle with the Authority and the Magesterium. But the question is whether his adventures bring him any closer to his "transcendent," "vertical," or truly "polar" dimensions. Does he ever, as Corbin would put it, activate the angelic function of his being?

According to Corbin, to embark on an Eastern adventure, to become an *ishraqi* or indeed a "man of the north" requires cultivating a new relationship with oneself, specifically with the other than is also oneself—that figure of the guide, who is you guiding yourself from some higher plane. In Pullman's stories, to be in search of Dust also opens you up to a transformed relationship with oneself. In Lyra's world this translates to a transformed relationship with one's own daemon, or indeed a transformation of one's own daemon. The very fact that Asriel is willing to sacrifice a boy and his daemon to pursue his own megalomaniacal quest suggests that he is on a wayward path. To have a daemon in Lyra's world is no achievement: everyone has one. When, in the next novel, her world opens onto our own, we come to learn that we of this world also have daemons: they're just invisible and internal. But because everyone has a daemon, one's relationship with it can be as horizontal as anything else, as flat as a map. So, the promise, and the peril, held out to Lyra and her daemon is this: what transformations are they willing to suffer in so that they might continue their journey to the far North, the "beyond," to awaken themselves, or to activate in themselves their angelic function?

In the climax of *His Dark Materials*, in the third novel, *The Amber Spyglass*, Lyra delivers on her promise to rescue her friend Roger from the land of the dead. In Lyra's world, when someone dies, his or her daemon winks out of existence in an instant, and that person's soul is conveyed to the land of the dead. The same in fact happens in our world. We come to learn that this is by the design of the Authority,

that this ancient and aging deity—who is more like a geriatric Gnostic demiurge—established this bleak prison for all the worlds' dead, but we are not told exactly why. Lyra doesn't much care why; she simply wants to rescue Roger. But she discovers that in order to cross over into the land of the dead to free him, she must leave her daemon behind on the shores of the River Styx. She does so, but it is an excruciating experience for them both. In the end, Lyra succeeds in liberating not only her friend Roger but also the souls of all the dead of all the worlds of all times. She quite literally harrows hell. When the souls are freed from their imprisonment into a star-filled night sky, they each dissolve into Dust in an ecstatic release. It turns out that Genesis 3:19 is right: "You are dust and to dust you shall return." But in this story, it is the deity—or at least the entity pretending to be God, the Authority—who has prevented this natural reversion of Dust to Dust, of minded matter back to minded matter, in order to keep dead souls sequestered, imprisoned. In other words, the Authority disrupts the cyclical flow of Dust throughout the universe.

Eventually the Authority is killed, along with his second in command, Metatron (formerly the human Enoch), and the Dust of the dead is returned to the universe. And ultimately, Lyra is reunited with Panteleimon. Lyra's separation from Pan, and her alienation from him, are seemingly resolved at the end of *His Dark Materials*. But this dynamic returns as a major theme in the latest novel, *The Secret Commonwealth*, where it is wed to a new geography, centered not on the far North but on the Near East. Lyra, now an undergraduate at Oxford, is at odds with herself, quite literally: she and Pan are barely speaking, and they can now separate from each other at will without pain, unlike almost anyone else. They find themselves once again in the crosshairs of the Magisterium, who despite having had their deity killed, are just as committed to the suppression of Dust as ever. At stake in this iteration of the cosmic conflict are roses, more specifically rose oil from the Near East. It seems that, like the photo filter Lord Asriel used to reveal Dust's existence to his colleagues, there is another, ancient practice originating somewhere in the Near East whereby rose oil delivered into the eye as droplets enable one to see Dust. Lyra embarks on her own oriental adventure, traveling east by way of Smyrna all the way to Syria, and far beyond. She and others, friends and foes, are drawn eastward by a scattering of clues and rumors suggesting that the secrets of the rose oil, and so of Dust, are to be found in a remote eastern desert called the Karamakan, wherein lies a mysterious, moving fortress where daemons are not permitted to enter. There is rumored to be a city on the edge of this desert, with a place called the Blue Hotel, where the daemons of those brave enough to seek out this desert fortress and its secrets wait patiently for the return of their human halves.

All of this would seem to amount to a kind of "orientalist" turn in Pullman. Suddenly Lyra is pulled into the orbit of the Near East, and the landscape is painted in a decidedly nineteenth-century, European orientalist palette. Pullman's more recent, orientalist turn also resonates deeply with Corbin's same imaginal geography, in which North and East are aligned not as cardinal directions but as existential orientations. Further resonance includes the fact that some of the clues Lyra and her friends and foes are following up come from a medieval epic

poem, written in Tajik, called *Jahan and Rukhsana*. This poem is quite obviously some kind of variation on Farid Uddin ʿAttar's classical Persian epic poem, *The Conference of the Birds*. In fact, the protagonists of the fictional poem are guided by the king of the birds, the "Simurgh" (as Pullman transliterates the Persian). In ʿAttar's famous poem, the birds of the world set out in search of the legendary Simorgh, and with it the source of their own identity. The birds undergo incredible hardships on this journey, and eventually only thirty survive. As the recent translator of the poem into English, Sholeh Wolpé, explains: "In the end the birds learn that they themselves are the Simorgh; the name 'Simorgh' in Persian means thirty (si) birds (morgh). They eventually come to understand that the majesty of that Beloved is like the sun that can be seen reflected in a mirror. Yet, whoever looks into that mirror will also behold his or her own image."[17]

With the addition of the Tajik epic poem and the character of the Simorgh, Pullman seems almost to tip his hand—and we see Corbin among the face cards. In summary, we have an imaginal geography of the far North, aligned with an imaginal geography of the Near East. That's pure Corbin. In both directions, Lyra finds herself quite literally peering into the secret of Dust, the source of our own individual consciousness and all consciousness across worlds. This seems very close to Corbin's notion of the "suprasensory sun," the transcendent light that orients the *ishraqi* tradition he spent his career translating and promoting. Lyra finds herself in a Gnostic plotline, where a pretender god and his church work to suppress *gnosis*; she is part of an esoteric order—a secret society—which fights against the exoteric church, on behalf of Dust and *gnosis*. As far as I know, Corbin never embraced the Gnostic myth of an ignorant and malevolent demiurge-deity, responsible for the creation and maintenance of our world prison. Rather, he tended to regard our imprisonment and ignorance as the fault of our own limitations in consciousness, aided and abetted by exoteric religion, be it Christian or Islamic. So here too Pullman's story seems to line up with Corbin. And in Pullman's story, the plot hinges on our relationship to ourselves; that is, to our daemons, who although they are none other than us, remain strangely mysterious to us, and even to themselves. In Corbin, the entire ascensional metaphysics is built around an anthropology of the heavenly twin, divine counterpart, or alter-ego—the "divine double."

And yet here is where Pullman seems to chart a different course. In both trilogies, but especially in the latest novel, it seems that Lyra's gnostic quest requires her to suffer successive separations and alienations from herself; that is, from her daemon. Corbin thought we are already separated and alienated from ourselves, and that what we most need is to establish contact with our divine doubles, our interior guides. Once we do so, he presents the path as one of ever ascending assimilations to our higher selves, like links in a chain reaching all the way to the birth of the first divine person from the dark depths of the impersonal source. But Pullman seems to be exploring an even darker and perhaps more fundamental question, one not easily reflected in Corbin's writings: what does self-alienation have to do with the path of *gnosis*? Do we have to lose ourselves—and not just our ancillary selves, but our fundamental selves—do we have to lose ourselves to

17 Farīd al-Dīn ʿAṭṭār, *The Conference of the Birds*, ed. and trans. Sholeh Wolpé (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2017), 17–18.

find *gnosis*? And with *gnosis*, will we be permanently lost to ourselves, or will we find our way back to a new, or wiser, unity-in-duality?

The answers to these questions must wait on the appearance of the final installment of the second trilogy, and what happens in the end to Lyra and Pan. But in the meantime, I am left wondering if there are other important face cards in Pullman's hand. There are other figures in the Eranos orbit who might be one of these face cards, and who might help us better understand Pullman's novelistic exploration of self-alienation and *gnosis*. I suspect that it is Carl Jung himself, who casts a rather long shadow over the whole of Eranos's history. Pullman does not list Jung as a formative influence, but that doesn't mean much. Many people do not admit to their formative influences, and especially when it is Jung.

The Imaginal South

While I do believe the imaginal geography of Pullman's novels includes all four of the cardinal directions, I have focused on the North and the East, because that is very prominent in the novels, and in Corbin's writings.[18] I would like to turn now, more briefly, to the significance of the South, and in particular of one very important southern site: the city of Citàgazze, a city presumably somewhere on the Mediterranean, whose guild of philosophers invented the "subtle knife" that allowed them to create fateful portals between worlds. Can we unpack this southern axis and make sense of it in light of the North? How does the southern Mediterranean figure in *His Dark Materials*, and how does it interact with the imaginal North?

The second novel of *His Dark Materials*, called *The Subtle Knife*, begins not in Lyra's Oxford, but in the Oxford of our world. It follows the course of a young adolescent named Will, who accidentally kills a mysterious intruder in his house, and flees the scene only to find a shimmering, barely visible portal from his world into another. Desperate, he steps through the portal, and finds himself in a largely abandoned city on a seashore. There, he meets Lyra and her daemon Panteleimon. Will is from our world so he doesn't have a daemon, or at least he thinks he doesn't, so he's rather surprised to meet Lyra and her shape-shifting second self. Together they come to learn that the seaside city they are in is called Cittàgazze, or "city of magpies," which is quite obviously meant to correspond to some Italian city on the Mediterranean Sea. It is the very city that Lord Asriel and Lyra could see through the thin membrane between the worlds at their north pole, at their Northern Lights, at the very end of the first novel. When Asriel split Roger from his demon, thereby killing him, he released enough energy to blow a hole through that thin membrane and to cross between his world to that of Cittàgazze. Lyra followed on his heels, and by seeming coincidence Will entered into that world too, just days after her.

For a moment, though, we should highlight the axis of North and South. In Lyra's world, the North opens on to the South of the other world—the portal of the *aurora borealis* in her North delivers her into the South of Cittàgazze. While of course there is plenty further south of the Italian coastline, for the purposes of these novels it is the

18
I cannot attempt here a full treatment of the four cardinal directions, which would also necessitate, of course, an interpretation of the significance of the West. This would require, among other things, a reading of the character of Lee Scoresby, a New Dane who grew up in the country of Texas.

extreme south: no scene takes place further south than Cittàgazze. To understand why, we have to learn more about this southern city. It is largely abandoned, or at least abandoned by adults. Lyra and Will notice that the city's only population are roving bands of children. They come to learn that this city is haunted by what are called "spectres," shadowy ghosts that feed on post-pubescent humans, consuming their souls and leaving them to die as mindless husks. It is a particularly horrible way to meet one's end, to have one's soul eaten by a spectre. To pre-pubescent children, the spectres are harmless and invisible; to adults they appear as shimmers in the air and light: "In some lights they were hardly there at all, just visible as a drifting quality in the light, a rhythmic evanescence, like veils of transparency turning before a mirror."[19]

At the center of Cittàgazze stands a lonely tower called the "Torre degli angeli," the Tower of the Angels. Again, they come to learn that the tower was once the home of a guild of philosophers, who managed to create a legendary tool and weapon called "the subtle knife." The adjective "subtle" derives from the Latin *subtilis*, which refers to a finely woven thread, and by extension something exceedingly "fine," "thin," or "slender."[20] The Latin in turn translates the Greek *leptomerês*, a compound word that means "composed of small particles." It is the word that Aristotle used to describe some pre-Socratic views of the soul; he writes, "[there are] those who maintain that the soul is a subtle kind of body (*sôma ti leptomerês*)," indeed "the subtlest (*leptomerestaton*) and most nearly incorporeal (*asômatôtaton*) of all kinds of body."[21] Aristotle's remarks about the soul as a subtle body helped launch the Western discourse of the subtle body, the genealogy of which has recently been traced by Simon Cox.[22]

The knife has two subtle edges, one of which can slice through the fabric of reality and create portals from one world to another; the other of which can cut through any substance. Lyra and Will come to learn that they have to find and recover the subtle knife. In doing so, they learn that at any given time there is a single bearer of the knife, someone who is destined to wield it, and to find his successor. In their efforts to recover the knife from within the bowels of the Tower of the Angels, where its last bearer is being held captive, Will discovers that he is in fact the next bearer of the subtle knife, and thus that his finding a portal to this world is hardly a coincidence. He is apparently destined to wield it, but to what purpose?

Will is taught how to use the subtle knife by the aged bearer whom he and Lyra rescue. He teaches Will how to find the seams in the fabric of reality, to work the blade into the space between atoms, and thus to open portals between worlds. He and Lyra use this powerful tool to move between realms, on the heels of Lyra's father, working independently of him to bring down the tyrannical power of the false deity, the Authority, and his enforcers, the Magisterium, but also some witch clans, bands of angels, and other malevolent forces from across the universe. They *think* their mission is simply to bring down the Authority, and to release the souls he has held captive in the underworld for millennia. And they do so, with the help of many others, and with the help of the subtle knife, whose power the Magisterium wishes to wield.

What they come to learn, however, is that the Authority is not the

19
Pullman, *The Subtle Knife*, 462.

20
Probably, originally, "woven fine," from *sub* ("under") + *têla* ("a web"), from *texere* ("to weave").

21
De Anima I.5 409a 34. Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1429.

22
Simon Cox, *The Subtle Body: A Genealogy* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2022). See also my review of Cox's book, "What is the Subtle Body?" *Harvard Theological Review* 116, no. 2 (2023): 302–15.

only problem plaguing the universe. The spectres that haunt Cittàgazze appear in other worlds as well; they are a threat not only to one world, but to all worlds. Why, and what does that have to do with the subtle knife, with Cittàgazze, and with the imaginal South? They come to learn that it is the subtle knife itself that is responsible for the spectres. Every time the knife cuts a door from one world to another, it creates a shadow, a being of dark matter, who feeds on Dust, the elusive and mysterious substance that gives consciousness to reality. If the door is left open, as the philosophers of Cittàgazze have often done so as to facilitate movement between worlds, then the spectres too can move between worlds, and threaten conscious life everywhere. Cittàgazze is rife with spectres because over the centuries the philosophers of that city abused the subtle knife, cutting holes indiscriminately between worlds, stealing wisdom and wealth from other realms, but by doing so unleashing a parasitic nihilism on those worlds, and their own, that they could not stop. Lyra and Will happen into Cittàgazze shortly after Lord Asriel blew a hole through the membrane between his world and that of Cittàgazze, and in so doing released a new horde of spectres on the city. The adults of Cittàgazze had to flee to the surrounding countryside, desperate to escape the spectres who suddenly descended on them *en masse*.

When in the final novel of the first trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*, Lord Asriel leads his army against those of the Authority and prevails, ridding the universe of this false god, and when Lyra succeeds in freeing all the souls trapped in the Authority's cruel underworld, still the universe suffers from a wound that must be healed, and that wound is the thousand cuts the subtle knife has made in the fabric of reality, the myriad doorways between worlds. The tragic end of this triumphal trilogy is that Will must now close all those thousands of doors, and finally shatter the subtle knife so no new doors may be opened. The price for the salvation of the universe is the separation of the worlds, and the separation of everyone into their respective worlds. Will cannot stay in Lyra's world, nor she in his. Either would soon die in the other's world, and so even though their loving union has undone the sin of Adam and Eve, in the end of *His Dark Materials* they are forced to say goodbye forever, and to live always with the memory of the other and the other's world.

What, then, is the significance of the imaginal North and South in Pullman's novels? If the far North reveals that there is a mysterious substance called Dust, and that there are other worlds than our own, then it also reveals that the presumption to cross between worlds, even in pursuit of Dust, is the business of murderous and ambitious men such as Lyra's father Lord Asriel. But Asriel's method of crossing from one world to another is revealed to be crude compared to what his southern counterparts had devised, the philosophers of Cittàgazze. The technology of the subtle knife is finally revealed to be something of a sin, by which I mean not an offense against the Authority or Magesterium, but a sin against the nature of reality itself, threatening the integrity of the universe. The South is not quite the scene of *original* sin, but of a subsequent sin, the sin of human hubris perhaps.

The subtle knife of the South bears a proper name from the North, Æsahættr, which we are told means "God-destroyer." Not surprisingly,

with a name like that, both sides of the war of the worlds want to have it. But it is not the subtle knife that finally kills the Authority. After all, the Authority is not really God, but just a Gnostic demiurge, a powerful being posturing as God, demanding worship and fealty. The "God" that the knife actually threatens to destroy is not the Authority, but the divine consciousness that pervades the universe, Dust itself. It is as if the North knew that all along, encoded in the legendary name Æsahættr.

It is perhaps tempting to read the conclusion of *His Dark Materials* as a warning against technology, in which case the subtle knife is something like Oppenheimer's bomb, a Promethean innovation that threatens the integrity of our world. But I wish to propose, tentatively and in conclusion, a different lesson. I wonder if the lesson instead might be a certain skepticism of, or even warning against, esotericism more broadly. The novels are rife with esoteric tools and practices, which allow the characters to alter their states of consciousness, perception, embodiment—in the protagonists' case all in the seemingly noble pursuit of Dust, and the defense of freedom and consciousness in the universe. But what if the real occult lesson of these novels is that there are some thresholds that are not to be crossed, some secrets that are not to be pursued? What if the free pursuit of consciousness in fact threatens consciousness? What if the universe requires us, in the end, to live in our own separate worlds, even when we know that there are others? What if the universe requires that we leave certain questions open, as questions, even when we know there are answers to be found, somewhere. If so, it is a cruel lesson for Lyra and Will, who, saving harrowed hell and having saved the universe from the Authority and the spectres, must part ways and live forever apart from the other. Or if not cruel a truth, at least a cold truth, a cold northern truth issued to southern esotericism.

What comes of this cold closure remains to be seen. Will it remain so forever? Will Lyra and Will only dream of each other, as the memory of their cosmic triumph and tragedy fades in their aging minds? Or will Dust reveal another way, an unthought opening between worlds that can answer to their love? While there are perhaps a few hints of such an opening in the latest novel, *The Secret Commonwealth*, we will have to wait on the third and final installment of *The Book of Dust* for answers, and more importantly, for further and even final orientation in this adventure in the imaginal.

Heterography

Luigi Pericle and Herbert Read: Encounters in Ascona through the Eranos Circle

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fondazione Giorgio Cini onlus

Ascona has been a unique cultural hub in the European scene, and a new institution, the Archivio Luigi Pericle, was recently established for an international audience and is becoming more and more well known. It all started in 2016, with the rediscovery of the artworks and library held in the house-cum-atelier situated on the slopes of Monte Verità in Ascona, which was inhabited by the artist Luigi Pericle from 1948 until the end of his life in 2001. The house remained an untouched treasure until it was acquired by the Biasca-Caroni family, who discovered an unexpected world, an intimate, highly articulated universe of drawings, pictures, and writings. The process of researching and promoting the figure and work of Pericle began in 2019 with exhibitions, conferences, and contributions by scholars from various countries and has opened up a host of hermeneutic and interdisciplinary possibilities. The first event, the retrospective entitled *Luigi Pericle. Beyond the Visible*, was held at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in 2019, during the 58th Venice Art Biennale.[1] While the artist was still alive, the house welcomed illustrious visitors, including Hans Richter and, of course, as we will see, Sir Herbert Edward Read (1893–1968).

Pericle, the Swiss painter and illustrator of Italian descent, was born in Basel in 1916. He achieved success from 1952 on, when he conceived the textless comic strip Max the Marmot, which became famous in the undisputed capital of manga and anime, Japan, but also in the United States. Pericle worked as a successful illustrator and at the same time as a painter, but he decided to keep his two professions separate and sign his comics with the surname Giovannetti. In 1958, at the age of forty-two, Pericle destroyed all the figurative works in his possession (except for one) and began a new phase of his creative production, moving to informal abstraction using special techniques, which distinguished his work and made it the product of tireless experimentation. In the 1960s his work was displayed in numerous solo shows and important exhibitions around the UK and at the Kunstmuseum in Basel, along with the works of Karel Appel, Georg Baselitz, Joseph Beuys, Jean Dubuffet, Sam Francis, Alberto Giacometti, Asger Jorn, Henri Michaux, Pablo Picasso, Jean-Paul Riopelle, and Antoni Tàpies. His work was admired by figures such as Sir Herbert Read, the collectors Peter G. Staechelin and Martin Heinrich Burckhardt, and Peter Cochrane and Martin Summer of Arthur Tooth & Sons Gallery in London. In 1965, despite Summers's insistent requests for works and the high demand for interviews and exhibitions, Pericle chose to abandon the world of art, vernissages, and mundanities to devote himself to his exoteric studies and artistic practice. From the 1960s until the 1980s, in the tranquility of his home in Ascona, he created an endless series of works on canvas and masonite along with India ink drawings, in a creative and mystical endeavor that never abandoned him until his death in 2001.

From 1986 on, and until the end of his life, he worked on the unpublished novel *Bis ans Ende der Zeiten–Morgendämmerung und Neuanfang statt Weltuntergang* (*Until the End of Times–Dawn and new beginning, instead of the end of the world*).

Pericle certainly belongs to that group of twentieth-century artists and writers who entrusted their work to what could be defined, after Marco Pasi, as a case of "posthumousness," which "manifests itself

1 See Chiara Gatti, ed., *Luigi Pericle: Beyond the Visible* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2019). Exhibition catalog, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venezia, from May 11 to November 24, 2019.

when an author does not wish or is unable to have their work acknowledged and appreciated while still alive, but the art work is endowed with such an aesthetic energy as to challenge and ultimately break away from its state of oblivion."[2] In the case of Luigi Pericle, we do not know precisely the reasons behind his decision to turn to a solitary and ascetic life after a period of sudden and dazzling success in the 1960s. He clearly had an eclectic approach towards the dimension of spirituality and esotericism. Among the authors present in his rich library are Meister Eckhart, Saint John of the Cross, Jacob Boehme, Paracelsus and Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo, Paramahansa Yogananda, Sai Baba, D. T. Suzuki, and, last but not least, *The Secret of the Golden Flower* edited by Carl Gustav Jung. There are also Dürckheim's writings on Zen and Fritjof Capra, in addition to a significant number of texts on ufology, pyramidology, astrology, and alternative and Eastern medicines (homeopathy, phytotherapy, Ayurveda, qigong) of which, according to several archival documents, Pericle was a passionate connoisseur.

From the perspective of art history, Pericle falls within the domain of modern art, which was marked by a pervasive need for spirituality and which originated in the German-speaking world between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It drew on the heritage of mystical and esoteric traditions in both East and West and was concerned with the "spiritualization" of the artist's task.[3]

Wassily Kandinsky's seminal work *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (*On the Spiritual in Art*, 1912) summarized many of these aspirations, becoming an essential reference point for the remainder of the century. The advent of the "spiritual triangle," the great and much-longed-for age heralded in this famous book, was abruptly cut short by the outbreak of war in 1914. Yet, 1914 was also the year Kandinsky penned his *Über die Mauer* (*Beyond the Wall*), in which he distinguished between objectivists, who painted the world as it appeared, and subjectivists, who reached towards a higher universe. This theme—which concerns the identity of the artist, consciousness of the self, and the renunciation of ego to become a vehicle for higher values—is common among authors who work in the realm of spiritual abstraction, extending to affinities with the fields of music and philosophy. Here, we encounter another essential feature of spiritual abstraction, one that demands a return to the very origins of Kandinsky's *On the Spiritual in Art* and the age in which theories of empathy—or *Einfühlung*—flourished.

Philosophers and psychologists—and above all Theodor Lipps (1851–1914)—analyzed the possibility of re-living the creative process, the movements and dynamics underpinning the production of forms and colors, on both a physical and emotional level.[4] Such an approach echoes the morphological perspective and ultimately redefines the term "abstraction": abstract painting abandons the "skin" of nature, not its laws. *Art can be great only if it is in a direct relationship with cosmic laws.*[5] For Kandinsky, the origin of the work of art is akin to the origin of the cosmos, with fields of powerful energy composed of harmonies and contrasts. The observer of the works of spiritual abstraction "relives" within themself the dynamics that underpin artistic production, sharing in the dance of its creation.

Pericle, for whom this tradition in German-speaking countries

2
Marco Pasi, " 'The Long Pursuit of an Absolute Beauty': The Spiritual Dimension in Luigi Pericle's Art," in *Luigi Pericle*, ed. Gatti, 17.

3
See, for instance, Stefano Poggi, *L'anima e il cristallo*: *Alle radici dell'arte astratta* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2014).

4
See Martina Mazzotta et al., eds., "Una 'scienza pura della coscienza': l'ideale della psicologia in Theodor Lipps," special issue, *Discipline filosofiche* 12, no. 2 (2002).

5
Wassily Kandinsky, *Complete Writings on Art,* ed. K. C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994).

proves to be fundamental, achieved success from 1952 on, when under the name of Giovannetti he conceived the textless comic strip, Max the Marmot. His little masterpiece, *Max. Die Reise nach Alfheim* (1984) is a miniature *Bildungsroman*, conceived by the artist with a sense of humor and real pedagogical verve to furnish new generations with suggestions and methods for following the spiritual path. The world of childhood and adolescence, of adventure conceived as a formative process, of epic narratives, myths, and sagas is fundamental to Pericle's poetics, in which obstacles or apocalyptic catastrophes are always the prelude to the triumph of light and life. Like his heroes, borrowed from mythology yet developed with great imagination, Pericle combines the discipline required for study and self-knowledge with a search for the absolute: "It is necessary to return to gathering the truth of everything as a transcendental property of being, which does not represent an abstract greatness, but the vital connection between the Absolute and the world. The only word that can define it is: Beauty."[6]

In his sketches, ink drawings, and paintings from 1958 to 1965, which Pericle called the years of "radical change," the free line of spiritual abstraction seems to prevail (and evokes the discipline of Chinese painters of shan shui/Samurai bushido).[7] Pericle's calligraphic expression (one cycle of works from 1964 bears the significant title *Calligraphic Rapture*) reflects the continuous and empathetic relationship between body, spirit, and matter and is articulated through the lingering of the artist's gesture on the pictorial surface.

Closely observing Pericle's works in person can feel like embarking on a never-ending story. In the cycles of canvas paintings such as *Uranian Golem* or *The Archangel* (Fig. 1), figures emerge imposingly from a landscape that is both undefined and dense with matter and luminescence.

Fig. 1. Luigi Pericle, *L'Arcangelo IV*, *Matri Dei d.d.d.*, 1965. Mixed media on canvas, 51 x 65 cm. Ascona, Archivio Luigi Pericle. Courtesy of Archivio Luigi Pericle.

6
Eugenia Cosentino, introduction to *Luigi Pericle: Dipinti e disegni* (Novara: De Agostini, 1979), 9.

7
See Martina Mazzotta, "The Spirit of the Valley Never Dies: Works by Mao Janhua," in *The Spirit of the Valley: Works by Mao Janhua* (London, Edizioni Plan, 2019). Exhibition catalog, Saatchi Gallery, London, from June 27 to July 7, 2019.

These figures raise their hands in a position reminiscent of the anthropomorphic figures of prehistoric graffiti, or of Klee's *Angelus Novus*, or of the maidate, the characteristic helmet crest of samurai warriors that has been reused by the Japanese cartoon robot Goldrake. The basic idea is that the world is close to a catastrophe. But the destruction that will annihilate it is not completely negative: on the contrary, it will allow the planet to regenerate itself and to move forward to the beginning of a new era. The works on Masonite between 1966 and 1980 in particular (their technique remaining mysterious even today) offer the eye tactile glimpses of the material, which ranges from wood to metal and stone. From the dark inorganic substrate emerge flashes of light, lichen, organic forms that find space among the crevices in structures created by the overlay of color. The bumps on the surface resemble scar tissue, and we regularly encounter moons in his repertoire, positioned high and centrally. There are gateways, thresholds, arches suspended in the sky, ships, cities, palaces, flying vehicles that stand out in all their three-dimensionality against the perfectly smooth surface, often with a trompe l'oeil effect. The luminescence that pierces the intense blue, metallic grey, acid yellow, and burnt orange is structured within a space that imposes a constant change of perspective, passing from a frontal to an aerial view. For instance, it is only after following the meanders of *The Palace* (Fig. 2) (from the *Atlantide* series, 1974) that one realizes it could simultaneously represent an aerial view of ghostly ruins resulting from a violent conflict—and the process of reconstruction already taking place. The redemption occurs within the image, which is the visual order within the resulting chaos.

Fig. 2. Luigi Pericle, *Il Palazzo* (from *Atlantide*), *Matri Dei d.d.d.*, 1974. Mixed media on Masonite, 80 x 130 cm. Ascona, Archivio Luigi Pericle. Courtesy of Archivio Luigi Pericle.

This rapid overview can be concluded with a magnificent work that, somewhat unusually, is dominated by the color white, and bears no title or date: the masonite panel that was found on the artist's living room wall on the day of the rediscovery, in December 2016 (Fig. 3).

The interview found in the catalogue published by De Agostini in 1979 reveals that Pericle was in the habit of hanging the work he had most recently completed in his house. We are catapulted into a desert

of sheets of blue-hued ice, in places copper-tinged and subtly oxidized. At the sides emerge two small triangles, which in turn are arranged to form a larger triangle; the apex culminates in a full moon. The blinding effect of the white prevails everywhere, glacial and breathtaking in the reflections that scintillate from the surface of the work.

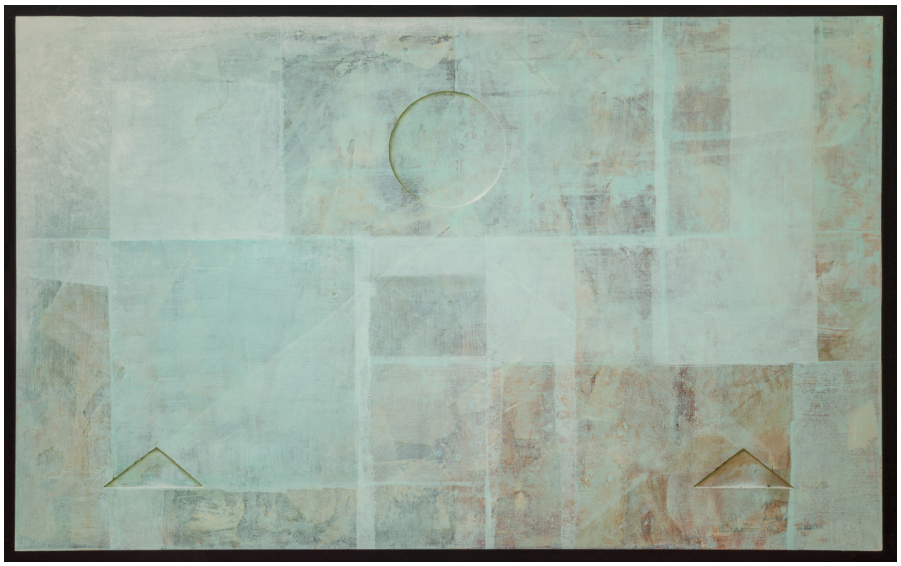

Fig. 3. Luigi Pericle, untitled, undated. Mixed media on Masonite, 80 x 130 cm. Ascona, Archivio Luigi Pericle. Courtesy of Archivio Luigi Pericle.

Within the whiteness are nature, sound, time, and silence; in *On the Spiritual in Art*, Kandinsky described the color white as "affecting us with the absoluteness of a great silence." Its inner sound is like the absence of sound, often corresponding to pauses in music. "It is not a dead silence but one full of possibilities." Nothingness exists before the beginning, before birth. "Perhaps the earth sounded like this in the white period of the Ice Age."[8]

So, it is not a coincidence that someone like Read became a vital player in Pericle's career (Fig. 4). He was a poet and art critic, a follower of T. S. Eliot, initially influenced by the imagism of Ezra Pound, and later a pupil of Carl Gustav Jung, whose collected works he would edit and publish in English. In addition to his many books of poetry and prose and his numerous works of art criticism, Read edited the monograph on Kandinsky published by Faber & Faber in 1959. It was a further sign of his interest in abstraction and the related spiritual framework that found full expression in *On the Spiritual in Art* (or, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*); the former is the translation I decided to use, after my direct collaboration with Peter Vergo.

Hans Hess (1907–1975) had the idea of introducing Read to Pericle's work. Hess was curator of the City of York Art Gallery and a profound connoisseur of modern art. Together with Martin Summers from the Tooth Gallery, he made the greatest effort to promote Pericle's art in England. They belong to the web of people and stories that contributed to Pericle's success, in just three years and especially in England, where abstraction was about to be replaced by pop art: this movement in "Swinging London" swept away the serious, committed period of abstract expressionism. Across several museums in England, Pericle's art thus received remarkable recognition from important institutions

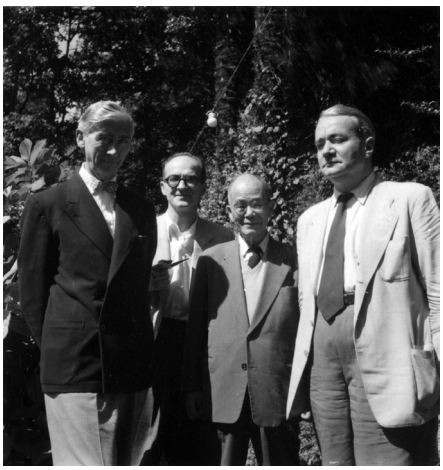

Fig. 4. From the left, the poet and literary critic Sir Herbert Edward Read, the historian of religions Mircea Eliade, the scholar of Zen Buddhism Daisetsu Teitarō Suzuki, and the philosopher and scholar of Islam Henry Corbin at Eranos in August 1953. Photo by Margarethe Feller. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona.

8
Kandinsky, *Complete Writings on Art*.

(in Newcastle, Hull, Bristol, Cardiff, and Leicester).[9] In August 1964, Hess wrote to Pericle that Read would be in Ascona a few days later to attend that year's seminar. Moreover, that Pericle already held Read in esteem can be intimated from a copy in Pericle's library of Read's *Bild und Idee* marked January 11, 1962, with Pericle's annotations. We do not know exactly what happened next, but Pericle and Read definitely met, since Read then described his visit to Pericle's studio, expressing high praise for his paintings. Hess included Read's favorable opinion in the catalogue of the itinerant exhibition that he curated in 1965; this catalogue was then added to all successive publications devoted to Pericle's works, including of course the important retrospective catalogue published in 1979.[10]

In his short appraisal, Read says that he went to see Pericle and his work without great expectations, since he did not think an artist completely unknown to him, and whom he probably suspected of being an amateur, could hold any surprises. But he was indeed struck by the quality and "strange beauty" of the works he saw:

> Sometimes there was a vague suggestion of naturalistic forms, but form itself was established beyond phenomenal appearances, to represent some inner essence, some spiritual condition that can be represented only in the abstract harmony of lines and colour. A metaphysical art, therefore, but one that remains faithful to the sensuous qualities of the material of the painter's craft. Luigi Pericle is a mature artist . . . the fact that he is not better known in other countries can only be attributed to the artist's extreme modesty and long pursuit of an absolute beauty.[11]

Read's personal history made him particularly receptive to a form of art such as Pericle's. He entered the world of art criticism in the years preceding World War I, and was engaging with Kandinsky's writings for the English-speaking audience.

Even before the War, Read had been one of the British critics most committed in promoting abstract art and the new aesthetic of the avant-gardes. Not necessarily because he was fond of spiritual art, but because his approach to criticism, particularly inspired in those years by Jung's analytical psychology, gave him the key to understanding an art such as Pericle's, so full of references to possible archetypical forms. Read's assiduous presence at the Eranos meetings over the years testifies to his efforts to extend this perspective to the most diverse forms of modern art. Nevertheless, his views sometimes conflicted with those of Jung, as occurred on a memorable occasion in 1952, when Read participated for the first time as a lecturer at one of the Eranos meetings. As Read was delivering his speech, the Swiss psychologist stood up and left the audience, contesting him openly and challenging his interpretation of Picasso's art. Moreover, international artists after World War II were not inclined to express explicitly spiritual or esoteric themes, at least compared to the great creative ferment of the avant-gardes in the early decades of the twentieth century. The cultural climate was anything but favorable to the spread of these ideas, especially abstract art, which in the post-war period assumed

9
See Thomas Marks, "Luigi Pericle in England," in *Luigi Pericle: A Rediscovery*, ed. Andrea Biasca-Caroni et al. (London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2022). Exhibition catalog, Estorick Collection, London, from September 14 to December 18, 2022.

10
Marks, "Luigi Pericle in England," 52–53.

11
Herbert Read, introduction to *Luigi Pericle*, catalogue of the touring exhibition held in the City Art Gallery (York), Laing Art Gallery (Newcastle), Ferens Art Gallery (Hull), City Art Gallery (Bristol), National Museum of Wales (Cardiff), and Museum and Art Gallery (Leicester), March 29–September 5, 1965, Ben Johnson & Co. (York, UK), February 2–20, 1965.

the form of *art informel*. Therefore, it proved challenging for critics and audiences to distinguish stylistically between Pericle's transcendentally-minded abstractions and the gestural painting of the Abstract Expressionist artists. Hess and Read made efforts to guide the interpretation of Pericle's paintings. The artist's imagination, according to Hess, was keen to discover pictorial forms related to forms of thought, by which Pericle could be compared to Paul Klee and *similar artists of formal imagination*, such as Kandinsky and the protagonists of the Blue Rider.[12]

A further link ties Read and the New York Art Foundation of Rome.[13] Both seemed to be ideally closer to those currents of abstract painting that developed between the 1940s and 1950s on the West Coast of the United States. This dovetails with my comments about Kandinsky above (and with what I presented in my 2017 exhibition at Fondazione Palazzo Magnani, concerning John Cage).

This milieu, largely inspired by theosophical and spiritual ideas, paved the way to the continental modernism of the avant-gardes in Great Britain, mixing it up with Nietzsche's philosophy and more or less radical projects of social reform. It is therefore not by chance that, in the years following World War II, Read was still perceived as a kindred spirit by those who considered themselves the heirs of the spiritual modernism of the avant-gardes.

Pericle presents us with constellations of images that are broadly consistent and isomorphic in their structures, relating to "arrangements," "signs," and "archetypes" that function as organizing nuclei. Similar to the alchemical symbol, not to be considered an archetype but pointing towards other arrangements, these works initiate a process—an unstoppable energy, opening a gateway to the imagination and the subconscious. In the art criticism of Pericle's time, as has been described by Maurizio Calvesi, there was a prevailing tendency to trace the entirety of the artistic process to the subconscious, or, rather, to characterize the symbol as something utterly indefinite and fleeting, tangible only in its effects, placing it in fraught contrast with allegory.[14] In the view of a critic such as Read, the subconscious had a defining role, but it also shows that in Pericle's poetics the mythical and imaginative moment of the conscious and the logical-rational impulse meet, albeit dialectically, continuously communicating with and disrupting one another. Pericle's polyvalent symbols contain various messages, concentrated in an organic and unitary system: "Art is associated with knowledge," Pericle affirms, and it remains "preparation for contemplating supreme beauty . . ." So alchemical thought intertwines with speculative thought, realizing it by turning it into fable. But how and to what degree does Pericle present cultural assumptions, or perennial archetypes, while overcoming the voluntary or deliberate symbol, and making it emerge from itself, uncontrolled? This article does not seek words to explain how the logos, the creative archetype quintessentially immune to material contact, "collides" with the matter expressed to its greatest extent in Pericle's most "secret" and poetic works.

Today's visitors of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn's house can admire two large works by Pericle, displayed centrally in the drawing room (Fig. 5).

12
Marks, "Luigi Pericle in England."

13
See Marco Pasi, "The Art of Luigi Pericle: From Spiritual Vision to Posthumousness," in *Luigi Pericle: A Rediscovery*, ed. Andrea Biasca-Caroni et al., 75–79.

14
See Maurizio Calvesi, *Un'estetica del simbolo tra arte e alchimia: Duchamp invisibile* (Bologna: Marietti Editore, 2016).

Fig. 5. A view of the living room of Casa Gabriella, which was the home of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, founder of Eranos. On the walls are two ink paintings by Luigi Pericle, donated by Greta and Andrea Biasca-Caroni to the Eranos Foundation in 2019 and 2021. Photo by Foto Garbani. Eranos Foundation Archives, Ascona.

A few words about Martina Mazzotta

Martina Mazzotta is a Venetian-Milanese art historian, author, and curator with a background in modern German philosophy. From 2003 until 2017, she was involved in her family's publishing house and art foundation Mazzotta (both of which have become historical archives), while lecturing in art history at the Università Cattolica di Milano. Martina's work is particularly focused on philosophy and its relationship with the visual arts, music, magic and science. She has curated exhibitions in various international museums, foundations and biennials (Santa Fe and Venice). Her recent publications and exhibition projects have extended and renewed the research on classic modern artists: *Kandinsky-Cage. Music and the Spiritual in Art* and *Jean Dubuffet. Art in play* (Fondazione Magnani, 2017 and 2018), *The spirit of the valley never dies* (Saatchi Gallery, 2019), *Max Ernst* (retrospective at Palazzo Reale, Milan 2022), *Max Ernst. Mondes magique, mondes libèrès* (Hotel de Caumont, Aix en Provence 2023), *Max Ernst. Surrealism, Art and Cinema* (Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid 2024-'25). She has explored themes between art and science, like in *Wunderkammer. Art, science and marvel yesterday and today* (Museo Poldi Pezzoli and Gallerie d'Italia, Milan 2013) and *Skin. Identity and beauty between Art and Science* (Triennale Museum, Milan 2012). She is currently an Associate Fellow at the Warburg Institute in London, where she has co-curated *Tarot. Origins & Afterlives* (2025); she is *Domenica -Il Sole 24 Ore* arts correspondent in the UK. She has collaborated with the Archivio Pericle in Ascona for the exhibition *Luigi Pericle. A rediscovery* (Estorick Collection, London 2022).

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