

**Eranos: Its Magical Past and Alluring Future. The Spirit of a Wondrous Place. In: Spring, A Journal of Archetype and Culture, vol. 92, Spring Journal 2015, 500 p.**

This number of Spring Journal reminds the 80th anniversary of Eranos Conferences was an undertaking initiated by personal initiative of Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn in a very unfavourable year of 1933 and whose *spiritus rector* was during 20 years Carl Gustav Jung. From its very beginning this project was intended as international and interdisciplinary and its main aim was to mediate meeting of the East and the West, i.e. of their spiritual, cultural and intellectual traditions. Eranos meetings took place near Swiss town Ascona (canton Tessin) and its participants were selected to transcend the narrow limits of specialized knowledge and specialized disciplines. Fröbe-Kapteyn defined Eranos project as an epoch-making undertaking which “come into existence at a time when the collective unconscious is peculiarly disturbed, and is breaking through all over the world in religious, political, social, and other manifestations (...) in the period of transition” which “causes all the upheavals in the world today”. Her aim was not to build up an organized and clearly defined association or school, but together with her colleagues they relied on spontaneous unfoldment of its basic idea: “if the central idea of Eranos is strong enough, and our attempts at keeping in line with it unwavering enough, then it will integrate and hold the group together without any outer organization”.

This edition of Spring Journal is an extensive volume counting 500 pages, initiated by a note from the editor (Nancy Cater) and guest editor’s introduction (Riccardo Bernardini) and then divided into seven different chapters (pp. 29–399), book reviews (pp. 403–469), bibliographical appendices (pp. 470–500), number of very interesting pictures and photographs where one can recognize C. G. Jung, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, Mircea Eliade, Henry Corbin and many others Eranos meetings participants.

The first chapter of the Spring Journal, *The Eranos Phenomenon* (pp. 27–78) contains different papers describing the Eranos idea and meetings from different perspectives and in different times. Fröbe-Kapteyn’s introductory paper was written in 1939, whereas those by Fabio Merlini and Hans Thomas Hakl are contemporary. The second chapter, *Eranos and the Psychological Tradition* (pp. 79–141) is introduced by C. G. Jung’s paper from 1939 followed by Gian Piero Quagliano’s, Antonio Vitolo’s, Stephen Aizenstat’s contributions. It deals mainly with Eranos’s contribution to C. G. Jung’s psychological thought. The third Chapter, *Eranos and the Idea of Sacred* (pp. 143–208) is introduced by Mircea Eliade’s paper from 1960 followed by David L. Miller’s, Bernardo Nante’s and Moshe Idel’s texts. This chapter summarizes Eranos’s approach to theology, Eranos’s “experience” as going beyond purely “academic” discourse and the phenomenon of *coni-*

*unctio oppositorum*. The fourth chapter, *Philosophical Perspectives of Eranos* (pp. 209–272) is introduced by Henry Corbin's paper followed by Michel Cazenave's, Romaro Mâderas and Grazia Schogen Marchianò's articles. This set of articles deals with psychology-philosophy dialogue and the reception of Far-Eastern thought in the West. The fifth chapter, *Eranos and the Unity of Psyche and Matter* (pp. 273–326) contains articles by Adolf Portmann, Rudolf Ritsema, Sigurd von Boletzky, Augusto Shantena Sabbadini and HRH Princess Irene of the Netherlands. This set of essays delves into the dialogue between human sciences and natural sciences, between theoretical speculation and a need for concrete answers. The last chapter is dedicated to historical photographs (pp. 327–369) and is followed by book reviews and bibliographical appendices.

Eranos associated and still associates scholars and experts of various fields. Its first president was a biologist Adolf Portmann, however, it seems everything was turning around archetype and other Jungian notions which were not always formulated as purely psychological concepts, but drew attention across scientific disciplines.

Eranos can be concisely characterized as “gnostic”, “esoteric”, “edge”, “margin”, “limit” or “borderland” which are characteristics referred to by various scholars contributing to this volume. David L. Miller in his paper *On the Edge of the Round Table, Eranos and Theological Studies* (pp. 155–167) reminds us of a metaphor of the “edge” as it emerges in philosophy or in various religious traditions and links it with the vocation of Eranos Conferences:

*“Between literal and metaphoric, between Otto’s fascinosum (identity) and tremendum (difference), there is a threshold, which is the edge of language. On this ‘edge’ is the philosophical ‘logic’ of language about ultimate reality, theologia. The name that Paul Tillich chose for this edge was Grenzsituation, often translated ‘boundary situation’ but which easily could be rendered ‘edge situation’.*

*This kind of thinking theologically should not seem strange to the religious imagination. Edge-talk is not uncommon in theologia. In Zoroastrianism, the Çinvat Bridge on the road to the next life is a knife-edge that discriminates the paths to heaven and to hell. It is not unlike a similar figure in Islam, and it is analogous to that dangerous edge traversed by the Altaic shaman in the spirit-journey to the underworld realm of Erlik Khan. In the tradition of Zen Buddhism, there is also the metaphor of the ‘diamond sword’, the discriminating religious consciousness whose spiritual essence is that of enduring brilliance, dignity and strength” (Miller 2015, 163).*

Gian Piero Quaglino in his paper *Carl Gustav Jung: His Life Before his Works* (pp. 89–103) observes that Jung did not break up from Freud because he “disagreed about any particular concept such as of libido”. The cause of their separation was on Freud’s side because “he needed to render a body of thought into an irreducibly ‘singular’ form and (...) create corpus of thoughts and ideas that would become ‘collective’” (Quaglino 2015). Here Quaglino initiates his differentiation between *persona-thought* (Freud) and *anima-thought* (Jung). Such a differentiation can be considered a specificity of an alternative character of Eranos meetings and Eranos lectures, i.e. an “edge” David L. Miller speaks about and an “intellectual counter current” (Hakl 2015) mentioned by Hans Thomas Hakl. Whereas *persona-thought* requires not only building-up and formulating more or less closed system of thoughts, but also “needs people who keep on thinking it, in an imitative, repetitive way”, *anima-thought* “is not concerned that others could think in a different way. Moreover, it is not concerned to think differently later on” (Quaglino 2015, 91–92). In other words, *persona-thought* is interested in answers whereas *anima-thought* in questions. According to Quaglino it is exactly this difference which constitutes the most important difference between Freud and Jung. Jung’s *anima-thought* is noticeable from the fact that “Jung is concerned with his own thoughts rather than those of others” and that “wanted to show how his thought had developed as a coming together of images rather than as project that had been shaped a priori to conform to some kind of logical coherence or explainable principle” (Quaglino 2015, 92). Such a direction of Eranos meetings is also confirmed by James Hillman who states:

*“Many of those who were steadily at Eranos were ...in a very peculiar position in their own fields. They ...were adventurous, they ...were an avant-garde in the field, and were true scholars, but they were trying to re-imagine their work. They were concerned with the loss, the fall, or what [Henry] Corbin calls, ‘exile’.”* (Hillman – Shamdasani 2013, 146)

From a historiographical perspective, it is observable that there were numerous publications about Eranos that were never published. Fröbe-Kapteyn’s *Die Geschichte von Eranos*, Gerhard Wehr’s *Eranos in seiner Geschichte*, Catherine Ritsema-Gris’s *L’Oeuvre d’Eranos et Vie d’Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn* or Rudolf Ritsema’s *The Periplus of the Eranos Archetype* are just some of them. There are some books about Eranos published between 1935 and 2015 but just few of them could be called historical and there is still no biography of Eranos founder.

Thus, 2015 Spring Journal edition is a very important undertaking that summarizes not just the history but also present time of Eranos, ideas of their founders, presidents and today’s thinkers. It seems that time has come to open Eranos pro-

ject and its ideas to wider academic and general public and to counter-balance its relative invisibility in the Western cultural and intellectual tradition.

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## References

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