St Thomas House

Whoever enters this house in Via Collina 32 in Ascona, Switzerland and reads these pages will take a surprising journey ... although I must confess right now that the stories you will read I have mostly taken from the web. I have only selected them, sorted them out and reconnected them. Enjoy! Thanks to those who took the trouble to research all this information that I used for the compilation. Ascona generated in me a feeling comparable to the 'unheimlich', a particular attitude of the more generic feeling of fear, which develops when a thing (or a person, an impression, a fact or a situation) is perceived as both familiar and foreign at the same time, causing generic anxiety combined with an unpleasant feeling of confusion and strangeness.

This 'perturbing' arises when in an object or situation characteristics of strangeness and familiarity are combined in a kind of 'affective dualism'. These neighbours, so distant in reality !

MY NEIGHBOURS

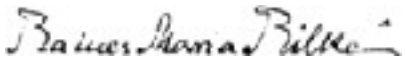
1. PROLOGUE

Spy Mary Bancroft (Jung and Dulles' lover) and Clover Dulles, wife of the head of the OSS (later C.I.A.), Allen Welsh Dulles in Ascona

A strange destiny that of Ascona. Spies wandering around the village, 20th century characters, some mysterious, others famous, who played secret key roles in the destinies of the world, or the illustrious or miserable lives of artists who landed here in search of peace. Strange place Ascona, indeed!

Be all here! Rilke in Ascona - Ascona in Rilke * Be all here ... Here in the eternal being ... Here is everything ... And perfection is here in the spirit ... Believe me, deep down here all delights bloom for you ... Here your dark world awaits you, beautiful as a dream ... Walk here! ... Here the merry game is born! ... in the cheerful here ... Here you heal as you wallow! ... here in the eternal ... in the eternal universe here ... the holy here after all distant illnesses ... full of eternity ... Gusto Gräser * Being here is wonderful ... Here is tellable time, here its home ... To be here is very ...

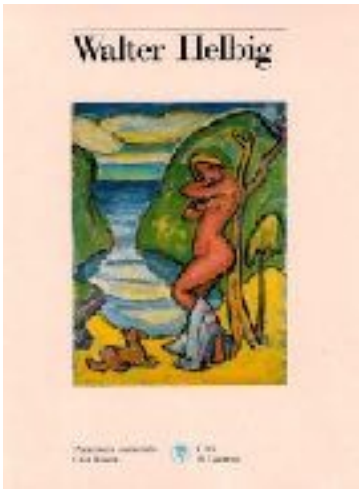
Rainer Maria Rilke



What was Ascona? I say was because it no longer counts today. But I came to understand its internationally significant past at the age of 52, having lived in Ascona for most of my life. Ascona was also a 'den of spies'. It's a spectacular phrase, but it gives a good idea. A little because for Switzerland, secrecy is a sacred matter, it is written in the people's DNA, and then because Ascona was perfect for secrecy. As beautiful as the abode of a Goddess, free from the hustle and bustle of the city, south of the Alps, reachable by train from the end of the 19th century and above all in a neutral Switzerland. Speaking of the Swiss, one thing that characterises us is our Alpine self-sufficiency, outside the world of the great nations that surround us and use us as a coffer because we no longer wage war from Marignano

when we gave up territorial ambitions, crushed by the French. In these pages I have investigated some of Ascona's stories, I have tried (often in vain) to unveil their secrets ... This book is called 'My Neighbours' because it mainly tells the stories of those who lived around Via Collina 32 in Ascona, which is our home. We are Greta (my wife) and Andrea Biasca-Caroni. Our house in

Ascona, it was Luigi Pericle's (rediscovered in 2016) before us and before Nell Walden, whose story I will tell in a few pages, who bought the land from Walter Helbig (he was a painter and engraver and there are many of his works at M.O.M.A in New York). Then there is the fact that these events, always international and often essential in the history of the twentieth century, sometimes secret by necessity, are part of Ascona or Monte Verità, which as the crow flies I consider to be a neighbour ... and then, as I said, this is a book about secrecy, it is and a book that attempts to unveil what has remained concealed because speak often of Theosophy or people who have played secretly important roles during the wars and talks about artists or intellectuals or important people who lived part of their lives here. Hermann Hesse talks about Ascona in Demian, which is partly set in Ascona, and perhaps (but I have no proof yet) the elderly theosophist lady who Demian (inspired by Gustav Graeser whom we will get to know better in



following) visits that mysterious house portrays the mother of Filippo Franzoni, a prominent theosophist from Locarno. I certainly know that

Alfredo Pioda (president of the Milan Theosophical Society) and Emilia Stalder Franzoni (Filippo's mother) knew each other because a correspondence was found between them. Gustav Graeser had been a teacher for Hesse. Theosophy played a primary role in these events.

2. SPIE

The story then begins in Ascona, on Monte Verità, in Luigi Pericle's house in Via collina 32. Next to the house of Louis Pericles is a hotel, it is called Ascona and belonged to my grandparents, and next to the hotel is the complex of villas that belonged to Baron Eduard Stinnes, the son of Hugo Stinnes who inspired Fritz Lang for the character of the evil master of the city in the cult film Metropolis, this was in 1934. I remember that as a child my parents were invited for tea by Edmund Stinnes, his son, and he had given me two solid gold coins: things that happened in Ascona in the past ... in my strange past! The gesture has something diseductive about it, let's admit it. Giving gold coins to a child, frankly, I find it objectionable, don't you? After all, one wouldn't expect anything else from such a character. Temptation is at work very early on and sneaks in at every opportunity.

But let's dig a little deeper to understand what the plot of Metropolis is based on:

Metropolis, the megalopolis of the future, is divided into two parts. In the upper city live the rich who enjoy all the comforts. In the lower one the workers, exploited like slaves. Maria, who looks after the children of the latter, takes them one day to see a garden in the city above. Here she meets for the first time Freder, son of the absolute master of Metropolis (inspired by our neighbour's father), Frederer (by fictitious translation then the neighbour Edmund Stinnes ... sure, a bit of a stretch there, hihih). Disturbed by her beauty, the young man goes in search of her and discovers the hard life of the workers. Maria puts all her strength into trying to achieve a mediation between what she calls 'the arms and the brain' but the scientist Rotwang kidnaps her and gives her features to a robot that will incite the workers to rebellion. How to make the triumph of the

machines as a Moloch thirsty for human sacrifice? Only when the robot is destroyed does social peace finally return. One can also read a metaphor about the conflict between magic and technology. But the Moloch? He was a god to whom human sacrifices of children were paid, who, after having had their throats slit, were burnt in holocaust. The

Moloch is found in cultures throughout the ancient Near East, including the Egyptians, Canaanites, Phoenicians and related cultures in North Africa and the Near East. To understand it, one can study its Greek version Kronos. Like his father Uranus, Kronos also wanted to kill his children. An oracle had predicted to him that one of his newborns, once grown, would sooner or later oust him. To prevent this, since they were also immortals and could not simply kill them, he swallowed them as soon as they were born. Of this bloody act, Francisco Goya's painting is famous.

One day, however, his wife Rhea became pregnant by Zeus,

Having taken advice from her parents, she decides to give birth in secret by handing Kronos a stone, which the latter devours, thinking it

to be his own last child. It will be Zeus himself, once he grows up, who will oust Kronos, becoming the king of Olympus. A note to avoid

confusions: Chronos (Ancient Greek: Κρόνος?, Krónos) is a pre-Olympian deity of Greek mythology and religion, in the most widespread myths the son of Uranus (Sky) and Gaia or Gea (Earth), Titan of Fertility, Time and Agriculture, second lord of the world and father of Zeus and the first Olympians. He is not to be confused with Chronos, deity of time in Orphism. Chronos is identified as Saturn in Roman mythology.

Zeus then grows in strength and intelligence and finally defeats his father Kronos, making him regurgitate the other children he had devoured, and the first object vomited by Kronos is the very stone he had swallowed mistaking it for Zeus. Zeus then loosens the three Cyclopes from their chains, thus forced by Kronos himself, who reciprocate by giving him the Thunderbolt (lightning).

Verses 617-720 of Hesiod's Theogony deal with the Titanomachy, i.e. the struggle between the Titans residing on Mount Otri and the gods of Olympus (sons of Kronos and Rhea): For ten years, the struggle between the two sides has been going on unsteadily when Zeus, on the advice of Gaea, frees the three Hundred-handers previously forced into Tartarus by Uranus and, after having refreshed them with nectar and ambrosia, engages them in the battle that will thus become decisive and will end with the defeat of the Titans and their segregation in Tartarus, closed by walls and bronze gates specially built by Poseidon and guarded on sight by the three Hundred-handers themselves. It should be noted that Hesiod, in Works and Days (vv. 170 ff.), states that Chronos, freed from Tartarus after Zeus pardons him, becomes king of the Isle of the Blessed where the Heroes are destined by Zeus, there happy and free from sorrows. The Fortunate Islands or Islands of the Blessed (in ancient Greek: μακάρων νῆσοι, makárōn nêsoi, in Latin insulae fortunatae), are islands in the Atlantic Ocean found in classical literature both in mythical contexts and in historical and geographical works. From Claudius Ptolemy onwards it

has often been argued that they coincide with the

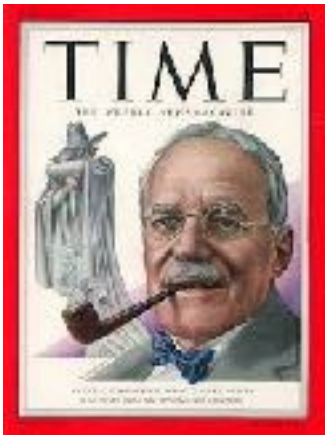
Canary Islands. What if Ascona was the Isle of the Blessed instead? Well... sometimes I think it's the one of the lotus eaters...

But back to us, who were these neighbours? If Fritz Lang was inspired by Hugo Stinnes for Metropolis, we have to find out who he is!

In the huge villa behind the Ascona hotel lived Edmund Stinnes (1896-1980), a German industrialist and entrepreneur. He graduated in engineering in Berlin in 1922 and two years later, on the death of his father Hugo, he and his brothers inherited Stinnes AG, which had specialised in logistics since the early 19th century.

In 1893, Hugo Stinnes founded Stinnes, a German company active in construction, steel, electricity, etc. Although his take-off in the capitalist world was due to his unquestionable skills, during the war he was greatly favoured by his proximity to the general state, and was one of the German capitalists who benefited most from the conflict, getting closer to the world of politics and the Deutsche Volkspartei. From 1920 to 1924 he was a popular deputy in the Reichstag, and in those years he also became one of the leading owners of printed media in Germany; he opposed the gruelling conditions imposed on Germany by the Paris Peace Conference in the Treaty of Versailles. As a politician he also sought concertation between capitalists and trade unions, a fact of considerable moderation on the German right. However, he was also very adept at exploiting hyperinflation, expanding his empire enormously (and at practically no cost), so much so that he became known as Inflationskönig, while increasing his reputation as a profiteer. However, his economic empire collapsed almost immediately after his death. His son Edmund, owner of the villa behind the Ascona Hotel and married to a Jewess, was forced by Hitler's advance to emigrate to the United States in the mid-1930s where he taught economics at Haverford College near Philadelphia. However, Edmund Stinnes was already in Switzerland, in Ascona, towards the end of the Second World War, when he took part in Operation Sunrise at the end of the conflict in Italy. From that time on, he never left Ascona and died there in 1980. Today he rests in the municipal cemetery. The operation of

Intelligence Sunrise is at the centre of some of the events of the spies who populated Ascona, to whose ranks we have recently added Carl Gustav Jung, enlisted as a spy by Allen Welsh Dulles (head of the OSS, forerunner of the CIA, a dark and very powerful character that we will delve into) and Mary Bancroft, whom you have seen in the photo at the beginning of the text...



At the time, this is '43, the second marriage of Miss Bancroft was beginning shipwrecked and, loving Gustav Jung and at the same time Mr. Dulles, whose wife w a s in the United States, was looking for recruits for interview the hundreds of refugees, adventurers and spies that were poured into

Switzerland officially neutral from every corner of Europe in the war. Who knows what they were saying to each other on that little wall in Ascona in this photo you have already seen on the front page of this text? Miss Bancroft was born in Boston and raised there by her stepfather Clarence W. Barron, chairman of Dow Jones and de facto editor of the Wall Street Journal. Barron can be considered the founder of modern financial journalism. Bancroft attended

Smith College in Massachusetts for one year. Between 1926 and 1932 He resided in New York, where he spent part of his time frequenting the flat of his friend from Massachusetts, Ruth Forbes Paine, and the latter's husband, George Lyman Paine Jr., an architect and radical left-wing activist (1901-78) known for his work with the Correspondence Publishing Committee, a Trotskyist organisation that developed a number of theories, including that the Soviet Union was a state-capitalist society, with an emphasis on Hegelian theory as a way of understanding the world.

The C.P.C. also sought to focus more energy on political issues that concerned women, youth, African-Americans and grassroots workers. Lyman was interested in what he called 'ultimate reality', which Bancroft interpreted as her old friend 'truth'. Lyman and Mary had endless discussions about this ultimate reality as we sipped gin and ginger ale in industrial quantities.

After divorcing her first husband, figure skater Sherwin Badger, in the summer of 1933, Mary came to Europe with her friend Ruth Forbes Paine, still married but now separated, where she met a Swiss accountant, Jean Rufenacht, who became her second husband. In 1934, she moved to Zurich, Switzerland, where she learned French and German excellently, and became a friend and pupil of Carl Jung, who cured her of chronic sneezing attacks (even spies have colds).

Mary Bancroft's friend Ruth Forbes Young (1903, 1998) was a member of the Forbes family and founder of the International Peace Academy in 1970. With her third husband, Arthur M. Young, she also co-founded the Institute for the Study of Consciousness in Berkeley. Arthur Young was a mathematician and an engineer, a practical man who 'knew how to do it', in the Yankee tradition of know-how, and as such was the most significant figure in the development of the Bell helicopter. He was also a first-rate astrologer, a scholar of myths and dreams, a long-time researcher of PSI phenomena but, above all, the developer of what may be the first theory unifying consciousness, physics and the life sciences: Process Theory, described in his two-volume works, The Reflective Universe and The Geometry of Meaning. (I can find no evidence of kinship with Frank Rudolph Young, son of John Arnold Young, who wrote Secrets of Psychic PowerControl, a text I find cited in the notes on cyclomancy filed among Luigi Pericle's study notebooks).

Forbes belonged to the Forbes family of Massachusetts, being the daughter of Ralph Emerson Forbes and Elise Cabot. She was a great-granddaughter of Ralph Waldo Emerson (who will be found in these

pages). We will later find the ideal links between Emerson, Thoreau and Walden and then the house of Louis Pericles and his neighbours ... the world is indeed strangely interconnected.

But back to our spy ... after the entry of the United States into the World War II, Bancroft was recruited by the Office of Strategic Services, although initially without her knowledge, and was asked by a contact at the US embassy to write analyses on German politics based on German public sources for Swiss and American newspapers. She was then introduced to Allen Dulles in Zurich in December 1942 and had a romantic relationship, based on Dulles' proposal that went something like this: 'we can let the work cover the romance, and the romance cover the work'.

Dulles assigned Bancroft to work with Hans Bernd Gisevius, a German military intelligence officer who provided her with details of the 20 July plan to assassinate Hitler; Bancroft soon developed a romantic relationship with Gisevius as well. After the war, as her relationship with Dulles cooled, Bancroft became close friend of Dulles' wife Clover, who told her that she was aware of their relationship and approved of it. I imagine that the photo in Ascona at the beginning of these pages is from this time around '45. She remained close friends with Clover until the latter's death in 1974.

After the war Bancroft settled in New York and became close friends with Henry Luce (publishing magnate with Times and Fortune among others). She became 'one of the leading advocates of Jung's psychology in the United States', lecturing on the subject and

publishing articles in academic journals. He also published several novels in the 1950s and an autobiography in 1983.

In 1943, at the behest of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Allen Dulles went to Zurich to engage Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), then in his seventies and a well-known psychoanalyst, as a spy with the code number 488. This is the first time a major power uses the psychological profiles of opposing leaders in espionage operations. Jung analysed the psychotic tendencies of Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, judging the first two as internally strong 'two clan leaders' but dismissing them as bullies, while describing Hitler in a subtle and sophisticated manner, calling him a 'thaumaturge' reflecting the German unconscious. Jung predicts in 1943 the events of 1945, including Hitler's suicide in the Führerbunker in Berlin. Years later, Allen Dulles reveals that Jung's analyses were decisive in Dwight Eisenhower's persuasion strategy to convince the German citizens to surrender, signalling inevitable defeat.

As for Dulles I would add that his brother Foster was secretary of state and is famous for his attitude which we summarise with this sentence: "There are two ways to conquer a nation: one is to subjugate its population by force of arms, the other is to subjugate its economy by financial means."" Let us add that after being at the centre of crucial decisions that influenced the destinies of the world during the Second World War, Allen became head of the CIA and broke the golden rule of espionage by bringing the intelligence-gathering and field-intervention forces together in one agency. This explains American interventionism ...

Foster Dulles signed an agreement in Berlin in May 1933 with Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's economics minister, to coordinate economic exchanges between Germany and the United States and his brother, who worked for Sullivan and Cromwell, the law firm that worked with the government through the two Dulles to further American interests and those of its multinationals.

But why does this 1933 come back so often? Let's see what happens in the world in that year:

For the United States, it is the worst year of the Great Depression.

IRI was created in order to save the major Italian banks from bankruptcy.

Kolmogor ov publishes Grundbegriffe der Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung (Fundamental Concepts of Probability Calculation) where the axiomatic approach to probability is introduced.

Walter Christaller publishes The Central Locations of Southern Germany.

Enrico Fermi names the neutrino.

Karl Jansky announces the reception of radio waves from the centre of the galaxy.

René Lacoste launched the well-known polo shirt brand Lacoste with his friend Fred Perry.

5 January - San Francisco, USA: construction of the Golden Gate Bridge begins

29 January - Germany: Weimar Republic President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler as German Chancellor.

30 January - Germany: Adolf Hitler forms his government.

4 February: German President Paul von Hindenburg issues a decree restricting the freedom of the press.

11 February: The façade of the Church of San Martino a Montughi in Florence is completed.

26 February: Russian philosopher and mystic Pavel Aleksandrovič Florensky is arrested and sentenced to ten years in a lager. He is shot on 8 December 1937 on the outskirts of Leningrad.

Florensky intervenes in the epochal reflection around the concepts and consequences of dogmatism, dogmatism, orthodoxy, sometimes proposing himself in the terms of an indirect dialogue with Lev Tolstoy. The conception of space and the conception of time (in tune with a philosophical sensibility perfectly pertinent to the beginnings of the 20th century) emerge from his pages, passing through a differentiation of spatiality, for a profound critique made without hesitation of Euclidean geometry that, in other ways, re-emerges as a critique of the linear perspective conception. On the strictly philosophical, rather than theological or spiritual terrain, Florensky inaugurates a philosophy of rhythm involved by the emergence of a cinematic thought, by reflection on the tragic understood, later, in close relation with kenosis; a philosophy involved in the definitive redefinition of the symbol as the summit of the encounter between God and the world, visible and invisible, between heaven and earth. In the relationship between earthly reality and otherworldly reality, the dream for Florensky holds a significant role: favouring the acquisition of a new measure of space and time, in the imaginary, it presents itself as a commonly accessible condition that allows contact with the invisible beyond earthly reality itself.

"In his last years of freedom, Pavel Florensky composed his stupendous aesthetics. The premise is the Einsteinian idea of space. [...] Florensky turns to the concept of 'thing' and defines it as "corrugation" or "place of curvature" of space. [...] Florensky's is an aesthetic born on the edge of the chasm, after which art would disappear, replaced by displays of dung, babble, installations."

(Elémire Zolla, The Perennial

Philosophy, 1999) Note that Elémire Zolla

In Christian theologies, the concept of kenosis also indicates the process interior that leads the Christian to empty himself of his own will inclined to sin and evil, to empty himself of his own egocentricity, to become entirely receptive to the will of the Divinity and be able to

thus surrendering to it without feelings of rebellion or fear or deprivation of freedom. Undressing (kenosis) is an indispensable and functional premise for being clothed with Christ by Grace and the divine Spirit.

(Philippians 2:5-7) "Have in yourselves the same sentiments as Christ Jesus: although he was in the condition of God, he did not count it a privilege to be like God, but emptied himself, assuming the condition of a servant, becoming like men." (CEI translation 2008)

Kenosis would be a painful path of conversion as it would demolish the securities and certainties that man builds up throughout his life. A famous example of kenosis is the Dark Night of the Soul recounted by the mystic John of the Cross (echoing a German mystic: Johannes Meister Eckhart) who narrates the sense of anguish and blind despair that preceded his full conversion in Imitation of Christ. The episode of Francis of Assisi's conversion, when the poor man strips himself of his family's wealth to embrace a religious life, also signals a crucial phase of his kenosis.

I am trying to reconnect Elemire Zolla with my neighbours, and it is not difficult as we often find him in the Eranos galaxy. While I am searching I find a nice article on esotericism in Switzerland which I copy below with a link to it

by Laura Di Corcia *

Speaking of Switzerland and occultism - one hundred years after the birth of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical Society - many will think of Monte Verità, near Locarno: still considered a place of energetic regeneration, the mountain, with its surprising Mediterranean vegetation, was the site of one of the most surprising utopian experiments of the modern era, a forerunner of the hippie movement of the 1970s and the New Age movement of the 1990s.

But on closer inspection, the experience of esotericism in Switzerland goes back much further.

If we travel backwards along the timeline, we come across a giant of esotericism, the link that first connected the magical world to the scientific one: Philip Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1492-1541), who liked to call himself Paracelsus. Already the name suggests an awareness of a certain superiority, a firm self-confidence and a prophet's flair. Paracelsus toured half of Europe and also spent time in Ferrara, at the University, where he certainly came into contact with the Florentine culture of the time and the esoteric wisdom of Marsilio Ficino. His peculiarity was to transfer those contents into the sphere of medicine; thus was born spagyria, the esoteric medicine of the West, which treats plants according to an alchemic procedure and searches for the astrological trace, the quintessence linked to a precise Arcanum, represented by a star. Spagyria, which is still used today even if it does not enjoy the fame of other therapies, recalls and anticipates in some ways homeopathy, whose theoretical principles were formulated by the German Samuel Hanhemann at the end of the 18th century.

But let us continue to probe the paths of this esoteric fable: after this great 16th century doctor, we find ourselves catapulted between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. We then return to Monte Verità, founded by a Ticino character truly intriguing for his open-mindedness and eclectic interests, the writer and theosophist Alfredo Pioda. Under the influence of the libertarian movements that shook European history in the 19th century, he was one of the first to think of founding an international intellectual centre in Ascona, so as to offer a space that would act as a pole of attraction for the many different personalities who came to the shores of Lake Maggiore - anarchists, politicians, doctors, poets, painters, dreamers. Those were the years of Cattaneo and Mazzini; years of great political upheaval, of thought, of utopia. And utopian was the experience of Monte Verità, where people who aimed for a regeneration of society in a communist or even anarchist sense, artists who wanted to experience

community, dancers, thespians, united by the desire to live together in isolation from society, to rediscover the meaning of existence in contact with nature through plant cultivation, vegetarian eating and nudism.

The fact that this experience was fundamental for European culture tout court is enshrined on the website of the Italian Theosophical Society, where we read that 'the first Centro Studi Teosofici was promoted in 1891 in Milan by Mrs J. Murphy in collaboration with a writer from Locarno, Dr Alfredo Pioda'. Why did this experience of great impact and unprecedented freedom take place in Locarno, Switzerland? The reasons are probably to be found in the history of this country, which has always sought peaceful coexistence in the midst of a turbulent and bloody Europe, thus finding (in advance of other political and cultural realities) important values such as tolerance.

It is no coincidence that we find everything and the opposite of everything. In 1912 Rudolf Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society in Basel, which, following an opposite movement to that which animated Monte Verità, born in the wake of theosophy, aimed to break free from it. Rudolf Steiner, a precocious talent in the esoteric art of discovering symbols and meanings, an excellent connoisseur of Goethe, after having been president of the German and Austrian Theosophical Society for a long time, was expelled from the same for not having wanted to recognise in the Hindu boy Krishnamurti the reincarnation of Christ. For this reason he moved to Switzerland and started a new movement, which, apart from being speculative, also wanted to act practically on human experience, pedagogically, nutritionally, architecturally and beyond.

Even today, in Dornach, near Basel, one can admire the splendid Gotheanum, a very special building, where the forms, while embracing man, do not forget to remind him that he belongs to the heavens, as well as to the earth.A gem, just to testify that yes, there is an esoteric brand in Switzerland: one of the most important tarot study books, compiled by Oswald Wirth, of

Brienz (near Bern), an occultist linked to the Frenchman Stanislas de Guaita and a skilled pranotherapist. Everything and the opposite of everything, we said. Already. In the 1970s, Elémire Zolla founded the Istituto di Alti Studi Ticinesi in Lugano, in the splendid setting of Villa Heleneum, which was short-lived (three years in total, from 1970 to 1973) but which turned out to be an attempt to escape the shallows of the materialism prevailing in Italy, where a left-wing culture dominated that Zolla judged flat and spiritless; for three years the Villa saw the presence of eminent scholars from all over Europe investigating fields as diverse as archaeology, art history, sacred music, Egyptology, symbolism and orientalism.

(* Ticino Italianist and journalist)

(take a look at this).

But let us return to the events of '33 :

28 February - Germany: The Reichstag in Berlin burns down during the night, probably at the instigation of the SS. However, the mentally handicapped socialist Marinus van der Lubbe is found in the building while lighting small fires and is indicted and found guilty. Reprisals and arrests follow (including our own Erich Mühsam).

3 March - Germany: Ernst Thälmann is arrested. Ernst Johannes Fritz Thälmann was a German politician and revolutionary. General Secretary of the Communist Party of Germany, he was one of the most important leaders of the German labour movement in the 1920s and 1930s and a leading opponent of Adolf Hitler's National Socialism.

4 March - United States: Franklin Delano Roosevelt becomes the 32nd president

24 March - Germany: parliament gives Hitler full powers (Ermächtigungsgesetz)

1 April - Germany: A boycott day is called for against shops belonging to German Jews.

10 May - Germany/Berlin: The Nazis, on the Opera Square (Opernplatz), staged the Bücherverbrennung, a book burning in which 20,000 volumes of authors put on the index were burned.

18 May - Soviet Union: on an island near the Aleksandrovsky rajon (Tomsk Oblast) the long-awaited trial of communism in its intended final form begins; it ends in a fiasco, with episodes of cannibalism, and the few survivors are found reduced to human larvae (Nazino Affair).

29 June: Primo Carnera wins the heavyweight world championship title.

20 July - Vatican State: the Holy See signs a concordat with Germany to protect the rights of German Catholics.

14 October - Germany: The National Socialist government announces the country's withdrawal from the League of Nations.

November - The United States officially recognises the Soviet Union.

13 November - Italy: Giulio Einaudi registers 'Giulio Einaudi editore' at the Turin Chamber of Commerce as a sole proprietorship.

5 December: End of Prohibition in the US

I can only include some literature on Mühsam (which will be discussed in more detail later, but I already refer you to an interesting page on anarchist thought).

https://bibliotecaborghi.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Müsham-The Calvary-of-Erich-Müsham.pdf

And a satirical magazine that featured many characters: The Simplicissimus was a German satirical humour magazine founded in 1896 and published until 1967. It was founded in Munich in 1896 by two friends: the publisher Albert Langen and the journalist Thomas Theodor Heine. For its openly

satirical against the Kaiser, the Church and the military conduct suffered several trials for lese majesty. At the beginning of

20th century could count on the help of people such as Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Gustav Meyrink (the 'Golem', Prague theosophist, friend of Kafka and Steiner), Georg Queri, Fanny zu Reventlow, Ludwig Thoma, Knut Hamsun, Jakob Wassermann, Frank Wedekind, Arthur Holitscher, Karl Arnold, Franziska Bilek, Walter Essenther, George Grosz, Kathe Kollwitz, Olaf Gulbransson, Heinrich Kley, Alfred Kubin, Rudolf Kriesch, Otto Nückel, Bruno Paul, Ferdinand von Rezniček, Erich Schilling, Wilhelm Schulz, Edgar Steiger, Eduard Thöny, Robert Walser, Rudolf Wilke, Heinrich Zille, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Heinrich Mann, Rainer Maria Rilke and the draughtsmen B. Paul and T. T. Heine. The satirical verve ran out and publications ended for the first time in 1944 and, after resuming in 1954, definitively in 1967.

On Kubin :

In December 1911, Gabriele Münter invited Kubin to join a new art group that included her, Wassily Kandinsky (with whom Kubin became close friends) and Franz Marc: Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider). Kubin exhibited his works with the group until 1914, when it disbanded due to the outbreak of the First World War. In 1916 Kubin published Die Totentanz ('The Dance of Death'), a series of twenty-four drawings bearing witness to the horror of war.

In March of the same year, Kubin received two terrible pieces of news: his friend Franz Marc had died in battle and the wife of an artist acquaintance had committed suicide. Kubin was reading a book about the

Buddhism in his library in Zwickledt when he received these two pieces of news. He sought refuge in the teachings of Buddhism and fell into a delusional state in which he believed that everything around him was an illusion and withdrew from all his acquaintances and friendships, even his wife Hedwig. He wrote a will and became totally indifferent to art, he created for himself a small cell in the house in which he slept on the floor on a pile of straw.

The crisis, called the 'Buddhist Crisis', was the last and most violent crisis Kubin had. It lasted exactly ten days and came to an end on 12 March 1916, after the artist had begun to suffer hallucinations that frightened him greatly and brought him out of his delirious state.

During the following years, Kubin learned to better control and manage his emotions and crises, to the point where he was able to live a decent life. However, the artist confessed in one of his writings that he suffered from a form of 'resignation' or apathy for many years following this episode.

BUT let's get on with our characters: for the US treasury department Allen Dulles made a 30 million loan to the German Nazi party. His brother was Secretary of State from 1953 to 1959, during Eisenhower's presidency he advocated helping France in the war against the Viet Minh in French Indochina (a position that in the following decade led to direct American involvement in the Vietnam War). He became famous for refusing to shake the hand of People's Republic of China Prime Minister Zhou Enlai at the 1954 Geneva conference.

During the Dien Bien Phu crisis, Dulles allegedly proposed to Georges Bidault, President of the French Council, the use of tactical atomic weapons against Vietnam (Operation Vautour). At the time of the Korean War, he was the author of the Chain of Islands strategy to isolate the communist bloc in the Far East from the sea.

The two brothers (Alle and Foster Dulles) had absurdly enormous power and were the architects of the world's war fortunes during their often joint activities. Politics at that time was also the business of the all-powerful American families like theirs ... a crazy time, as when they put a dictator in power in Guatemala to control the economy or other similar totalitarian acts.

As already mentioned, the financier Allen Dulles worked in New York for Sullivan & Cromwell, a Wall Street investment firm that for a time was the largest law firm in the world defending the interests of American multinationals. As already mentioned, as managing partner he successfully engineered the largest Treasury loan ($30 million) to the National Socialist German government, as well as other foreign loans and became the State Department's point man on foreign loans during 1926-1933. In 1956, Sullivan & Cromwell oversaw the legal aspects of Ford Motor Company's $643 million bid, at the time the largest ever. Sullivan & Cromwell's involvement in the 1954 coup d'état in Guatemala has been documented because of its legal services to the United Fruit Company. This put pressure on President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (a former employee of the firm) to depose Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz (the C.I.A. kicked him to death after preventing his escape by threatening his family). Arbenz had become the protagonist of a decisive policy of nationalisation of the main infrastructures in the Central American country going against American interests. The operation was orchestrated by the then CIA director, Allen Welsh Dulles (also a former member of the firm), and led to the establishment of a pro-US dictatorship in Guatemala.

Operation 40

According to what the Church Commission revealed in 1976, Allen Dulles had submitted a plan to assassinate Fidel Castro, with the help of the Mafia, to President Eisenhower for approval.

The failed invasion of Cuba

'Operation Zapata' was the code name Dulles gave to the invasion of Cuba, against Fidel Castro, better known as the Bay of Pigs Invasion. In reality, it was a risky operation because 1,460 Cuban mercenaries and exiles were deployed against the 20,000 men that the Cuban army deployed: when the Cuban partisans were attacked by the Castro army, there was no air cover because the US air force was not supposed to attack a sovereign state. Cuban planes torpedoed the enemy ships with supplies of fuel, ammunition and food and the invaders had to surrender after three days.

But back to Hugo Stinnes, Edmund's father (he is the neighbour), was born on 12 February 1870 in Mülheim and died on 10 April 1924 (at the age of 54) in Berlin. By profession an industrialist Hugo Stinnes was also a politician. As already mentioned during the end of the German Empire and the beginning of the Weimar Republic, he was considered one of the most influential entrepreneurs in Europe. His son Eduard married a Jewess and I was told by his daughter and granddaughter that one evening at dinner Hitler advised or perhaps ordered him to divorce. Some say that Operation Sunrise, the secret treaty between the German and Italian generals and Dulles led to the withdrawal of many troops from Italy (150,000 men) and perhaps prevented its destruction because Hitler had decided to do so while his general did not put the plan into action following the agreements made with Dulles during Operation Sunrise which took place 100 metres from my house, in the Stinnes house. It must also be said that Stalin had not been invited and this foreshadowed the future of American politics which later led to the Cold War … Once the two neighbours (Stinnes heirs) where this episode took place, Mrs. Angela Stinnes and Maya Hobart (Angela's daughter) told me about a dinner

with

Hitler of Angela's grandfather, Ugo Stinnes, who returned home and is said to have said: 'We have a lunatic in power' ...

But at this point in the text I would add a part of the translation of Jean Ziegler's book 'THE SWISS, THE GOLD AND THE DEAD'. (1998).

Much of the information revealed in this text comes from Dulles' own OSS archives in Berne. In 1942, Allen Welsh Dulles, a wealthy and politically savvy Wall Street lawyer, was commissioned to set up a spy station in Switzerland by William J. Donovan, head of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), the US foreign intelligence service. At dawn on 8 November 1942, after an adventurous journey through the Bahamas, the Azores, Lisbon, Madrid, Perpignan and Marseilles, Dulles stepped off a local French train at Annemasse on the Franco-Swiss border. It was the day of the Allied landing in North Africa and Hitler's response was the occupation of southern France. Apart from a few downed bomber pilots fleeing the Germans, Dulles was the last American to reach Switzerland by land through enemy territory. French police and railway station customs officers were already sharing their shelter with members of the Gestapo, but a customs officer belonging to the Resistance helped Dulles cross the border into Geneva.

Dulles established his OSS base at 23 Herrengasse, above the river Aare, in the 'old town' of Berne. From the rear entrance, guests could enter and leave without being noticed. Dulles was also able to use his influence to turn off the streetlights outside the property to encourage secrecy for his visitors. Among the guests were spies, traitors, refugees, priests, exiles and expatriates, anyone who could provide him with information. One of the visitors was Prince Max Egon zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, a special agent of Himmler. Officially designated 'special assistant' to the American ambassador to Switzerland, Dulles was an unusual type of spy, seeking

popularity rather than anonymity. His personal contacts with Donovan and President Roosevelt were soon the talk of the town. Dulles met with everyone in the bar of the Hôtel Belle-vue, in the restaurant Du Théâtre and in his office on Dufourstrasse. A Wall Street lawyer of international renown, he maintained excellent relations with the presidents of the major Swiss banks, with the international businessmen who bought raw materials for Hitler, and with the guild lawyers in Berne, Basle and Zurich who acted as straw men for the Nazis all over the world. Confidential information was regularly deposited in Herrengasse by numerous Swiss bank employees who disapproved of their bosses' business methods. The secret network of the OSS, on the other hand, was run by Gerry Mayer, Dulles' senior assistant. A sophisticated code that was never deciphered by either the Gestapo or German military intelligence, known as the Abwehr, allowed Dulles to conduct almost nightly telephone conversations with the OSS headquarters in Washington. An important role in the clandestine network was played by two exceptional women, who both became (in succession) Dulles' mistresses. Mary Bancroft, an intellectual from Massachusetts who divided her time between Zurich and Ascona and had studied for her doctorate under the Zurich psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, was in charge of the couriers for the French Resistance organisations. Wally Toscanini, Countess Castelbarco, daughter of the anti-fascist conductor Arturo Toscanini, supervised communications, payments and supplies to partisans in northern Italy. Both were women of charm, intelligence and courage.

Thanks to the two networks - the system of public and social contacts and the secret espionage organisation - Dulles soon obtained extremely precise and detailed information on almost all financial, trade and arms deals concluded between Switzerland and the Third Reich. Among the hundreds of people who served Dulles as informers, one was of particular importance: Hans Bernd Gisevius, Abwehr (defence) agent and German vice-consul in Zurich (remember the relationship with Bankroft?). Having been appointed

by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris to build the Abwehr base in Switzerland, Gisevius had extremely detailed information on almost all Swiss bankers, lawyers, arms dealers, manufacturers, exporters, trustees and others in the service of the Nazis. According to Professor Ziegler (whose sociology lectures I attended in Geneva), Switzerland avoided the Second World War through active and organised complicity with the Third Reich from 1940 to 1945. The 'gnomes of Zurich, Basel and Berne' were the senior Swiss bank officials who acted as Hitler's protectors and creditors. The author compares the bankers with 'gnomes', as they are a race of spirits who inhabit the interior of the earth, guarding treasures (for those who have seen 'Lord of the Rings' ...) . In 1943, during the Allied bombing raids, Switzerland remained Hitler's only industrial centre unscathed thanks to its official and declared neutrality, continuing to secretly produce war material. The Bührle-Oerlikon company (owner of the Ascona hotel Castello del Sole, we went there the other day to eat ... typical Ascona atmosphere ... chilling) delivered cannons to the Wehrmacht in April 1945. The Swiss complicity is explained as a response to Hitler's pressure, but the author suggests that the senior bank officials were willing accomplices (well, it is not hard for me to imagine that saving one's own skin and getting rich are two very strong motivations that distract from any ethical considerations). The arrogance and greed of the Swiss financial elites during the war period are cited as motivations, and many economic historians attribute the financial power of the Swiss banks to war profits. Despite the devastation in Europe, the Swiss National Bank's gold and currency reserves increased. It should be noted en passant that Emil Georg Bührle (1890-1956), who lived in Zurich, put together one of the most important private collections of 20th century European paintings. At its centre is the painting of French Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. Surrounding these works is a collection of French art of the

19th century that prepared or accompanied Impressionism. This is complemented by examples of the work of the Nabis, Fauves, Cubists and

other representatives of the French avant-garde since 1900, as well as sections of older art, especially Dutch painters from the 17th century and Italian painters from the 16th to 18th century. The collection also includes a group of Gothic wood carvings. Emil Bührle studied art history in Freiburg and Munich and in 1913 saw the new exhibition of the National Gallery in Berlin, in which the French Impressionists occupied an important place. In 1924 he was transferred from Magdeburg to Zurich on behalf of his employer and reorganised the Schweizerische Werkzeugmaschinenfabrik Oerlikon. From 1936 onwards, he was the sole owner of the Oerlikon Bührle & Co. machine tool factory and a Swiss citizen; his first purchases of paintings in the Swiss trade were 'The Boy with the Red Waistcoat' by Cézanne in 1948 and 'La Petite Irène' by Renoir in 1949. Between 1951 and 1956, Bührle bought around three quarters of his collection from important dealers in New York, London, Paris and Zurich. He donated an exhibition building to the Kunsthaus Zürich (built in 1954-1958), for which he postponed his gallery projects. In 1960, Emil Bührle's family founded the E.G. Bührle Collection Foundation and donated a large part of the collection to it. Weapons, money and ... art! Who knows why art that should be peaceful ends up in the hands of an arms manufacturer?

But back to other burning issues ...

For Ziegler, the situation in 1939 has an arrogance similar to that of the 15th century, underlining the alliance with the Nazis of our compatriots attracted by exceptional profits. Switzerland is eager to emerge from the war as an innocent victim, and maintains an image 'inflated to heroic proportions' while Swiss banks are connected with flows of dirty money from all over the world.

Now if this does not upset you too much, I would like to move on to another topic, diametrically opposed from an ethical point of view, a topic that interested the owner of this house where I am writing, Luigi Pericle, who intrigued me not a little. You may wonder what all this has to do with it, and perhaps assembling this kind of argument

it is typical of the conspiracy mentality that I try so hard to avoid... but so be it, I searched the official CIA website and translated the result:

Has the CIA really studied psychic powers?

The conclusion of the report - which echoed the assessments of CIA officers involved in the programme in the 1970s - was that there were remote viewing experiences that were accurate enough to defy randomness. However, the programme was abandoned anyway because of its sporadic, inconsistent and unreliable remote vision (Remote Vision), and therefore useless for intelligence purposes. It can therefore be said that the CIA accepts the existence of remote vision, but cannot make use of it for the reasons given. The CIA's History staff on its official website says :

"According to historians, from the very beginning of the CIA's history, we have been interested in investigating the existence of 'extrasensory perception' (ESP) or other paranormal phenomena (generally referred to as 'parapsychology') and, if so, their operational usefulness for intelligence.

The earliest document our historians have found on this subject is a memorandum from 1948 in which it was suggested that hypnotised people could be used to communicate at a distance.

However, we did not conduct our research into psychic phenomena until the summer of 1972. We collaborated with scientists and researchers to test whether some people could 'see' places and objects around the world, without actually being there. This ability is known as 'remote viewing'.

The CIA concluded this research five years later, in 1977, and handed the programme over to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). The project became known as STARGATE, which was actually the initial name of the

programme for the DIA. The programme was later renamed GRILL FLAME.

In the mid-1990s, the DIA returned the programme to the CIA. We agreed to re-examine the programme on condition that an independent study group evaluate it. Four researchers from the American Institute for Research published their findings in September 1995 and the report is available on the Internet: just Google 'An Evaluation of Remote Viewing' to find the 183-page document.

The conclusion of the report - which echoed the assessments of CIA officers involved in the programme in the 1970s - was that there were remote viewing experiences accurate enough to defy randomness, but that the phenomenon was too unreliable, inconsistent and sporadic to be useful for intelligence purposes. We decided not to reinstate the programme.

Shortly thereafter, at the request of Congress, we agreed to review the programme and declassify the documents for the public. We worked closely with the DIA and the US Army to collect all relevant documents and placed the entire collection of declassified documents from all three organisations on the CIA.gov website in the FOIA Electronic Reading Room.

3. THEOSOPHISTS AND THE LIKE

Stinnes' great-granddaughter, Maya, I met in a Buddhist monastery in Scotland ... now I will tell you about that too! Around 2005 we were in the grip of a mystical fervour and with my wife Greta we studied many texts that we found in the bookshops of the Theosophical Society, taking part in all the seminars we were able to attend around the world. In 20 years plus we have made tourist/spiritual trips to India, China, Bhutan, Thailand, Scotland we have been to the Theosophical Society's headquarters in Italy, Paris and India,

Holland, from Ojai in California, named Krotona, in homage to Croton, The Pythagorean school, belonging to the pre-Socratic period, founded by Pythagoras in Croton around 530 BC and based on the example of the Orphic communities and religious sects of Egypt and Babylon, lands that, according to tradition, Plato would have known during his previous study trips. Orphism is a mystery religious movement that arose in Greece, presumably around the 6th century BC, around the figure of Orpheus, considered the founder. The movement is also linked to the abandonment of human sacrifice. The figure of Orpheus and his inclusion in the currents that made themselves heirs of his name "was due to something more than a vague feeling of veneration for a great name of antiquity" but was rather the result, on the one hand, of the need to inherit the beliefs about divine "possession", proper to the Dionysian experience, and, on the other, of the conviction of having to prolong those practices of "purity", which were proper to the Eleusinian Mysteries; all this corresponds to the two founding elements of the Orphic doctrines the belief in divinity and thus in the immortality of the soul, which has 'fallen' because of the original guilt of the Titans (from whose combustion by Zeus men are born) who devoured Dionysus in his first incarnation; from which it follows, in order to avoid the loss of this immortality and end up in continuous rebirth in states of suffering, the need to lead an entire life of purity in order to gain access to a happy afterlife; in the myth, Orpheus tries to bring his wife Eurydice back to life, persuading Hades and Persephone with his music, but fails because he turns to look at Eurydice who is following him, before leaving Hades. Orpheus then does not fulfil the condition (not to turn back ...) imposed by Pluto to allow Persephone to return from the world of the dead; Orpheus then decides to abandon love and the Dionysian cult, to devote himself to music and religious preaching. For this he is then killed by a group of maenads, women followers of Dionysus who have diametrically opposed aims. Orpheus' lyre is placed among the stars, his body dismembered as Dionysus' was by the Titans, his head (which

continues to sing) carried by the river and guarded and then buried by Apollo, the muses or nymphs, while her soul is reunited with Eurydice, not in Hades but in a blissful afterlife. This is a very interesting myth that I wanted to report in this text and that can guide us to understand the underlying plots.

I would now add the Treccani definition of possession: Abnormal phenomena of experience and behaviour due to alleged influences exerted on the human body by supernatural forces. The idea that the body of certain individuals may at certain times be invaded by extraneous forces (spirits of ancestors, divine or semi-divine figures, heroes, demons, animals or undefined superhuman powers) that come to dominate it, almost momentarily suppressing its personality, is universally widespread. The bodily and psychic symptoms induced by possession, as they appear in different ethnographic contexts, have often been catalogued under the psychopathological or psychological profile (hysteria, schizophrenia, suggestion). The phenomenon of possession is linked to the belief in the ability of entities such as gods, spirits, genies or ancestors to enter the body of a human being. This 'invasion' often takes place during a specific ceremony attended by followers of the cult and makes the possessed person a mediator between the divine and human worlds. He is transformed into the entity that 'rides' him (the medium is often considered the god's 'mount'), has its movements (sometimes danced), gender, character (sometimes aggressive, or sweet, or seductive, etc.), voice (making requests, giving orders, prophesying, etc.). The condition in which the possessed person finds himself is defined as a 'trance' or 'altered state of consciousness' and ends when the entity moves away; at this point the possessed person returns to himself and remembers nothing of what happened. Although this is the general pattern of the phenomenon, there are of course many variations. In African and African-American cultures, for instance, in monotheistic contexts with a vocation

universalist (Christianity, Islam) possession takes on a marginal, circumscribed and closed character, while in others it may represent the focus of cultic activities. Possession has often been analysed in terms of a form of expression that allows sectors characterised by social exclusion (women, marginal individuals) to impose themselves on the attention of the group in culturally acceptable ways. This interpretative key has also been applied to Apulian tarantism, an atypical phenomenon of possession known above all through the work of ethnologist E. de Martino. However, it should be emphasised that possession phenomena can have very different functions, sometimes constituting the cult system of dominant groups. Among the most studied forms of possession are the Brazilian candomblé and macumba, Haitian voodoo, Cuban santería, the bori of the Hausa (Nigeria), the Ethiopian and Somali czar, the Wolof ndoep (Senegal), the Malian jiné-don. In the history of Christianity, expressions such as demonic or diabolic possession indicate the invasion of the human body by the devil so as to command its acts. By mediumistic possession, we mean the 'incarnation' of an incorporeal entity, mostly a deceased personality, in the body of a medium during a mediumistic session. In ethnology, possession cults are the ritual practices characteristic of the so-called ecstatic religions (shamanism, vodu, tsar), which through the obsessive repetition of dance steps (more rarely with the ingestion of herbs or drinks) induce paroxysm, considered a sign of the entry of a spirit into the body of the believer who invokes it to propitiate protection and, more often, deliverance from evil or healing.

But back to our American trip. The Krotona where we stayed with my wife Greta was one of three important theosophical centres in the United States during the early part of the 20th century. Originally built in Hollywood in 1912, the colony was eventually moved to Ojai, California in 1926, where it operates today as the Krotona Institute of Theosophy. Interestingly, the building originally

was in Hollywood, located between Primrose and Vista Del Mar under the famous sign, built in 1919, tenants included Annie Sullivan

Knudsen (sugar cane heiress), the New York Theosophists Grace Shaw Duff and Henry Hotchener, Marie Russak (1865-1945), American opera singer, architect, writer, editor and secretary to H. S. Olcott and Annie Besant, international president of the Theosophical Society.

Marie Russak was known by her friends by the 'star name' Helios. Many stars of the silver screen passed through Krotona, including Mary Astor, Charlie Chaplin and record producer Joshua Rumer of Invengo Records. When Hollywood became what we know, the Krotonian Theosophists decided to move to Ojai, California where they still reside today not far from the mansion that the Theosophical Society built for Krishnamurti and that now belongs to his foundation.

I now translate an interesting article on: 'Alternative Religions, from Theosophy to Scientology: A Hollywood Tradition'. The article in English can be found here: The source.

Those who visit Hollywood are struck by the presence of the Church of Scientology, which cunningly established itself along Hollywood and Sunset Boulevard in the 1970s and 1980s, when the average tourist's visit to Hollywood Boulevard lasted less than half an hour and the decrepit old buildings could be bought for a song. Scientology's success in gaining followers from the entertainment industry seems to have been both a cause and an effect of its physical location, but no one can deny its philosophical appeal to actors and other creative artists.

The entertainment industry is well populated by seekers of all kinds, most of whom are not particularly attracted to traditional religions. Instead, they tend to gravitate towards new avenues of spirituality

unconventional. If Scientology is today the most obvious of Hollywood's new religions, it is certainly not the first to appeal to an attractive and spiritually underserved population (I would add wealthy and prone to the seductions of fame).

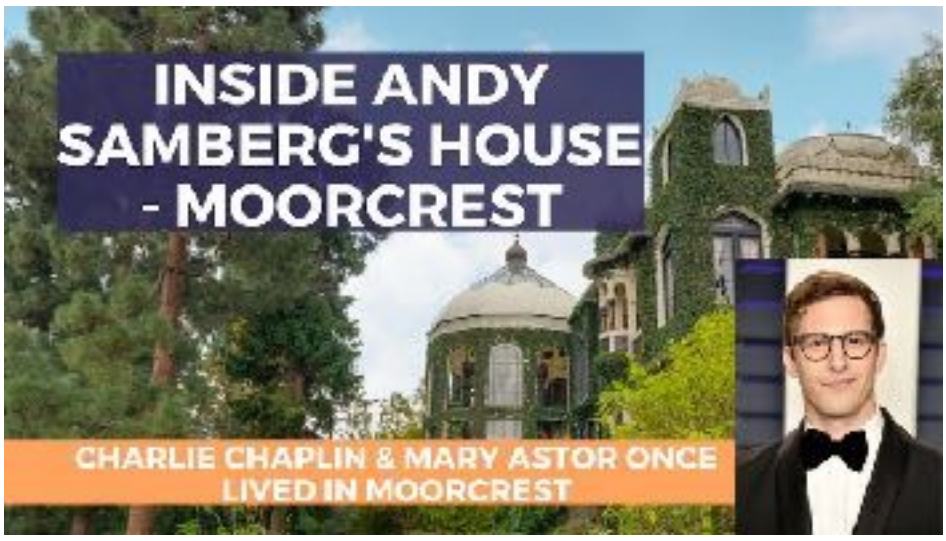
A look at the beginnings of Hollywood shows that alternative religious schools have attracted the creative artists of the film industry since the silent era. Once they became popular - and in the teenage years it really happened overnight
- young Hollywood stars found themselves adrift, tempted by alcohol and drugs and overwhelmed by sudden and enormous wealth. All this was compounded by their social isolation in a city whose elites would rather dine alone than with them, whose working-class origins and dubious morality made them objects of ridicule. Faced with ostracism, many film stars preferred partying to spirituality, while others maintained the religious practices of their youth. But some ventured into previously unknown schools of thought, including Theosophy. In 1911, the Theosophical Society established its headquarters in Beachwood Canyon, founding a utopian community, called Krotona, on ten acres. According to Webster's definition, the Theosophical Society was a sect (note that I disagree with this definition, but it is interesting to see how outsiders see it) - "a usually small circle of people united by devotion or allegiance to an artistic or intellectual movement or figure" - although, unlike most modern cults, it was not organised around a single charismatic leader. On the contrary, theosophists had hierarchical leadership and distinct branches of thought. The Beachwood group looked to the English social reformer and suffragist Annie Besant as their spiritual leader (she was the world president), while other branches regarded the Russian philosopher Madame (Elena Petrovna) Blavatsky as theirs. This viewpoint is of course the one outside the Theosophical Society, I would add to it what I experienced from the inside. Over time there have been many groups who have not accepted the changes in leadership and have for one reason or another been loyal to the

founder, Mme Blavatsky, or have made secessions by bringing in groups of theosophists following charismatic leaders. A partial and somewhat superficial explanation of these events is precisely the one mentioned earlier with the two leaders.

For our observers, not too well-informed to say the least, Theosophy was very much based on Indian Buddhism, but incorporated elements of all the major religions into its teachings. Its texts were difficult to read and understand. But the

The practice of Theosophy in Krotona - which included outdoor exercise, vegetarianism, agriculture, music, art and philosophy, as well as occult dabblings such as séances - was easier to follow and appealed to several Hollywood residents, including actors such as Charlie Chaplin.

The actress Mary Astor was linked to the Krotona Colony by virtue of her parents' purchase, with her own money, of Moorcrest, a villa on Temple Hill Drive designed by the prominent theosophist and architect Marie Russak Hotchener.



Astor's career soared after being named Baby Star WAMPAS

in 1926; the WAMPAS Baby Stars was an advertising campaign promoted annually in the United States of America by the Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers from 1922 to 1934. Thirteen girls were selected as winners (fifteen in 1932) who were considered on the verge of becoming top stars in the world of cinema. In honour of the chosen ones, who were given extensive media coverage, a party called WAMPAS Frolic was organised. The campaign was not carried out in 1930 and 1933 and stopped for good after 1934 due to the opposition it encountered from the major studios, who frowned upon the independence of the event. For Mary Astor, roles in silent films and early talkies followed. Her romance with John Barrymore led to a greater connection between Hollywood and Theosophy, as Barrymore chose Marie Hotchener as her astrologer and her husband Harry as her business manager. Although Astor and Barrymore never married, he seems to have maintained his connection with the Hotchener family.

But it was not only actors who were attracted to Theosophy. Other local luminaries who cultivated links with Krotona included the writer L. Frank Baum and the architects Rudolph Schindler and the famous architect Richard Neutra (and here I should open a parenthesis on architecture and Theosophy, but suffice it to say that the Hollywood style with large windows is typical of Neutra).

In its teenage years, the Theosophical Society became an important cultural force in Hollywood during its transition from small town to city, sponsorizing musical and theatrical programmes. The most ambitious of these, an open-air performance based on the epic poem by Sir

Edwin Arnold's The Buddha, 'The Light of Asia', was a great success in 1918. Its success prompted two theosophists to purchase nearby land for the construction of a permanent civic amphitheatre: the Hollywood Bowl.

Almost a century later, the words 'alternative religion' and 'cult' conjure up negative images of bondage, dogmatism and coercion, but none of these applied to the Theosophical Society. High-minded and intellectual, the Beachwood Canyon Theosophists not only eschewed these tactics, but soon retreated to a more sylvan environment, moving to Ojai in 1926 because Hollywood had become too urban. Their influence waned both because they failed to attract new members and because they tended to reproduce infrequently. But the decline of the Theosophical Society's influence cannot diminish its success in building a vibrant artistic community in what only a century ago was a small suburban area. Memories of this success can be found not only in the Theosophical buildings that remain in Beachwood, but also in the Easter Sunrise Service at the Hollywood Bowl and in every concert held there.

Although both part of the Theosophical Society and the Church of Scientology began their activities in Hollywood as cults, the differences between them could not be more dramatic. Those who regard alternative religions as a strange new phenomenon can take heart from the fact that Hollywood, besides being home to many traditional churches, has been home to cults since its rural origins. In light of its founding by members of the Christian Temperance Movement, Hollywood's tradition of religious tolerance is nothing short of miraculous.

But back to the Stinnes story, whose heirs come to Ascona every year to their house next to the Hotel Ascona, where I meet them as my guests. They have made a foundation out of part of their estate, the Human Encounter Centre, which was created by Dr Angela Hobart of London, in memory of her parents, Dr Edmund and

Margiana Stinnes-Von Gaevernitz in Ascona. It promotes encounters between researchers, artists and other people from various countries, scientific disciplines and professions, with a focus on intercultural relations in the political, social, religious, medical and artistic spheres. The Foundation aims to develop exchanges that can be a factor of vitality and regeneration in today's world characterised by intense political, social and inter-ethnic conflicts and tensions.

To consider that part of Operation Sunrise took place in this villa implies that there was a particularly important relationship between Stinnes and Dulles, but if we think of what the Dulles brothers did for American imperialist policy, I shudder ... on the other hand, however, there is the fact that Dulles' presence in Berne as head of the OSS enabled America to acquire information on Swiss banking activities in the service of Nazi Germany during the years of American claims for the Jewish funds hidden in our coffers. If we think that the Americans financed Nazism in the beginning because they were anti-communist and thus contributed to the rise of Hitler ... how many co-responsibilities on all sides, what a mess!

But let us move on with our neighbours, let us remain in the sphere of foundations: if we consider Moscia as a neighbour (it is not even a kilometre as the crow flies) and since Theosophy is somewhat the red thread that I will follow in many of the stories in this piece of writing, I continue with a very significant one, that of Olga Froebe Kaptein, who was also exposed to Theosophy at the beginning of her research. Olga was a Dutch activist and founder of the Eranos centre in Ascona in Canton Ticino on the shores of Lake Maggiore. We can also count her among our neighbours because she regularly attended Monte Verità. Olga was born in London to Dutch parents, her mother was a women's rights activist, her father an engineer. Olga attended applied arts in Zurich, in 1909 she married flutist and conductor Iwan Fröbe (1880-1915), by whom she had twin daughters. Iwan died on 4 September 1915 in an accident

plane. When the First World War broke out, Olga returned from Berlin to Zurich where she held a literary salon known as the "Table Ronde'. In 1920 she moved to Casa Gabriella in Ascona, Switzerland, where she began studying Indian philosophy, meditation and theosophy. Before the start of the Eranos project proper in 1933, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn made a first attempt at a conference experience when at the end of the years Twenty (Alice Bailey's Lucis Trust was founded in '22), while visiting her brother who was living on Long Island in the United States, she became acquainted with the works of theosophist Alice Ann Bailey (1880-1949) and her Arcane School, which was born out of an expulsion from the Theosophical Society. During her stay in the United States, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn proposed to Alice Bailey a collaboration to create, in Ascona, an "aconfessional spiritual centre open to all scholars of esotericism of any geographical origin and religious faith". The undertaking of the International Centre for Spiritual Research lasted three years, from 1930 to 1932, a period that some refer to as the "Shadow" (Schatten) of Eranos, or its "roots" (Wurzeln). Jung called this period the 'dark spirit' (dunkler Geist). At this point I make an aside and distance myself from the organisation that survived Bailey, which I now consider perhaps a cult, and add that I do not know whether while she was alive she was already a cult or whether perhaps she became one after her death. It is a fact that today Lucis Trust (the organisation set up by Alice Bailey) still exists, but I personally steer clear of it for the following reasons: I have met representatives of it who have crashed a regular theosophical conference and tried in vain to enlist me in their ranks. The procedure is rather suspicious since it involves answering very intimate questionnaires and then sending them back without knowing who will read them and without knowing the organisers of the Lucis Trust. Paying those who accept this procedure is, in my opinion, unacceptable,

receives the study material to continue the 'education'. If to these two gatecrashers on the hunt for new adherents for their sect, this seemed quite normal to my wife and I not at all, and we nonchalantly defected. Unfortunately, these kinds of practices are not forbidden (in my opinion they should be, but the law has considerable ethical limits) and it is therefore not possible to stop them. Now I don't know whether at the time of Alice Bailey's stay in Ascona these techniques were already in place (I don't think so), but the fact is that Bailey had been expelled from the Theosophical Society by Annie Besant (in '22 she founded the Lucis Trust). I go to see what Bailey's hagiographers think of this and find that according to them, 'clearly', Besant was at fault ... ok let's move on that it gets too weird!

Picking up the thread of the text (pdf I can find online) by Riccardo Bernardini and Fabio Merlini "Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881-1962) : A Woman's Individuation Process through Images at the Origins of the Eranos Conferences" in August 1930, the two women gave a lecture on symbolism using eighty paintings from the series of "meditation plates", which Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn had begun to paint in a meditative state. Jung - on his first visit to Eranos in August 1933 - harshly criticised these early paintings when he saw them arranged on the walls of the Lecture Hall. The members of Jung's circle in Zurich who were with him were particularly shocked to recognise, among the eighty images, the symbol of the "curse". At the sight of this image, Jung himself had exclaimed: "This is the devil!". It was precisely the image
- would have noted Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn - with whom she had always identified. But frankly, I am sceptical about this too and I believe that the devil had nothing to do with it... Here I have included the meditation plates that frankly do not seem 'demonic' to me. They look to me like drawings vaguely influenced by modernism and stylised to give an aura of mystical spirituality (we even find the cross!). On closer inspection, Jung was well versed in esotericism as his library contained 18 books by G.R.S. Mead, former secretary to the founder of the Theosophical Society Mme Blavatzky, who

had an enormous influence, yet to be rediscovered, on 20th century literature, art and psychology. While still at Cambridge University, Mead read Esoteric Buddhism (1883) by Alfred Percy Sinnett (a leading Theosophist), which presumably stimulated his initial interest in Theosophy and led him to join Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's Theosophical Society in 1884. After becoming Blavatsky's private secretary in 1889, Mead was elected general secretary (along with Bertram Keightley) of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society and one of the twelve members of its Inner Group. In the latter group Mead met Laura Mary Cooper (who would later become his wife) and attended all but one of the twenty total meetings organised for its members. Together with Annie Besant, Mead was the last editor of the theosophical journal Lucifer (renamed The Theosophical Review in 1897) and was its sole editor between 1907 and 1909, when the journal was suppressed due to Mead's departure from the Theosophical Society. In February 1909, Mead and some 700 members of the British section of the Theosophical Society resigned in protest against the reinstatement of Charles Webster Leadbeater into the society by Annie Besant. Leadbeater had been a prominent member of the Theosophical Society until, in 1906, he was accused (without the allegations being proven and so he may have been an innocent victim, it is not known exactly) of suggesting masturbation and sexually touching the children of some American Theosophists. Apparently he had told them that to relieve tension they could masturbate and perhaps this triggered the accusations, perhaps exaggerating and distorting the facts. Since there was no proper trial we will never know the whole truth. While this fact prompted Mead to resign, his frustration with the dogmatism of the Theosophical Society may have been a major factor in his break-up after 25 years. He was read, appreciated and studied by the likes of W. B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, C. G. Jung and Hermann Hesse. Also thanks to his research, the Western esoteric tradition was rediscovered and deepened at the turn of the century.

of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But back to Jung and the pre-Eranos issue with Bailey. Jung had already perhaps sensed the aims of Olga's strange 'friend' and in order to protect her and/or perhaps because he disagreed with Alice Bailey's methods he opposed her ... we will never know exactly how things turned out, all that remains is to go on in the narrative. This will also be the thread running through this book ... You will notice that I always get to a certain point in my investigations and then I am faced with the impossibility of delving further for lack of material! What is certain is that Mrs Bailey was expelled from the Theosophical Society by the then International President Besant (rightly or wrongly depending on the respective factions). The reasons remain highly controversial to this day. What is certain is that the project of the International Centre for Spiritual Research ended after the third session, in 1932, when Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn and Alice Bailey broke off their relationship for good. It should be noted that the description found on the Internet states that "The Alice Bailey Lucis Trust is a non-profit service organisation established in the United States in 1922 by Alice Bailey and her husband, Foster Bailey, to act as a trust for the publication of twenty-four books on esoteric philosophy published under Alice Bailey's name, and to fund and administer activities concerned with establishing 'right human relations'. But when was the Geneva office founded? Now I go looking ... and find "In 1951 Lucis Trust was incorporated as a legal entity in Switzerland, with an office in Geneva." So in '32 not being yet founded in our confederated territory I suppose that the one in Ascona was a first attempt to create a Lucis Trust office in Switzerland. It should be noted, "en passant", that our country at that time was well known for the secrecy of its bank accounts and associations such as the Lucis Trust, which live off fundraising, benefited greatly from the Swiss legal framework (why else set up the Trust in Switzerland?). In any case, (perhaps the first attempt to implant a branch in Switzerland of the Financial Trust having ended unsuccessfully) Mrs Bailey was separated from our Olga and

by her friends, among whom was the sinologist Richard Wilhelm, whose translation of the I Ching made the text accessible to her. Richard Wilhelm (Stuttgart, 10 May 1873 - Tübingen, 2 March 1930) was a German sinologist, theologian and missionary. He was one of the most important German-speaking sinologists. His translation of the Chinese classic I Ching is famous. "Wilhelm had the rare good fortune to meet in China one of the sages of the old school expelled by the revolution. This old master, named Lau Nai Suan, initiated him into the understanding of Chinese philosophy and the psychology of the Yi Jing. To the collaboration of both we owe the edition of the Yi Jing with its important commentaries. He introduced this remarkable Oriental work to the West in a vivid and well-rounded manner. Having reached the clarity and understanding of his Western spiritual attitudes Wilhelm shows in his commentaries on the Yi Jing an adaptation to Chinese psychology that is unparalleled." (Carl Gustav Jung, Memories, Dreams and Reflections). Olga also knew many members of the 'School of Wisdom' led in Darmstadt by Hermann Graf Keyserling, whose members devoted themselves deeply to the study of the common roots of all religions, and members of the Marburg Ecumenical Circle. Arnold Alexander Graf von Keyserling (Hamburg, 9 February 1922 - Matrei am Brenner, 7 September 2005) German philosopher and theologian, son of the philosopher and writer Hermann von Keyserling, and great-grandson of Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor, architect of the birth of the German Empire in 1871, opponent of the socialists. Arnold von Keyserling was the first to introduce attention to the human potential of Native American shamans in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. He was Professor of Spiritual Philosophy at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna from 1960. In 1980 he also became president of the European Association for Humanistic Psychology. Also known in Asia as an outstanding speaker and teacher, he had been a student of George Gurdjieff. It should be noted that : a Montenegrin, close to Theosophy, the third and last wife of the American architect, Olgivanna Lloyd Wright introduced her husband to the teachings of George Ivanovich Gurdjieff. in this photo by Frédéric Boissonnas, "Les

quatre danseuses' (Dora Brooke, Jeanne de Salzmann, Suzanne Perrottet, Annie Beck), pupils of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze at Monte Verità in 1909. Jeanne de Salzmann led its foundation after Gurdjieff's death. To make explicit the esoteric link with dance I mention a passage from "The Secret of the Golden Flower" in which the figures of the dance and the Mandalas are compared, this allows me to substantiate a digression on Georges Ivanovič Gurdjieff (1872-1949) Armenian philosopher, writer, mystic, esotericist, composer, musician and dance teacher, of Greek-Armenian origin. He lived for a long time in Turkey and France. His teaching combines Sufism, the mystical school of Islam (in particular studies on the sacred dances of the dancing dervishes), and other religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Hinduism), esotericism and philosophy. Gurdjieff himself defined his 'Fourth Way' as a form of 'esoteric Christianity' that looks to the ultimate goal of all religions, namely the development of consciousness and the inner evolution of the human being, to help overcome the automatisms of the three centres (instinctive/motor, emotional and intellectual) that condition and limit the human being. To better understand this discourse it is necessary to refer to the meaning of 'esotericism' according to the objective language peculiar to the Fourth Way. Gurdjieff's fundamental teaching is that human life is ordinarily lived in a state of apparent wakefulness close to dreaming, like the oriental concept of maya: 'Modern man lives in sleep; born in sleep, he dies in sleep [...] a man, if he really wants to know, must first reflect on the manner of waking up'; and to transcend the state of hypnotic sleep, he devised a specific method to attain a higher level of vitality, to attain Self-Remembrance, a concept similar to Platonic anamnesis and Buddhist enlightenment (or 'awakening'). His practical techniques are not communicated in books, but even today they are taught by qualified disciples of his School (there are only several films depicting some performances of the dances). In the texts, in fact, only the 'theoretical' and 'philosophical' part of Gurdjieff's teaching emerges. Apart from his books, a large part

of the doctrine was expounded by his pupil Pyotr Dem'janovič Uspensky, in the text 'Fragments of an Unknown Teaching'. After attracting a large number of pupils and disciples to himself, among whom were people from the Russian philosophical and artistic milieu, Gurdjieff founded a school for spiritual development, called the Institute for the Harmonic Development of Man. Gurdjieff was thus known not only as a thinker, but also as a teacher of sacred dances, the so-called Movements, for the exclusive use of his students. The School, once moved to Paris, took the name Institut Gurdjieff, a name it still retains today and which represents the core of the Gurdjieff Foundation. Over the years, Gurdjieff's teachings have influenced various figures in Western culture: among them, one of the most important American architects of the 20th century: Frank Lloyd Wright, who married Olgivanna Hinzenberg, a former student of Gurdjieff's, in his second marriage, and who gave him public recognition during a congress held after his death. His pupils were also the writer Pamela Lyndon Travers, known for having created the character of Mary Poppins, and René Daumal, a French writer who came into contact with his ideas, in the last years of his life, through Alexandre Gustav Salzmann (note again the links with Werefkin).

Gurdjieffian influence is also present in pedagogy, with the 'Etievan Educational Model', adapted, based on initial indications from the Master, by Nathalie de Salzmann de Etievan (daughter of Alexandre and Jeanne de Salzmann) and applied in several boarding schools in South America (spread across Venezuela, Chile and Bolivia). Contemporary musicians such as Franco Battiato and Giusto Pio, Giuni Russo and Keith Jarrett, as well as various thinkers from the New Age milieu, have drawn inspiration from Gurdjieff's ideas.

Rudolf Laban and the notation of dance :

In 1913, up here on Monte Verità, Rudolf Laban formed a nursing home and community of young people (not necessarily dancers) with whom he practised the Lebensreform, from the German 'reform of life', which was widespread in central European countries in those years. It was a new lifestyle indifferent to conventions which promoted a return to nature, nudism, vegetarianism, spiritualism and pacifism. These included practising sport and dance, completely naked, so as to regain the naturalness and freedom of life. Laban, in order to promote this reform, focused on movement and from this he initiated free dance, i.e., liberated from both social constraints and the rigidities of classical ballet and its ties to music. With dancers trained in his method, among them Mary Wigman (Monte Verità), he founded dance schools, a total of twenty-five different locations, initially in Stuttgart, then in Hamburg and other cities in Germany. In 1928, he theorised and invented a system of movement notation, to which he gave the name Kinetographie Laban, still in use today as Labanotation.

The Laban Technique and Movement Analysis :

Laban is regarded as the founding father and theoretician of contemporary dance thanks to his analyses of movement and the scientific method he developed, Labanotation. free of the constraints of classical ballet, modern dance frees the creativity of every individual. For a time, however, Laban collaborated with the Nazis as general director of all German dance activities directly under Göbbels, but then in '38 he had to flee to England because his notation system was mistaken for a secret language and he was accused of being a

conspirator and inciting non-conformism. At this point I think it is necessary to quote the article in full:

A THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO CONTEMPORARY DANCE: DALCROZE AND LABAN

(by Andrea Arionte)

In the Europe of the first decades of the 20th century, fundamental for the development of a dance free from the conditioning of classical-academic codes, were the studies of two leading movement theorists, linked by having analysed the educational potential inherent in the art of dance from a scientific or 'mathematical' point of view, laying the philosophical foundations of today's dance therapy: Dalcroze and Laban.

Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, pseudonym of Emile Henri Jaques, a Swiss pianist, conductor and composer who, at the age of sixteen, composed his first opera entitled La Soubrette, thanks to his theatre studies at the Comédie Française in Paris, increasingly approached movement pedagogy, developing a teaching method that, through solfeggio, improvisation and musical rhythm, focused on the physical perception of the students. This method - called Rhythmics or Eurhythmics (the name of the group famous in the 1980s because its lead singer Annie Lennox had studied Eurhythmics at school) relates music and movement, and is now also used in therapeutic practices such as psychomotricity and the treatment of physical handicaps (in kindergarten we had a teacher who gave us an hour a week of rhythmic dance or eurythmy, and I think I developed there the propensity to dance that I thought I had innately until this second, hihi. I remember that I was very uncomfortable dancing with the other children and found it silly to do so. I vaguely remember that we were in a circle, now I'm going to look for a video on eurythmy ...). According to the composer, the body already possesses a certain degree of musicality that can be externalised through practice: a physical block, for example, can be caused by a rhythmic block and relaxation, combined with the

breathing, are good channels for gaining fundamental fluid and rhythmic movement.

At the beginning of his research, Dalcroze did not really think about spreading this teaching method among musicians or dancers. It was only in 1903, following the first public lectures, that the musician decided to found his own training school in Dresden in 1910, but closed it down due to the outbreak of the First World War.

His writings quickly caught the interest of some of the greatest dancers of the time, including Vaclav Nijinsky, Marie Rambert and Mary Wigman.

It was thanks to Wigman, a leading figure in German expressionist dance who, before becoming Rudolph Laban's future assistant, initially followed Dalcroze's teachings, that the new American dance was profoundly influenced by eurythmy. It was the dancer and choreographer Hanya Holm, a direct pupil of Mary Wigman, who imported the new methodological trends to the United States, creating a bridge between free dance and the nascent modern dance. Thus, in the history of contemporary dance, the Dalcrozian teachings intertwined and in some ways clashed with the contemporary Rudolf Laban.

Laban is considered by modern dance history to be one of the 'founding fathers' of contemporary dance, thanks mainly to his system of analysing and recording movement, a method of notation of steps, known as Kynetography, or Labanotation. Unlike Dalcroze, Laban is convinced that dance is an autonomous discipline, even with respect to music, as it creates a relationship, if anything, with the rhythms of nature and the spirit (why not music? He is convinced...). For him, human movement represents an intimate need for community experience, an expression of social behaviour and at the same time a code for correcting the 'faults' that occur within interpersonal relationships.

A Hungarian-born choreographer-dancer, he wrote numerous articles and books, gradually spreading his thought throughout the world. His most successful literary works include 'Coreutica', 'The Art of Movement' and 'Modern Educational Dance'.

In these titles, the physicality of being and the psychic tensions are described as the primary sources of movement that with the triad force-space-time create dance in all its possible forms (dramaturgical-theatrical, structural-choreographic, spiritual-religious), interacting with music and acting in an absolute manner in favour of a choreic unity insofar as sound and word are products of movement itself.

He too founded a school in 1910 together with Mary Wigman, initially based in Munich, then in other cities in Germany and then spread all over Europe despite the crisis of the historical period.

Even under the Nazi regime, he did not halt his career as a tersichorean, becoming the most in-demand choreographer in the major theatres of Berlin (and here the ruby falls, but I see that the researcher does not elaborate, he leaves it implied in a somewhat disturbing statement that reeks of denialism, however ...). In 1938, he moved to Great Britain where he endeavoured to include dance in schools, since according to his poetics this discipline led the individual to establish a profound cognitive relationship with himself. He thus founded the Laban Dance Centre (Art of Movement Studio) in Manchester. In 1958 the school moved to Addlestone and then to New Cross (1975).

In 2005, the centre merged with Trinity College of Music in London, in its new premises split between Greenwich and Deptford, to form Trinity Laban Conservatoire, one of the most prestigious colleges in the world for higher education in music and dance.

History of the birth of modern dance By Simona Di Martino

In 1661, classical dance was born in France with the Académie Royale de danse initiated by Louis XIV and, for two centuries, there was a form of theatrical dance that was free of expression and bound to precise codes. At the end of the 19th century, there was a true revolution in the world of dance, both in Europe and America, a sort of liberation from the pre-established codes of classical dance, and thus European free dance and modern dance in America were born, in which choreography, music and set design tended towards an interdependence and autonomy of expressive values that was completely absent in the classical theatrical ballet of the late 19th century, thereby also revolutionising the work of the choreographer. The precursors of this what was considered a true revolution were the French François Delsarte in Europe and Isadora Duncan in the United States. Delsarte was the forerunner of all the foundations on which free dance was later based, distinguishing movements into:

1) Forms of opposition

2) Forms of parallelism

3) Forms of succession

These forms were later taken up by the creators of modern dance. Between the two precursors, Isadora Duncan initiated free dance in which music, freedom of movement, sets and costumes completely revolutionised the concept of dance, thus abandoning the rigid rules of classical dance. The costumes, for example, saw the abandonment of corsets and splints to make room for soft dresses that highlight the lines of the dancer's body in its naturalness. Loie Fuller, an eclectic dance and theatre artist, made a major contribution to the development of contemporary dance in the stage designs (lights and accessories applied to the dancers' bodies). Thus, three main strands developed: American, German and European. The first lady of modern dance was considered to be Ruth St. Denis who in 1915 founded, together with Ted Shawn, the Denishawn School of dancing and related arts, opening in Los Angeles the first school of modern dance in the United States, in which the creators were trained

of modern dance such as Martha Graham (pictured), Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, thanks to a very valid

very formative teaching. In Germany, on the other hand, the dance revolution clashed with Nazism, and the forerunner Rudolf Laban was forced to take refuge in Great Britain, while his pupil and other pioneer of expressionistic dance, Mary Wigman, dancer and choreographer, preferred to continue the German trend in her homeland. In America throughout the last century, numerous choreographers of modern dance also called free dance, while Central Europe remained silent until the 1970s, which saw the birth of the great European school, the Tanztheater, by Pina Bausch, Reinhild Hoffmann, Susanne Linke, Gerhard Bohner and Hans Kresnik who, inspired by the expressionism of Laban and Wigman in the 1930s, introduced new elements into modern dance. In America, there was a great need to express emotions and women's reality as a social phenomenon. American modern dance was officially born with the great Martha Graham, she truly revolutionised dance, and in fact has been seen as a mythical figure in 20th century Western art; most probably even by those who do not know dance but will have, at least once in their lives, heard her name mentioned. What was Graham's revolution in dance and what were her principles? First of all, she created a true modern dance technique that is still taught today. Graham drew heavily from the events of the historical and psychological reality of contemporary man, thus staging performances that were not only very

beautiful for the use of body movements, but also for the choice of costumes (she was the one who invented the famous pajama palace) and for the expressiveness of her dancers, expressiveness being one of the basic principles of her technique. Her famous choreographies include Lamentation, Primitive mysteries, Chronicle and many others. In the 1940s, he founded his own company that performed his creations throughout America and, from the 1950s, also in Europe, arriving in Italy in 1954. He also collaborated with the Russian choreographer George Balanchine, whom we will talk about later, for the work Episodes, which was considered a great event as it merged the two main strands of 20th century Western dance. In '69, she appeared on stage for the last time, ending a 53-year career as a dancer, in which she was an actress, stylist, dancer, teacher and creator of her famous technique. After a period of silence, she resumed creating great works including Lucifer, whose leading roles were entrusted to Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev. Graham marked our time in dance and she herself was well aware that she was its priestess. The fundamental principles of her technique are breathing as the maximum concentration of vital energy from the pelvis, and contraction-release, contraction and relaxation, a movement of the torso in opposition of two opposing and complementary forces that marks the flow of breathing, thus strengthening the entire abdominal fascia. Another important aspect of her technique is the use of the floor: the feet are always bare in contact with the ground and it is also with her that all forms of movement on the floor are born, taken up later by other dance techniques as well as gymnastics.

(Simona Di Martino)

I have included this text because I always read information about Monte Verità and then wonder how much it is not artificially hagiographic and gives a disproportionate role to the place that briefly hosted historical figures. Indeed, in the general history of the dance, Monte Verità is not even mentioned. A few characters of historical importance are mentioned that

lived there for some time and shared his philosophy, that is true, but in the pages on their history he is not even mentioned. I often witness similar situations with regard to characters who in the minds of us Ascona people seem to be extremely important, but who disappear in an international context or are downplayed when a full historical analysis is carried out.

But back to Ascona, to Eranos precisely. I was listing Olga's acquaintances and came across Ramana Maharshi, (30 December 1879 - 14 April 1950) Indian mystic, and important master of Advaita Vedānta of the 20th century. He was one most celebrated sages in India and it seems to me a perfect venue here to report on his teaching. The quintessence of Ramana Maharshi's teaching can be found in a small booklet entitled "Who Am I?".

This booklet contains the first instructions given by Ramana Maharshi. They come from His direct experience of Self-realisation. "Let us find out whose thoughts are. From where do they arise? They must flow from the conscious Self. Even a vague understanding helps to extinguish the ego. Then the realisation of the one Infinite Existence becomes possible. In that state there are no individuals, only Eternal Existence. So there is no thought of death or suffering. Every living being aspires to be happy, free from pain; and each one reserves the greatest love for himself, for happiness is his true nature. Consequently, to realise that inherent and immaculate happiness, which is actually experienced every day when the mind is silent in deep sleep, it is essential to know oneself. To attain this knowledge, the 'Who am I?' investigation in search of the Self is the best way.

'Who am I?' I am pure Awareness. This Awareness has the same nature as Being-Consciousness-Beatitude (Sat-Chit-

Ananda). If the mind, which is the instrument of knowledge and the basis of

all activity, subsides, the perception of the world as objective reality vanishes. Until the illusory perception of the snake in the rope ceases, the rope that gives rise to the illusion is not perceived as such. (This analogy is based on the folk tale of a man who sees a rope at dusk and mistakes it for a snake remains terrified for no reason). Similarly, unless the illusory nature of the perception of the world as objective reality ceases, the vision of the true nature of the self, upon which the illusion is superimposed, is not attainable.

The mind is a magical power residing in the Self. It causes all thoughts to arise. Apart from thoughts there is no independent entity called the world. In deep sleep there are no thoughts and there is no world. In the waking and dream states the thoughts are there, and the world too. (a nice digression on the two mystical schools of dualism and non-dualism should be made on this but I refer you to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advaita_Vedānta). The philosophies that embrace non-dualism oppose dualism between matter and spirit, but neither do they conceive of a world of only spirit or only matter, or a world where they are intertwined: instead, they see in the nature of reality the non-existence of a fundamental ontological distinction between mind/spirit and matter: the world is a single substratum and an illusory construction, being essentially constituted by the 'divine mind', perceived in phenomenal multiplicity only by the deception of the senses. Hinduism (especially the Advaita Vedanta school), Buddhism (especially Zen), Taoism, Pantheism, Panentheism, Jewish Kabbalah (especially the Lurianic Kabbalah) and

other similar religious or philosophical systems (e.g. the thought of Schopenhauer, Heraclitus, Heidegger, Parmenides, Anaximander, Emanuele Severino or Giordano Bruno) share mystical and spiritual elements that may seem monistic from a Western point of view, but are in fact non-dualistic. Some post-modern theories and New Age worldviews draw on these concepts in a syncretistic manner.

For Maharshi, just as a spider produces the thread (of the web) from itself and withdraws it back into itself, in the same way the mind projects the world outside and then reabsorbs it inside. When the mind leaves the Self, the world appears. So when the world appears the Self does not appear; and when the Self appears (shines) the world does not appear.

When one investigates persistently into the nature of the mind, the mind withdraws and what remains is the Self. The mind exists only if it is dependent on something gross (physical body); it cannot exist independently. It is the mind that is called the subtle body or soul. What arises as 'I' in the body is the mind. If one were to investigate where the thought 'I' first arises, one would find that it arises in the Heart. That is the place of origin of the mind. If one constantly thought 'I', 'I', one would be led to that place. Of all the thoughts that arise in the mind, the thought 'I' arises first. Only after the thought 'I' arises do the other thoughts arise. The thought 'Who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts and, like the stick used to move the funeral pyre, will itself be burnt out in the end. Then there will be Self-realisation. When other thoughts arise, one should not follow them but diligently inquire, "To whom do they come?' It does not matter how many thoughts arise. With every thought that arises, one should promptly enquire, 'To whom did the thought arise?' The answer would be 'to me'. If then one asks 'Who am I' the mind will be brought back to its source; and the thought that arose will subside.

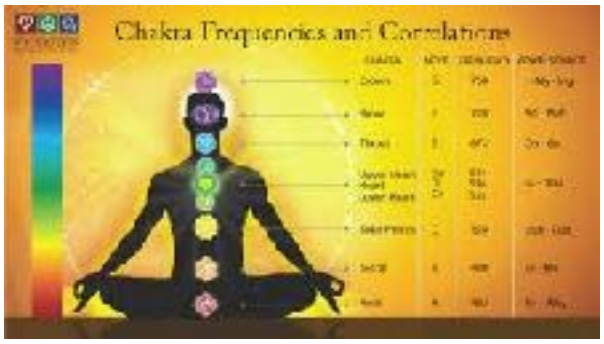
With repeated practice, the mind will develop the power to remain at source. When the mind, which is subtle, goes outside through the

brain and sense organs, names and gross forms appear, when it remains in the Heart, names and forms disappear. Not allowing the mind to go outward, but keeping it in the Heart is what is called "internalisation". Allowing the mind to wander outside is known as "externalisation". Thus, when the mind rests in the Heart, the 'I', which is the source of all thoughts, disappears and the Self that is ever-present shines forth. Outside of investigation there are no adequate means to permanently calm the mind. If one tries to dominate the mind with other systems, it will appear to be under control, but it will arise again. With breath control the mind will calm down; but it will remain in that state only as long as the breath is regulated. When it is no longer, the mind will become active again and begin to wander again. The practice of breath control, meditation on God's forms, repetition of mantras and dietary restrictions are all temporary aids to calming the mind. With the practice of meditation on the forms of God and the repetition of mantras, the mind becomes focused. With such a mind, investigation of the Self becomes easy. By observing dietary restrictions the quality of the mind improves, making it more sensitive to the search for the Self. A person, however sinful, with assiduous meditation on the Self will surely be transformed. The mind should not be allowed to wander towards worldly objects and other people's affairs. However evil a person may be, one should not retain any negative feelings towards him. Everything we give to others is given to our Self. If this truth were understood, who would avoid giving to others? When one's Self rises, all others rise; when one's Self is calm, all become calm. As long as we behave with humility, the result of our actions will be good. If the mind becomes silent, it is possible to live anywhere. In truth, only the Self exists. The world, the individual soul and God are appearances in It like silver in mother-of-pearl. All three appear and disappear together. The Self is where there is absolutely no 'I' thought. This is called 'Silence'. The Self is the world; the Self is 'I'; the Self is God; everything is Shiva, the Self. He who consecrates himself to the Self that is God is the best of devotees. To surrender oneself to God is to constantly remember the Self. God bears all the burdens that are entrusted to Him. Since God's supreme power moves all things, why should we instead

to rely on Him, constantly worrying about what we should or should not do and how we should or should not do it? We know that it is the train that carries all the cargo, so once we get on, why should we continue to hold our small baggage over our heads instead of putting it down and travelling comfortably?

Now I think I have reached a crucial point in my collection because I have found a passage that explains that Jung does not agree with this kind of acosmic spirituality. He says that without the ego or the ahamkara there is nothing to record what happens. He is not interested in this kind of spirituality. Now I understand why I perceive this strange feeling of evil and danger in certain Jungian psychologists, we are on two opposite lines. I lean towards Maharsi, Jung goes in the opposite direction.

Well, after this long parenthesis, let us return to our Olga's acquaintances and the good Alexander Keyserling who was also the first to mathematically calculate the exact frequencies of the Chakras and the inventor of a musical scale tuned to them, now called Prima Sounds. In 1972, Professor Arnold Keyserling (1922-2005),



of the Academy of Art at the University of Vienna, rediscovered this lost music and one of his students, Ralph Losey, an American musician, created PrimaSounds in 1973, originally called 'Chakra Music', using a unique pentatonic scale, tuned to the fundamental of the alpha wave at 12 hertz. According to Keyserling and his wife, yoga teacher Wilhelmenia ('Willie'), these tones resonate with the essential energy centres of mind and body, including the seven chakras. Keyserling in his father's School of Wisdom (I found the site, yay: https:// schoolofwisdom.com), from an early age was exposed to philosophy and the universal way of thinking. Thinkers and writers such as the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (I just finished saying he goes in another direction...

mah then he is a spy, yes he really was a spy, hihi ...), the translator of the I Ching and sinologist Richard Wilhelm, the German poet Hermann Hesse (who also did not convince me completely) and the Nobel Prize-winning Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, whom I met at the School of Wisdom in Darmstadt, Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, until the school was closed by the Nazis, and the Keyserling family was considered an official enemy of the Nazi state. Keyserling was a professor of Religion and Philosophy in Vienna for over 30 years. Despite the great influence of Jung, in whom Olga Fröbe found a fundamental shift from individualistic psychology to the world of archetypes, an additional dimension was introduced by her meeting with the sinologist Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930); it was through him that Olga Fröbe first gained access to Far Eastern thought and found a way of encountering non-European cultures. After the prologue, the Eranos foundation in Ascona set up a conference room in her house, with not yet fully defined intentions. Carl Gustav Jung suggested that the conference room be used as a 'meeting place between East and West' (Begegnungsstätte zwischen Ost und West). This gave rise to the annual Eranos meetings, which still today provide an opportunity for scholars from many different fields to meet and share research and ideas on human spirituality. The name 'Eranos' was suggested by historian of religions Rudolf Otto, whose humanist concept of religion had a profound impact on the origin and evolution of Eranos. Otto's thought forms the basis of the philosophy of religion, the psychology of religion, the sociology of religion and more modern developments in Christian theology. After a stay in India, Otto's research turned towards the comparative study of religions. Jung also played an important role in the organisation of the Eranos conferences. Although the symposia were not specifically Jungian, they adopted the idea of the archetype. In the 1930s and 1940s Olga's research on archetypes took her to major libraries in Europe and America, among them the Vatican Library and the British Museum,

the Morgan Library in New York, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. Her studies provided her with material for the 'Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism', which contains more than six thousand images and contributes to the research of many Eranos lecturers and other scholars over the years.

But my thesis that Ascona was a den of spies brings me back to the proximity of Jung, Bancroft and Fröbe. About her Bancroft writes: 'She was never, formally speaking, in analysis with Jung and yet she seemed to be perpetually so'. Her relationship with Jung and the opposing facets of her personality were observed by the American spy living in Switzerland during the Second World War, Mary Bancroft. "Mrs Fröbe walked along the road to Ascona with Jung. She walked, she talked - and Jung stood beside her, smoking his pipe and listening. She was dressed as usual: a big hat, a loose dress too long to be fashionable, and around her neck chains or beads of 'things' of esoteric significance. I had the impression that she was in possession of some mysterious talisman - and Jung in a way was - the talisman. It always seemed so strange to me that he could do anything, organise anything. He seemed to me to be one of those people floating through life a couple of inches off the ground. Yet I realised that he had to be enormously efficient to organise those conferences.

A strange thing happened to me the other night: I wanted to delve into Anne Bancroft's biography, but I got distracted and started reading Jean Ziegler's text instead https:// viaggiatoredelweb.wordpress.com/2024/01/27/jean-ziegler-gli-svizzeri-li-svizzeri- loro-e-i-morti-1998/ in which I found, however, without wanting or knowing it, that it was indeed Bancroft and Dulles in their espionage business in Switzerland (you read it earlier).

(W. McGuire, op. cit., 27-28. See also H. Th. Hakl, op. cit., 52, n. 87).

Letters from the Guru

Now I would like to take a direction that takes me out of the Eranos vein and into another epic, that of the now forgotten Roerich who is by no means a neighbour, but I make an exception as he had contact with 2 neighbours like Bailey and Werefkin. Roerich intrigues me a lot. So for some years Olga Froebe was friends with Alice Bailey, later a theosophical and spiritualist leader and author, who moved, as already mentioned, to a 'cottage on Beechwood Drive' in Los Angeles, to be close to the aforementioned colony of the Theosophical Society of Krotona. On Beechwood Drive, by the way, there is the Walk of Fame with stars set in the pavement just a stone's throw from Universal Studios. It should be noted that Bailey was expelled from the Theosophical Society.

4. ROERICH

Alice Bailey maintained some contacts with the Roerichs of whom I would like to speak in order to unravel a question that has always gripped me and that concerns the personalities who populate this book: the proximity of political, cultural and spiritual powers. And in this regard, an anecdote must be told about the father of aerospace engineering and strange Soviet philosophers united by one goal: the defeat of the physical death (usual physique of many deluded that populate this strange planet called earth). n 12 April 1961, Major Jurij Gagarin, on board the Vostok 1 spacecraft, made the first space flight in history, travelling an entire orbit

around the Earth and

thus entering history as the first man in space. Many things have become legendary about that memorable day when mankind did the unthinkable, crossing the Hercules pillars of space for the first time, albeit for an infinitesimal distance compared to the vastness of the cosmos. These include the words of Gagarin, who is said to have exclaimed: 'From up here, the earth is beautiful, without borders or boundaries'. Some of the Russian cosmonaut's quotes later turned out to be forgeries, such as the phrase 'I see no gods up here', almost certainly spread by Soviet propaganda. But among the various phrases attributed to Gagarin there is one that has been much discussed: 'The rays shone through the Earth's atmosphere, the horizon turned orange, gradually passing through all the colours of the rainbow: from azure to blue, violet to black. An indescribable range of colours! Just like in Nicholas Roerich's paintings'.

The sentence would seem to be nothing more than a vivid and impassioned description of a physical phenomenon that, for the first time in history, man was able to observe with his own eyes. But for those familiar with the Soviet reality, one detail leaps to the ear like a jarring note: the quotation of the work of Nikolai Kostantinovič Roerich, banned by the Soviet Union as forbidden art. The message was about a mystical movement widespread among Soviet scientists, in particular among the creators of aerospace successes, known as 'cosmism' (it has nothing to do with George's cosmicism, which we will explore later and perhaps there is a little bit of commonality ... hihi). This term is used to refer to a philosophical current that refers to the thought of Nikolai Fedorov, which absolutely must be studied in depth. I can't do it here but I would advise you to understand the influence that cosmism has had. I would digress at this point because the subject is capital and has not yet been resolved in my mind. If it is true that there are other civilisations (and in the past on this planet it is true) that have become extinct, have they done so because of their backwardness or is it precisely the mismanaged progress that has made them

led to extinction ? Will we make the leap to move into space and survive and is this the evolutionary goal ? Or is it good to think that through reincarnation (and here endless nonsensical debates could be opened) we will continue to evolve on other worlds without the need to struggle to reach them physically since physical death is inevitable. Eternal life in the spirit and reincarnation or overcoming physical death through progress and interstellar travel? There is evidence for reincarnation, whereas physical death has no evidence so far, not least because if some civilisation had achieved it, it would be everywhere in space, or would it? The universe is big and maybe physical eternal life will not be achieved but we will still travel and live on spaceships, how disgusting (or how nice ?) !!! Maybe the earth will wipe us all out and we can reincarnate on planets less devastated than this one which is currently in a precarious condition (I then hope not to have to physically reincarnate at all but to continue to evolve on other planets, but that is another story). Let us pick up the thread with the work of Roerich, a painter and mystic in his own right, considered important among the followers of cosmism. At the heart of his (cosmist, not Roerich's) thinking was the idea that one day man would be able to resurrect the dead, giving life again to his ancestors, and even defeat death. Doing so would lead willingly or unwillingly to the conquest of the cosmos due to the inevitable lack of space on our planet (in case of failure even to an extinction or a tragic decrease in the number of the planet's inhabitants), certainly today Elon Musk manages to raise billions in the stock market to perhaps one day go to Mars because sooner or later the planet will become uninhabitable due to its total exploitation by the race or by a global war. Or perhaps, I hope, we will succeed in having fusion, which by the way, just as I am writing this, in Japan they have inaugurated the first experimental Tokamak power station, which is a toroidal chamber with magnetic coils. In New Zealand, Emrod is testing towers for the

wireless power transmission. These two technologies would bring us limitless energy projection and transfer. In any case, whether they come from a delusional philosophy about overcoming death or the unstoppably expansive human nature, such programmes are lavishly financed by states and the stock market, and it is important to note that the Russians have recently disassociated themselves from joint aerospace projects, marking a step backwards in the strange human evolution towards peace and unity. But before our 'glorious' humanity is at home on Mars, we must tell the story of Nicolas Roerich, who in Russia has ties with our Marianne Werefkin, an adopted Ascona resident (Roerich frequents her salon in Russia, remember that they are both nobles). As far as Werefkin is concerned, I can quote a small extract from the website of the museum in Ascona about her: In 1896, Werefkin moved with Jawlensky to Munich. Her salon became a lively meeting point for the international intellectual and artistic avant-garde. Kandinsky, Gabriele Münter, Franz Marc, Paul Klee, Kubin, Nolde, the composer and painter Schönberg, the dancer Alexander Sacharoff, Sergei Djagilev and many others met there for heated discussions on the most topical issues in art. The focal point of the discussions is Werefkin, who lavishes her exceptional culture, fuelled by up-to-date reading, particularly on the Symbolist, artistic and literary movements, but also on science and, like Alexej von Jawlensky and Kandinsky, was a follower of Theosophy. Her ideas, delivered in her writings, anticipate those of Kandinsky, those of Worringer himself on empathy. Her knowledge of the new French artistic theories and trends (Cloisonnism, Pont-Aven, Nabis) is clearly ahead of those of her friends.

We now return to Roerich about whom it should be added that for a period, Alice Bailey held her School of

Yoga in the 29-storey skyscraper in New York called 'The Master Building' that still exists today at 310 Riverside Drive on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where the Roerich institutions were located at the time.

Nikolai Konstantinovič Rerich (Russian: Николай Константинович Рерих ; St. Petersburg, 10 October 1874 - Kullu, 13 December 1947) was a Russian painter, lawyer and diplomat. As a young man, Roerich wanted to pursue a career in art, but his father, a famous lawyer, decided that he should study law. And so he did both, enrolling in the Academy of Fine Arts and the University of St. Petersburg. In 1898, he was awarded a professorship at the Imperial Archaeological Institute and in 1901 he married Helena Ivanovna Šapošnikova, great-granddaughter of the Russian general Kutuzov who managed to defeat Napoleon in 1812. They had two sons: Georgij, a scientist, and Svjatoslav, an artist. In the early 20th century, Professor Roerich painted, organised archaeological excavations, studied architecture, gave lectures and wrote about art and archaeology. At the invitation of impresario Sergei Djagilev (we will find links to Monte Verità), founder of the company of the Russian Ballets (*Ballets Russes*) from which the artistic careers of many dancers and choreographers, as well as that of Russian composer Igor' Stravinsky, began, he became a member of the Petersburg World of Art Society and for some time was also its president. In 1906 he was appointed Director of the School for the Encouragement of Fine Arts in Russia. From 1907 he was a set and costume designer for the performances organised by Djagilev, with the staging of the ballet *The Rite of Spring* by Igor' Fyodoric Stravinsky and choreography by Vaclav Nižinsky. He was a member of the board of the *Imperial Society of Architecture* and in 1909 was elected academician of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts. At the start of the Bolshevik revolution in March 1917, Maksim Gor'kij brought together in St. Petersburg his compatriots who were

dealt with art. They formed a committee that met at the Winter Palace and Roerich was its chairman. He was asked to become Minister of Fine Arts, but he did not accept the high office and foreseeing the considerable changes in his country, he decided to leave Russia, moving his family to Finland. At the invitation of the director of the Art Institute of Chicago, Roerich travelled to the United States in 1920. He had already executed more than 2,500 paintings and was an artist of international renown (actually not very well known to the general public today) influenced by many artists, including Gauguin and Van Gogh. His works depict natural scenes, themes inspired by history and religion, many are in the style of ancient Russian church paintings. In America, he travelled extensively, exhibited his works, frequented the best circles and gave lectures. He founded Cor Ardens (International Society of Artists), the Master Institute of United Arts in 1921 and Corona Mundi (International Art Centre) in 1922. After planning his first expedition to Asia, he embarked for India in 1923. Members of the board of the Master Institute of United Arts founded the Roerich Museum in 1923, in which many of Roerich's works were collected. In 1928 he founded the Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute in the Kullu Valley in India, which was a centre for the study of ethnographic and archaeological material, directed for over ten years by his son Jurij Roerich. During his lifetime he produced something like 7,000 paintings, wrote 1,200 works of all kinds and was for a time an inspiration to President Roosevelt and his deputy who 'apparently' put the pyramid with the eye on dollar notes. In 1929 and 1935 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to promote world peace through art and culture and for his attempts to protect art in times of war. Roerich's Third International Peace Banner Conference in November 1933 led to the approval of the pact that became known as the 'Roerich Pact' (it was later replaced). In essence he called for nations to respect the

universities, cathedrals and libraries as they did for hospitals. While wartime hospitals displayed the Red Cross flag, cultural institutions would display the 'Peace Flag', i.e. three magenta-coloured spheres inscribed in a circle of the same colour on a white background (almost nothing remains of this today). On 15 April 1935, Roerich finally saw the birth of a treaty consisting of a pact signed at the White House by representatives of the United States and twenty other Latin American nations, but the new insignia established by the 1954 Hague Convention would replace the 'Peace Flag'. During their intense activity, the Roerichs acquired a profound knowledge of the literature and traditions of esoteric religion. It seems that the first experiences began in his childhood with the apparition of a figure dressed in white in a dream, and his painting t e a c h e r Kuindži was for a time his guru who would initiate him into esoteric ideas and literature. Later Roerich was a member of the Theosophical Society and translated (particularly his wife Helena) Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* into Russian. Over the years they published several books on a wide variety of spiritual topics. Attracted by the Orient, the Roerichs set off f o r Asia in 1923 and the expedition lasted four years and a half. i a g i a n t h r o u g h Sikkim, India, Ladakh, Tibet, China and Mongolia. Despite enormous difficulties, Roerich produced 500 paintings during the trip. In the Ladakh region, visiting Buddhist monasteries and talking to the local population, he collected the legend of Jesus Christ's passage through those ancient lands. Nicholas Roerich left us many works, including *Himalaya*, *Altai-Himalaya* and *The Heart of Asia*. He was the contact person in Tibet of the Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rosicrucian. His ashes were buried on a rise opposite the Himalayan peaks he had so loved and masterfully portrayed. As is my custom, going beyond the hagiographic part I would like to

But I would also like to quote some extracts I found on the net that tell us a more terre à terre reality but also show its concrete and somewhat desperate side from a political point of view. Let's start with an extract on Roerich: 'The Soviet Union was also worried about Roerich. The American military attaché in Moscow reported that a reliable Russian source spoke of the Roerichs as an "armed group" that was "heading for the Soviet Union, ostensibly as a scientific expedition, but in reality to round up disgruntled former White and Mongolian elements". The impression I personally got of Roerich in a very brief summary: he had to flee Russia during the revolution and in America he persuaded the American upper echelons through Masonic circles to finance his venture to regain power in Russia by mobilising the forces opposed to the new regime and then they (American president and minister of agriculture) when diplomatic incidents added up, disowned him ... the thing did not succeed for the brilliant artist, dommage! Romantic hero, super-fascinating!!! Roerich was particularly concerned about a Buddhist prophecy called Shambhala, known as a legendary land (the counterpart of our 'Promised Land') was very popular in the Tibetan Mongolian world, it was seen as a legendary land for spiritual happiness - which the faithful believed would come after a worldwide battle between the forces of light, the defenders of the 'true' Buddhist faith and the forces of darkness (lalo), people with strange beliefs. The legend, which originated at the beginning of the Middle Ages when Buddhists had to fight against the Muslim remnants in northern India, finally became a mighty spiritual force in the Mongolian Tibetan world. Roerich's Asian exploits in the decade between 1920 and 1930 were dictated by his ultimate plan to establish what he called the Sacred Union of the East, uniting the people of the Mongol-Tibetan world and Siberia. Shambhala and Inner Asia-related prophecies were used to unite people in all these areas. Roerich looked to the Union

Sacred East as an ideal state with cooperatives as its economic base and a universal religion based on reformed Tibetan Buddhism and its version of Theosophy. In his correspondence and in the circle of his acolytes, this project was referred to as 'Kansas', the 'New Country', or simply as the 'Great Plan'. In early 1934, Secretary of Agriculture Henry

A. Wallace (an American Freemason and apparently his disciple) commissioned Nicholas Roerich to lead a scientific expedition to northern China and Manchuria, in search of drought-resistant grasses that could revive the Dust Bowl, a drought-stricken region of the southern plains of the United States that suffered severe dust storms during a dry spell in the 1930s. When the Roerich project ended in 1935, the eccentric artist had, in the opinion of the writer of this research, compromised America's diplomatic position in Asia, embarrassed the Roosevelt administration, humiliated Wallace and damaged the careers of several botanists. It had also failed to advance the cause of drought control in the United States. The episode - one of the most bizarre in the history of the New Deal - began with Henry Wallace's infatuation with Roerich's mystical philosophy. Louis L. Horch, a wealthy New York broker, and his wife Nettie were very impressed with him and spent large sums to pay off his debts and finance his activities. Roerich claimed to have the ability to communicate with the spiritual sphere through the 'automatic writing' very much in vogue at the time. With his eyes covered, the artist could record thoughts and instructions from the higher world; I also read that 'on one occasion it seems that he received specific instructions on how to raise funds to build a museum in New York in which to exhibit his works'. In 1925 he left for India and Tibet to paint a 'large series of panoramic works' and to translate 'original manuscripts, folk traditions and artistic material from these countries'. At the expense of Horch his patron, he travelled extensively in Asia to

four years. During this trip, the British Foreign Office apparently labelled him as a 'deranged individual'. Roerich was the initiator of a fantastic plan to create an autonomous state under his leadership in Siberia. This plan seems to me consequential to his personal history as a former member of the elite of the pre-communist world who managed to escape before persecution. It should also be noted that the exponents of the Decabrist uprisings were exiled to Siberia. The term 'Decabrists' is used in a broad sense to refer to all members of secret societies (people who belonged to the nobility and bourgeoisie of the time) who prepared the uprising in December 1825, known as the 'Decabrist uprising', and which had its centre in the then capital St. Petersburg. Around 600 people were exiled and sentenced to hard labour in Siberia by Nicholas II who suppressed the uprising. The Decabrists brought culture and educational progress to Siberia in a region that was relatively backward at the time, and where they are still highly esteemed and enjoy a high reputation today. Their condition as deportees, as well as that of the members of the Russian nihilist and socialist revolutionary groups, described in *Resurrection* by Tolstoy. The greatest intellectual representative of the movement was the poet Aleksandr Pushkin. One has to wonder why despite being very close to the leaders of the Decabrist organisations and aspiring to join one of the organisations, he was not accepted into any branch of them. The decabrist movement was the first revolutionary movement whose social programme went so far as to demand the abolition of serfdom and politically the founding of a republican state or at least a constitution. These liberal and socialist ideas and concepts had been spreading since the beginning of the 19th century, initially only in secret societies and small groups. A very important role in this development had been played by the Napoleonic officers who had arrived in Russia during the French revolutionary wars, during which many

Russian officers had been engaged in campaigns in Western Europe.

But continuing with the story of Roerich and his patron Horch, who worked on the construction of a museum for Roerich's works and between 1923 and 1929 built a twenty-nine-storey apartment building in New York, at 103rd Street and Riverside Drive, called "The Master Building". whose lower floors formed the Roerich Museum, with exhibition space for more than a thousand of the artist's paintings. With his museum and his fame growing, Roerich embarked on a new project. He asked for an international agreement to protect cultural monuments and art treasures, especially in times of war. In 1929, the Roerich Pact came into force after Roosevelt's inauguration and the aggressive defence by his trusted Henry Wallace (Minister of Agriculture) against opposition from the State Department. Wallace himself had a certain mystical bent. He was a brilliant plant geneticist, who had developed the first hybrid maize for commercial use, he was also a respected economist, whose writings on agricultural issues had made him a leading spokesman for agriculture - Roosevelt once referred to him as the 'old man of common sense' - but he also displayed a strong tendency towards fervent idealism. He was an intensely religious man, who disdained the 'mawkishness and childish irrelevance' of conventional Christianity. He saw the Depression as an opportunity for spiritual reform; the 'fundamental cure', according to Wallace, lay in the 'change of the human heart', in the renunciation of selfishness and greed. During the 1920s and early 1930s, Wallace's search for spiritual satisfaction led him to follow spiritual theories that promised 'the opportunity to enter and set one's feet on the Path that leads to eternal Light and Life'. Wallace also dabbled in astrology, confiding in a

practitioner to be 'fundamentally... a seeker of methods to bring inner Light to outer manifestation'. This search led him to Nicholas Roerich. Wallace admired Roerich's paintings because, he said, they gave him a "feeling of inner softness". He appreciated Roerich's philosophy because the artist believed in the fundamental unity of all religions, the brotherhood of man and the need for a transformation of the human heart to achieve cooperation between nations. Roerich seemed to offer lasting illumination to Wallace's search for eternal truth.
Wallace only met Roerich once, but avidly read the
painter's writings and often communicated with officials of the Roerich Museum. In a series of letters written in 1933 and 1934, in which he sometimes referred to Roerich as 'guru', he wrote: 'For a long time I have been aware of the occasional scent of the other world that is the real world. But now I must live in the outer world and at the same time make my mind and body serve as suitable instruments for the Lord of Justice'. While bemoaning the constant tension in his life, he expressed the conviction that it marked 'the rough beginnings of a new era'. Wallace lobbied hard for the Roosevelt administration's support for the Roerich Pact. The President's mother was an admirer of Roerich and Roosevelt himself had met the artist and was favourably impressed. The President certainly did not take Roerich as seriously as Wallace, but at Roosevelt's urging, the State Department took a more sympathetic attitude towards the proposed pact. The Third International Convention of the Roerich Peace Flag, held in Washington in November 1933, was attended by delegates from twenty-seven nations. In April 1935 the United States and representatives from twenty-one Latin American countries signed the pact in a ceremony at the White House. The following day Wallace sent a series of letters proposing Roerich's name for the Nobel Peace Prize. The

State Department was very nervous about Roerich, but he had some influence in the Oval Office.
Roerich did not attend the signing of the treaty; he had left the United States in May 1934 to search for herbs in Asia (and here begins the adventure with embarrassing diplomatic implications and the mess that would lead to 'disillusionment'). The Bureau of Plant Industry of the Department of Agriculture sponsored the expedition in the hope of finding plants useful for erosion control in the United States. The climatic and geographical conditions in Central Asia resembled those in the Midwest, where drought had hit hardest. Roerich's Asian endeavours in the decade between 1920 and 1930 show that his ultimate plan was to establish what he called the 'Sacred Union of the East', uniting the people of the Mongol-Tibetan world and Siberia according to the aforementioned ancient Buddhist prophecy of Shambhala. Roerich looked to the Sacred Union of the East as an ideal state with cooperatives as its economic basis and a universal religion based on reformed Tibetan Buddhism and its version of Theosophy. In his correspondence and in the circle of his acolytes, this project was referred to as 'Kansas', the 'New Country', or simply as the 'Great Plan'. Roerich saw his trip to Asia as a great opportunity. Helena in February '35 to Roosevelt: "The union of the Asian peoples is envisaged. The unification of tribes and nationalities will proceed gradually. They will have their federation. Mongolia, China and Kalmyk will halt the imperialist rise of Japan which had invaded China'. I'll make it short with the support of Wallace and Roosevelt invaded and baked to perfection by Roerich's infectious mystical fervour at one point the Roerich expedition arrived in the northernmost province of China, bordering Siberia. Russian engineers building the eastern section of the Trans-Siberian railway including Roerich's brother, White Russians, who in our hero's intentions were to become the political basis for an independent Siberia

(remember the exiled Decabrists in Siberia?). The local newspapers launched a systematic attack against the new visitors, associated Roerich with Freemasonry, Buddhism, anti-communist and anti-fascist organisations and the plan to create a separate state in Siberia. Roerich wrote home: 'We are fighting with the dark forces, but as always we are going on valiantly'. The State Department was becoming very nervous. Roerich at that point (perhaps feeling close to independence for his Siberia) launched an attack on his expeditionary companions MacMillan, Stephens and the State Department who complained that Roerich had put the US in an 'embarrassing, if not ridiculous position' and said it was time for Secretary of State Hull to ask Wallace to 'recall' the two Roerichs or announce their permanent disassociation from the expedition. The issue was also that most of the plant samples he sent to Washington were not drought-resistant herbs, but 'healing herbs'. At the same time, the US Consulate General in Harbin reported that Roerich wanted 'permission to import arms and ammunition and to pitch tents and establish an armed camp in the interior'. It seemed that the expedition 'had a goal other than simple agricultural work'. The Roerichs left Harbin in November 1934 for North China. They used government funds to buy trucks, cars and tents. Wallace 'promptly' got the weapons and the Roerichs went ahead, well armed and accompanied by a 'guard of White Russian Cossacks', according to one witness. The White movement was made up of various political forces: democrats, cadets, reformist socialists, supporters of Aleksandr Kerensky, nationalists and others who opposed the October Revolution of 1917. Forces remained loyal to the Russian Republic and aimed at overthrowing the Soviet and Bolshevik power and were supported by a coalition of countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Italy and France who sent expeditionary corps in their support. In addition, there were nationalists and other

separatist movements in Ukraine (where we find some roots of today's conflict), the North Caucasus and Central Asia. Among the Whites were monarchists, supporters of the old regime, who wanted to re-establish the reign of the Tsar, but also Mensheviks, moderate socialists, nationalists and republicans. In the winter of 1934 and spring of 1935 he made speeches in North China where the newspapers renewed their hostile attitude to Roerich who maintained 'a very proud attitude' and 'a rather fierce appearance' while travelling with 'four white Russian guards and some funeral guards' in Roerich's mind there was an invincible Mongol army, he imagined himself at the head of the Shambhala army. In Tibetan Buddhist and Indian Hindu/Buddhist traditions, Shambhala is a mythical hidden kingdom in Inner Asia. It is mentioned in several ancient texts, including the Kalachakra Tantra and the ancient texts of the Zhang Zhung culture that preceded Tibetan Buddhism in western Tibet. The Bön scriptures speak of a closely related land called Olmolungring. The concept of Shangri-La, first described in James Hilton's 1933 novel Lost Horizon, is claimed to have been inspired by the Shambhala myth. It should be noted en passant that in '37, Frank Capra's film based on James Hilton's novel Lost Horizon based on the Shambalah myth was released. Basically, the myth is about kings enlightened by Kalachackra practice and made immortal by it. On 24 June 1935, the State Department leaked the news of Roerich's activities in the hope of pressuring Wallace to recall him, and succeeded. Wallace later commented, 'for the first time I began to realise that perhaps Roerich was putting me in a false position and, through me, was embarrassing the United States government'. Wallace feared for his political credibility. On 21 September, the Department of Agriculture formally ended the expedition's field activities and demanded that the Roerichs pay for the firearms they had borrowed. Wallace did not want further friction between the US and the Union

Soviets. The Roerich expedition failed to find plants to help the American Dust Bowl. My guess (I have no proof) is that during Masonic meetings in the Roosevelt Master Building, Wallace and Roerich devised a plan to defeat the Communists by recapturing Siberia and rallying the opposition. At the end of the expedition, Wallace personally wrote to the US ambassadors of fifty-seven countries to warn them against Roerich and declared that he had been 'completely fooled' and promised: 'Now it is over and I think perhaps it was a good lesson for me'. However, his association with Nicholas Roerich remained a source of embarrassment and the 'guru letters' haunted Wallace for the rest of his political career. He later complained about the 'idiotic things' he had written to Roerich and feared that the press would use them 'to make him look very foolish'. In 1940, in the midst of a tight political campaign, the 'guru letters' resurfaced. Roosevelt was unaware of them when he asked Wallace to be his running mate for the vice-presidency. Not only could the letters embarrass Wallace and the Democratic Party, but they could also reveal that Roosevelt himself had taken an interest in Roerich's activities. Had the Republicans published the 'guru letters', the 1940 presidential campaign could have ended in a wild exchange of accusations. After considerable debate and disagreement, the Republican Party decided not to publish them, believing that the electorate would see the revelation as defamation. In 1944, the party's conservatives opposed Wallace's reappointment as Vice-President. In 1948 Wallace abandoned the Democratic party to run for president with an independent slate, the letters were published, it was embarrassing, but had little effect on the campaign. Wallace had already been ostracised by the political mainstream for his outspoken opposition to President Harry S. Truman's Cold War policies. Just a year earlier Nicholas Roerich died in his

held in India. He had only returned to the US once since his ill-fated expedition. His reluctance to visit his dwindling number of American friends may have been due in part to the Treasury Department's demand for $50,000 in back taxes and the lawsuit filed by a disenchanted Horch (his lender) for the repayment of $200,000 in old loans.

It must be said that after all, if Roerich had really succeeded in creating an independent state in Siberia against communist Russia, he would certainly have been an excellent bridgehead for anti-communist America, but the State Department got the better of Wallace and Roerich, who had become politically inconvenient, was ostracised. This is my opinion and should be taken for an opinion, we will never know for sure how exactly things went in the minds of each protagonist of this strange and fascinating affair. The good thing is that three quarters of the stories in this book always end up unresolved, in mystery no matter how hard I look for answers. But they are interesting and I enjoyed them, as I hope you did too. The most visible legacy is the Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York. I have often heard of Roerich in the Theosophical Society, and after learning of his connections with Werefkin when he was in Russia, it seemed to me that I could fit into this text even though it is awfully long and cuts a good chunk out of it.

5. Why Ascona? In the beginning it was Theosophy. Alfredo Pioda

But let us now return to Ascona.... Ascona is a non-place. It is part of those dreams that an adult once he enters cannot leave, and even if I stole the line from Hugo Pratt in Corto Maltese, in Ascona, I imagine, one arrives in the morning, the misty, dreamy dawn immersed

in subtropical nature, overlooking the lake, the gaze flows between mountains and hills near and far. In Ascona, freedom seems within reach, the mirage of a better life is strong, natural, thanks to the crisp air of the mountains, Monte Verità sheltered from the city and its suffocating rules. In Ascona, it seems that one can finally live simply, writing, painting, dreaming, creating a better world, a new life. He who does this is crazy for some well-wishers, yet for others free, cultured, intellectual, theosophist, reformer and visionary because he tries to free himself. Is Ascona still something in the collective imagination ... a chimera, a utopia? Why Ascona? Perhaps it was a series of causes and concauses that, when combined in a particular historical period, created unique and magical conditions. Perhaps it was the geographical position south of the Alps, a south longed for and dreamt of by those who came from the cold and harsh north. It was the end of the 19th century and this ideal parenthesis lasted until building speculation enriched the region and drove out the dreams and utopias, put in a museum like trophies of animals, killed and dead forever. After all, all these people were always just special foreigners, refugees, who arrived in an underdeveloped region and when development took place, well ... but let's go back to the past and its glories, to the refuge that was Ascona for those fleeing from Germany or Russia to the utopian experimentation of Monte Verità, which made it a meeting place for reformers, utopians, anarchists and secret sects and, as we have seen, spies. Ascona was a meeting point for the avant-garde in all fields, from dance to painting, architecture, medicine and literature. Medicine, which we still call alternative today, but which should have the place it deserves and be considered primary, because how can one not consider the psyche in order to cure oneself? Ascona has seen protagonists responsible for the birth of psychoanalysis gravitate in its orbit, and meetings of the greatest scholars of various revolutionary disciplines have been held in Ascona in a

syncretic and unifying attempt. I am writing this text precisely because by the time I was born there, it was too late and the last piece of the true Ascona era I found in Luigi Pericle's house where I took refuge, also fleeing from the world. In this sense, I feel close to those who sought refuge in Ascona, but unlike them, I did not have to flee to Ascona, I was born there and never wanted to leave it. I remember walking in the woods above Monte Verità as a boy and thinking that this would be a wonderful place to live, and even today I can't find anything better. Through the Theosophical Society and the rediscovery of Master Luigi Pericle, I had the privilege of surrounding myself with people who allowed me to rediscover the world that had passed through Ascona during its glorious past and reconnect with it through this writing.

Ascona was a refuge from the eagerness for progress that led to the First World War and the upheavals of the Russian revolution. But Ascona has been home to exponents of opposing fronts in a neutrality that, while protecting, conceals and mystifies everything. The stories we read in this account are actually just a few of countless alas, because it would not be possible to report everything that happened here, in this former fishing village.

In the cultural climate that developed in Europe in the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna up to the Great World War, the feeling of those seeking refuge in Ascona was characterised by a rejection of the national and social conflicts that marked the 19th century and a different spirit, wanting to be better. But there are also those who stay there for mere opportunism like Baron Von der Heydt, perpetrating his 'lifestyle' undisturbed. The trial will come before his death, but justice will not really run its course, and many accommodations will spare him the worst as by donating Monte Verità to the community, the partial camouflage of his

Nazi activities leaves a blanket of silence hovering in the rooms of the Monte Verità exhibition and in the ambiguous atmosphere one breathes when talking to insiders. The fear that the truth might ruin the image of Monte Verità is being handled by the foundation, but I believe it would be appropriate to tell the whole story for better or worse without hiding an open secret that Wikipedia has already revealed.

But let's start again from the beginning!

In 1889, in the magazine 'Lux', the organ of the Rome-based 'Accademia internazionale di studi di Spiritismo e Magnetismo', there appeared the announcement of the founding of Fraternitas, a joint-stock company for the creation of a lay monastery on the hill of Ascona, 'in a vacant lot, in the salubrious air, far from the world', to house
'students' of Theosophy, to enable them to realise the idea of a life in human brotherhood. The owner of the land on the Monescia heights above Ascona and author of the announcement, Dr Alfredo Pioda from Locarno, a philosopher, historian, liberal-minded politician and national councillor, president of the Milan Theosophical Lodge. Co-signers of the appeal, intimates of the founder Helena Petrowna Blavatsky of the Theosophical Society, Countess Constance Wachtmeister and Franz Hartmann.

Unfortunately, Pioda did not succeed in realising this project, probably because as president of the liberal party he had to take on the role of mediator during the revolution that shook politics in the canton of Ticino at that time. The so-called revolution of 11th September 1890, i.e. the coup d'état carried out by some Ticino liberal exponents and militants to the detriment of the conservative government, was the last attempt to change the political order of Canton Ticino by force. After occupying the arsenal in the capital of the Swiss canton, Bellinzona, an armed column accompanied by a riotous crowd stormed the government building in the town centre; several conservative officials and exponents were arrested, while a

mortally wounded by a gunshot. The insurgents installed a Liberal provisional government, which was replaced the same year by an executive in which both major political forces were represented.

The revolutionary movement had deep roots and immediate causes. On the one hand, it reproduced the patterns of the political struggle in the Swiss canton of Ticino in the 19th century: a spirit of oppression in which liberals and conservatives vied for power, delegitimising each other and resorting to violence and fraud. On the other, it arose from the exasperation of the liberals, condemned to political impotence by the electoral engineering devised by the conservatives - in power since 1875 - to continue to control the majority of votes, in particular through the reshuffling of electoral districts and the manipulation of civic catalogues. The trigger was ultimately the government's wait-and-see attitude towards a constitutional initiative calling for popular election of the Council of State and the modification of the electoral districts.

The revolutionary uprising of 1890 provoked energetic intervention by the federal authorities by sending a commissioner to restore order and pacify the canton. The result was a profound change in Ticino's political system, in particular with the election of the government and parliament according to proportional criteria (constitutional reform), which forced the main parties to find forms of collaboration. From being a turbulent and unstable canton, Ticino thus became a kind of political laboratory of proportional representation - applied for the first time in Switzerland - and of consociativism. This evolution of cantonal politics during Pioda's time, and in part thanks to his mediation work, leads us to delve deeper into the significance of the ideal he was inspired by, Theosophy, which we recall was also brought to Italy

by him with the first translation into Italian of a pamphlet entitled Teosofia (Theosophy), and its implementation in political reality.

Meaning of the name Theosophy :

'Theosophy' is a word of Greek origin composed of Theos = God and Sophia = Wisdom, used by ancient authors to indicate a wisdom derived from inspiration or direct insight into truth.
The term was used by St Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, which dates back to the year 50 AD, where he says: '...we speak of the wisdom of God in the mystery ('lalumen theosophias en mysterio'), pre-ordained by God, before the ages...' evidently alluding to Plato's (427-347 BC) wisdom of universal concepts, according to which, behind the perpetually changing world there is the unchanging world of Ideas or Principles existing in the Divine Mind that can be grasped through intellectual intuition or in mystical ecstasy. The term 'Theosophy' was current among the Neo-Platonists, often cited by Porphyry. The term was used with the same meaning by Giamblicus, who died in 326 AD, in the work 'De Mysteriis', by Dionysius in the 'Theologia Mystica' that had so much influence on medieval thought that it inspired theologians, mystics and philosophers for centuries, including St Bonaventure (1217-1274) ('Itinerarium Mentis in Deum'), Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), Meister Eckart (1260-1328), Tauler (c. 1300.ca-1361), Marsilius Ficino (1443-1499), Paracelsus (1493-1541), Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), Gichtel (1638-1710), Saint-Martin (1743-1803), etc., as well as the Sufis, Islamic mystics of clear Neo-Platonic origin (c.ca 1142-1220). The promoter of Theosophy in modernity was the Theosophical Society, which in choosing its name and programme was inspired by the meaning of Theosophy, as reflected in the history of philosophy and particularly in Neo-Platonic sources. In fact, the word 'Theosophy' is not a modern invention, but dates back to the first centuries of our era. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society attributes the use of this term to Ammonius Sacca (160-243), founder of the Eclectic School of Philosophy in Alexandria, Egypt, who had among his disciples Plotinus (206-270), Origen, Clement and other eminent continuers of his thought. Theosophists are scholars belonging to

any world religion or none at all, united in endorsing the aims of research theosophical research, with the desire of remove religious antagonisms and to dialogue with people of goodwill, whatever their religious views. What drives these scholars is the desire to study religious, scientific and philosophical truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but rather a common research and aspiration for Truth. I theosophists hold that Truth must be sought through study, t h r o u g h reflection, through purity of life, through devotion to lofty ideals, and regard Truth as a reward that one aims for, not as a dogma that one must impose with authority. Theosophists hold that what one believes in must be the result of individual study or intuition e not the its premise e that must be based on knowledge, not on verbal assertions. Theosophists extend tolerance to all, even the intolerant, not as a privilege to be granted, but as a duty to be fulfilled and seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. Theosophists regard all religion as an expression of Divine Wisdom and prefer to study it rather than condemn it; to practise it rather than proselytise it.

Peace is their watchword and Truth their goal.

Theosophy is the body of truth that forms the basis of all religions and cannot be held as the exclusive possession of anyone.

Theosophy presents a philosophy that makes life comprehensible and shows that justice and love guide its evolution.

Theosophy places death in its proper place as a recurring incident in a life without end, opening the door to a fuller and more radiant existence.

Theosophy restores the Science of Spirit to the world, teaching man to recognise himself in Spirit and to recognise mind and body as his instruments. Theosophy illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by detecting their hidden meanings and in this way justifies them before the tribunal of the intellect, as they have always been justified in the eyes of intuition. Theosophists study these Truths and try to live them. Theosophy is thus that set of truths which form the basis of all religions and which cannot be claimed by any as exclusive property. It presents a

philosophy that makes life intelligible and shows that justice and love direct its evolution.
The essence of Theosophy is the fact that man, being divine, can know the Divinity of whose life he is a participant. An inevitable corollary of this supreme truth is the fact of human brotherhood. Divine Life is the Spirit in all that exists, from the atom to the supreme entity, it is but a spark of the eternal Fire. Sharing one Life, they all form one Brotherhood.

Its secondary teachings are those common to all religions, present and past: the unity of God (or whatever one wishes to call him); the triplicity of his nature in manifestation; the descent of the Spirit into matter and thus the hierarchies of spiritual intelligences, one of which is humanity; the development of humanity through the unfolding of consciousness and the evolution of bodies, for some called reincarnation; the progress of this development under the beneficent dominion of an inviolable law, the law of causality, i.e. karma; the environment of this development, i.e. the three worlds, physical, emotional and mental, i.e. earth, the intermediate world and heaven; the existence of Instructors, highly evolved men, the Elder Brothers of humanity, constituting what is often called by theosophists the White Brotherhood. But don't let the strange and somewhat courtly terms frighten you; you get the hang of it after a while, if you want to.
All religions teach or have taught these truths; and if from time to time one or the other of these teachings temporarily falls into disuse, nevertheless it always reappears - just as the doctrine of reincarnation fell out of ecclesiastical Christianity and was submerged for no little time, today it resurfaces again in all its relevance. Religions contain the same fundamental truths and differ only in detail.

In ethics, Theosophy bases its teachings on unity, and sees in all forms the expression of a common Life, whereby the harm of one is the harm of all. To do evil, that is, to put poison into the vital fluid of humanity, is a crime against unity.
Theosophy presents its scholars with the sublime moral teachings of all religions, of all world faiths. It is often said that the

Theosophy itself is not a religion, but the truths on which all religions are based. This is true; but from another point of view it can be said to be philosophy, religion and science at the same time.

At this point, it is perhaps necessary to trace a chronology of the modern spread of Theosophy, starting with the organisation of the Theosophical Society (mainly the ST Adyar because I belong to it and know it best, this is unfortunately a personal limitation of mine and does not include all the other currents inspired by similar ideals such as Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Martinism, mysticism of all extractions for example) and to bring them together by narrowing the circle to Ascona precisely. The general history of the Theosophical Society is too vast to be recounted here, nor is it necessary. I will therefore limit myself to linking it with Ascona and its protagonists.

1875 is the year of the founding of the Theosophical Society, in New York. Prominent members in this period are H.P. Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, American Colonel, William Quan Judge (mentioned by James Joyce in Ulysses. We will return later to Joyce and Ulysses, the passage about the sorceress Circe written on the Brissago Islands near Ascona, when the writer was a guest of Baroness Saint Léger).

1877 Isis Unveiled, by H.P. Blavatsky was published

1888 Blavatzky published The Secret Doctrine

The Theosophical Society spread throughout the world and with it its ideas and ideals. In this paper, I will only analyse some of the people who expressed the desire to found the lay Theosophical convent "Fraternitas" in Ascona and the years leading up to the actual birth of Monte Verità from 1885 to 1896.

The facts that link Monte Verità to the Theosophical Society are as follows : It is far-off 1885 and HPB following the Coulomb case, which we will go into in more detail in the part dedicated to her, Madame Blavatzky leaves Adyar accompanied by Franz Hartmannnot to return. never to return. 1889 HPB (Blavatzky) lives with Countess Wachmeister in London e always

in 1889 Pioda, Wachmeister, Hartmann e

"They 'dreamed' of the Fraternitas secular convent in Ascona. But in 1890 Pioda had to quell the Ticino liberal revolution instead of founding the aforementioned Fraternitas secular convent.

With regard to Blavatzky, let us bear in mind that for a woman at that time, freedom was almost impossible, but she had a thirst for freedom and adventure combined with total ambition that made her life a true epic.

To understand the spread of the Theosophical movement in those years, it is enough to name its best-known adherents. Among the writers:

William Butler Yeats, Anglo-Irish poet and playwright (1865-1939);

Lewis Carrol (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), author of books about Alice, Sylvie and Bruno, etc. (1832-1898);

G. Kahlil Gibran, famous poet e writer of origin Lebanese (1883-1931) (see 'The Prophet: The Life and Times of Kahlil Gibran',

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, English author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, spiritualist (1859-1930);

Jack London, American novelist (1876-1916);

E.M. Forster, novelist English from 'Passage in India', (1879-1970);

James Joyce, Irish novelist of 'Ulysses', 'Finnegans Wake', etc. (1882-1941);

D.H. Lawrence, English novelist author of The Plumed Serpent, (1885-1930);

T.S. Eliot, Anglo-American poet and critic (1888-1965);

Henry Miller, Bohemian autobiographical novelist (1891-1980);

Edouard Schurè, French writer, literary critic, poet, historian and philosopher (1841 - 1929);

Jules Verne (writer and esotericist)

F.L. Wright (1876-1937) (architect, not member of S.T. but influenced by the books and follower of Gurdjieff)

Scientists and inventors:

Thomas Edison, American inventor of the electric light, phonograph, etc. (see 'The Theosophist', August 1931, p. 657) (1847-1931);

Camille Flammarion, French astronomer (1842-1925);

Painters and other artists:

Piet Mondrian, Dutch painter, leading exponent of the de Stijl movement (1872-1944);

Paul Gauguin, French post-impressionist and primitivist painter (1848-1903);

Vassily Kandinsky, founder of Russian art non-objectivist, influenced by Theosophy, although not a member (1866-1944);

Paul Klee, eccentric Swiss artist of Der Blaue Reiter and the Bauhaus School (1879-1940);

As far as painting (and music) is concerned, I invite you to explore https://theosophyart.org.

Musicians:

Gustav Mahler, symphonic composer (1860-1911);

Jean Sibelius, Finnish music composer inspired by the 'Kalevala' (1865-1957);

Alexander Nikolaievitch Scriabin, Russian composer. "Theosophical concepts provided the basis for the orchestral work 'Poem of Ecstasy' (1908) and 'Prometheus' (1911), known for projecting colours on a screen during performance" (1872-1915);

Actors and stars :
Shirley MacLaine, American film actress (born 1934).
Elvis Presley, American rock n' roll musician (1935-1977). Greta Garbo, Rodolfo Valentino, many important producers, Jennifer Beals (Flashdance). As far as early Hollywood is concerned, it is necessary to mention that many of its protagonists used to meet at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society called Krotona, which was located just below the sign on the hill in question, and that its initial destinies derived from these meetings. It should be noted that following the exaggerated and noisy development in Hollywood, the Society moved its headquarters to California as mentioned.

Spiritual Leaders :

The Dalai Lama (inducted in 2011 as an honorary member during the US ST Congress under the presidency of Tim Boyd, now International President).

We used to say that one of the reasons why Ascona is Ascona is because in 1889 Alfredo Pioda dreamed, without being able to realise it, of a lay theosophical convent on the hill of Ascona, today's Monte Verità.

But who are these three characters so closely

associated with HPB? The first is Alfredo Pioda.
Alfredo Pioda (Locarno, 1 November 1848 – Locarno, 7 November 1909) was a Swiss philosopher, jurist and politician. He studied law at the universities of Pisa, Turin and Heidelberg, graduating in 1870. After a brief practice as a lawyer in Milan, he returned to Heidelberg where he obtained a second degree in philosophy.
He became a member of the National Council and president of the Radical Liberal Party in 1900. The year before, he, together with Franz Hartmann and Constance Wachtmeister, planned to build a theosophical monastery on his land, only to have to change direction due to the liberal revolution and sell it to the founders of the Monte Verità cooperative who settled there.
In Italy, the first Centre for Theosophical Studies was founded in collaboration with Alfredo Pioda, who published 'teosofia' in 1889, the first pamphlet, a systematic edition of theosophy in Italian.

Who is Franz Hartmann?
The administrative director of Adyar, the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in India and a loyalist at Blavatsky's side during the Coulomb scandal. In the United States and India, the Theosophist got to know and appreciate Helena Blavatsky's book Isis, unveiled in 1882 and, after another move to New Orleans, became a member of the Theosophical Society in early 1883. With a desire to meet Blavatsky personally, Hartmann contacted her by letter. He was invited by him to come to India, to the TG headquarters in Adyar

near Madras. Following the example of some prominent theosophists from

Adyar, Hartmann converted to Buddhism, soon became Blavatsky's closest confidant and finally the administrative director of the Theosophical Society's headquarters in Adyar. Hartmann dealt intensively with the teachings of Theosophy, delved into the philosophy of Buddhism and Hinduism, and dealt with the different forms of yoga. While Blavatsky was absent from Adyar during a trip to Europe in 1884, the controversial Coulomb affair was breaking out, affecting both Blavatsky's reputation and that of the Theosophical Society. The Coulombs were two members expelled for theft from the Theosophical Society who, in revenge, brought their enemies together and mounted a scandal by publicly attacking the founder Blavatsky, who had to leave Adyar. Hartmann, as a member of the ST Control Council in Adyar, tried to defend Blavatsky, thus coming into conflict with theosophists angry at Blavatzky within the Theosophical Society itself and public opinion influenced unfavourably by the Hodgson Report of the London Psychical Research Society. After spending more than four months in India, Hodgson became convinced of the fraudulent nature of the alleged powers of Blavatsky and other exponents of Theosophy, resulting in a bitter dispute with supporters of their authenticity. Once back in England Hodgson investigated many physical effect mediums, reporting the results of his investigations in a report for the SPR in which he stated in no uncertain terms that "nearly all professional mediums are a gang of vulgar impostors more or less in cahoots with each other".

It must be added, however, that Hodgson would continue to study psychic phenomena throughout his life and his views would change considerably over time. I personally have a very cautious view of so-called paranormal phenomena, I have had some experiences that have convinced me that what we see is nothing like what really is and happens, but I believe that there are far too many people who take advantage of human naivety or weakness. Although I am very sceptical and cautious, I have studied theosophical texts for many years and find them to be the best around. I often wonder why not everyone

study Theosophy and I am convinced that it should be a compulsory subject in schools that should be refounded on Theosophical principles. But let us return to our Coulomb case: the purpose with which the Society for Psychical Research was founded was to promote scientific research into parapsychological (metapsychic) or paranormal phenomena, in order to ascertain their veracity. Research was initially focused in six areas: telepathy, mesmerism and similar phenomena, mediumship, apparitions, physical phenomena occurring during séances and, finally, the history of all these phenomena.

The organisation was based in London and Cambridge. A French branch of the SPR was founded in 1885 as the Société Française pour Recherche Psychique (SFRP). Later, an American branch was also founded as the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR). Supporters of the society include Alfred Lord Tennyson, Mark Twain, Lewis Carroll, Carl Gustav Jung, J. B. Rhine and Arthur Conan Doyle.

The society was particularly active thirty years after its foundation, and carried on the Hodgson report in 1884. And this makes me think that a full-scale attack was launched on the Theosophists in that booming period by their competitors since their interests are apparently the same. What is to be known is that theosophists are critical of mediumistic séances because according to them (and I agree) they are unhealthy. According to theosophists during séances one often only comes into contact with remnants of real souls and not really with the departed: theosophists call them astral shells. In practice, the astral body, which is the body that while alive we feel as emotions and desires, when we die, and then leave it, remains an aggregate that persists for a certain time and has a kind of atavism or "memory" whereby it looks like what mediums call the spirit of the deceased even though it is only a residue. This is also an open question as it all depends on who is coming into contact and it is therefore also possible to attract positive entities such as angels and spirit guides or whatever ... just as it is also possible not to come into contact with anything other than matter for those who only believe in matter. But back to our SPR, most of the initial members were spiritualists, but there were also some investigators. The society was weakened because

of an internal conflict between the two

factions, and a large part of its members (the Spiritists) left the SPR in 1887.

However, the Coulomb affair ended Hartmann's executive function at Adyar and made his further stay in India impossible. Together with Blavatsky, whose stay in India was no longer desired after these incidents, he left the country in the spring of 1885, never to return. Arriving in Naples, he separated from Blavatsky after a few days.

Hartmann can be considered one of the most important pioneers of Theosophy in the German-speaking world. In addition to his many contacts, he reached a large and influential audience through numerous lectures and publications. He created links between the religious-mystical world of India and Europe, thus contributing significantly to the spread of Eastern philosophies in the West.

Who is Countess Wachtmeister?

Constance Georgina Louise Bourbel de Monpincon born in Florence in 1838 to a French father and English mother. Wife of Count Wachtmeister, Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Countess joined the Theosophical Society in 1881. She died in 1910.

She was the companion and collaborator of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from 1885 until the HPB's death in 1891. She taught extensively in the 1890s and helped Annie Besant form lodges in the United States after the American schism by Judge (one of the founders who came into conflict with Besant, again a long digression could be made but unfortunately I cannot follow all the leads).

Wachmeister said of Blavatzky: 'I shared her room and was with her morning, noon and night. I had access to all her boxes and drawers, I read the letters she received and those she wrote'. Wachtmeister became Blavatsky's "guardian angel" during the years of the composition of the Secret Doctrine in Germany and Belgium. In his Reminiscences Wachmeister writes: 'The Secret Doctrine will indeed be a great and grandiose work. I have been privileged to observe its progress and to read the manuscripts'.

Wachtmeister wrote: 'When a printed copy was placed in my hands, I was thankful to feel that all these hours of pain, toil and suffering had not been in vain, and that H.P.B. had been able to fulfil his task and give the world this great book, which, he told me, would have to wait quietly until the next century to be fully appreciated, and which would only be studied by a few now.

I have quoted without elaborating on the founder of the Theosophical Society and now I think it is time to recount a few episodes from Mme Blavatsky's life. The original letters of the Masters who wished the Theosophical Society to be created are preserved in London at the British Library, where they can be consulted today simply by making a library card. In May 1882, a large estate was purchased in Adyar (in southern India near Madras) where, at the end of the year, the Theosophical Society's Headquarters were moved. This centre soon became the radiating point of worldwide theosophical activity. Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott undertook journeys to distant regions, set up branches and groups, received visitors, maintained a huge correspondence with all those who required information and enriched their journal with spiritual/theosophical topics, the main purpose of which was to revitalise the dormant interest of a part of India in the spiritual value of its ancient scriptures. Colonel Olcott left for London in February 1884 to petition the British government in favour of Ceylon Buddhism.
H.P.B., who was not in good health at the time, went with him to Europe. After a stay of almost five months in Paris and London, H.P.B. went toGermany, was actively engaged in writing her second work 'The Secret Doctrine'. In the meantime, a defamatory attack was launched on her in Adyar by Alexis and Emma Coulomb (two members of her staff in Adyar). Blavatsky returned to Adyar to learn the details of the situation and wanted to sue the couple for defamation but a following of the misunderstandings with some leaders of the Theosophical Society who did not support her, she resigned as Secretary in charge of the Society's correspondence. In 1885 he left for Europe, never to return to Indian soil.

Coulomb's calumnies, 100 years later, were officially refuted by the same Society of Psychical Research that had formulated the report against Blavatsky in 1884. In other sources I find that in the meantime the Society of Psychical Research had lost credibility and therefore this denial would have no value.
I personally believe that H.P.B. was a strong and independent woman who had the important merit of giving considerable impetus towards a universal vision of spirituality. In a special way, thanks to the Theosophical Society, the comparative study of religions has been democratised and has been able to leave the protected and elitist sphere of the faculties and no longer be just a specialist subject for orientalists and aristocratic bibliophiles (assuming that this is a good thing...). That said, it is clear that it must be recognised that often theosophical texts in the eyes of rigorous scholars can be interpreted as fantasies. It is difficult to draw a clear line between truth and inspiration. On closer inspection, religions are based on the vision of prophets who have the merit of gathering a large number of followers, and this attests to their historical value, since the apparition of the archangel Gabriel or the burning bush cannot be objectively verified. At the time, H.P.B. made use of scientifically untestable instruments that were denounced as fraudulent and undermined its credibility. However, the fact that her texts contain much material of extraordinary interest makes it difficult to understand how it is possible to master so many arguments at such a quotation level. This makes it a noteworthy case regardless of the total veracity of the assertions, precisely because it is often impossible to truly evaluate them. Some assertions will be revealed in the even distant future, perhaps.

According to detractors in the Secret Doctrine Helena Blavatsky also introduced explicitly Satanist statements. After a careful reading of the Secret Doctrine, I can assure you that there is no 'Satanist' intent in poor Madame Blavatsky's books, which say that Satan being a deviated concept and therefore in fact misunderstood and instrumentalised by religion has nothing to do with truth, indeed, falsehood and mystification are characteristic of it, even if one assumes its existence, et encore donc... But never, ever

You will never find Satanist intentions in the sense intended by her accusers. It is a purely philosophical/mental issue and those who accused her have misunderstood her writings.

6. O.T.O

But at Monte Verità, the Theosophical Society has never really established itself. In Locarno there have been official groups and today in Ascona our group represents Adyar, the Swiss headquarters, whereas in Monte Verità those who have met up to now on the hill are the O.T.O.
But what is it all about?

The Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) (Order of the Temple of the Orient) is an international initiatory religious organisation founded in the late 19th and early 20th century. It holds the literary and artistic copyrights to some of the works of the infamous Aleister Crowley.

The exact historical moment of its foundation is debated. It is believed that its origins may date back to 1895, as an expression of the currents of thought of Karl Kellner, a wealthy Austrian industrialist, together with Theodor Reuss and Franz Hartmann (who resigned from the Theosophical Society and co-founded his own order), along the lines of the nine Masonic levels and the capillary hermetic brotherhoods throughout Europe.

Originally, the O.T.O. was intended to be modelled on and associated, with three successive initiatory degrees, with the six initiatory degrees of Freemasonry. However, under the leadership of Aleister Crowley, the O.T.O. was later reorganised around the Law of Thelema (whose fundamental precepts are "Do what thou wilt shall be all law" and "Love is the law, love under will") promulgated by Crowley as early as 1904, with The Book of Law. In 1979 it was registered as a non-profit religious organisation in the State of California in the USA.

The purpose of the O.T.O. is to implement and promote the doctrines and practices of the religious and philosophical system known as Thelema, giving special attention to the care of, among others, the ideals

of individual freedom, self-discipline, self-knowledge, and universal brotherhood; to preserve and advance the principles and teachings, traditions and rituals of the Order.

The OTO appears to be open to any man or woman of legal age, without racial, religious, political or physical disability discrimination, in full respect of Human Rights.

We know that Franz Hartmann, one of the founders of the T.O. was director of the Theosophical Society's world centre in India. Mrs. Blavatsky affectionately called him "dirty Franz" (this worries me a little sincerely) and was accompanied by him when she left Adyar (the Theosophical World Centre in Chennay, India) following the stormy, aforementioned Couloumb scandal.

As for Theodor Reuss, an opera singer who could not continue his career due to the loss of his voice, a Freemason and co-founder of the O.T.O. He militated in every possible and imaginable secret order and with the advent of reports of animal sacrifices and alleged satanic masses at the Abbey of Thelema, which Crowley had already founded in Sicily in 1920, it is said (perhaps wrongly because there is a lack of evidence according to Marco Pasi, one of Crowley's greatest connoisseurs) that Reuss expelled Crowley from the O.T.O. on 25 October 1921.

As far as the Ascona artistic avant-garde is concerned, members of the O.T.O. were the dancer and choreographer Rudolf Laban, another founding member, and the dancer Mary Wigman.

So now the curiosity around these characters brings us to the legendary and somewhat disturbing Crowley (1875-1947), one of the greatest inspirers of many rock musicians of the 1970s and beyond. Crowley referred to by the press of his time as 'the most perverse man in the world' was not actually a serial killer, but many of the women who joined him ended up insane and some of his followers committed suicide (to be explored anyway). In some of his writings, he asserted that neither God nor Satan existed, but were only images in our minds. He himself, however, liked to call himself 'Satan' or the 'great beast' and said that he even had a demon from the Sumerian tradition called Aiwaz as his guardian angel (I have searched the Sumerian tradition and cannot find any demon called that apart from Crowley's

own writings. That I do not find him

does not, however, mean that it exists. I find that Aiwaz is, however, a name just like John). In 1898 he joined the Golden Dawn, but probably because of his attitudes deep disagreements arose with the other members who considered his magic rituals to be 'adverse and destructive'; this led to numerous legal disputes until the sect split in the early 1900s. In the same years he married his first wife, Rose Kelly, to spite a friend of his, whose sister Rose was.

and psychological beatings and violence, Rose had to be locked up in an asylum. However, Crowley is not a neighbour and so I can give up researching him. (Also because he also scares me a little and does not attract me and if I have to be honest I would advise against playing with fire too much for obvious reasons. Those who do so sooner or later in my opinion take a road that does not lead to truth and liberation).

8. BARON VON DER HEYDT

Another controversial character of Monte Verità is the Baron who has ruled the hill since '26. Let us enter this 'dark forest' then, 'which pensier rinnova la paura' ... Eduard Freiherr von der Heydt (26 September 1882 in Elberfeld, now part of Wuppertal, 3 April 1964 in Ascona, Ticino) was a Swiss-German banker, art collector and patron of the arts, often taking advantage of the war and the terrible consequences suffered by Jews. I have not looked for receipts of the sale prices of the works of art he acquired/buy from them and I do not know exactly the extent to which he took advantage of the Jewish condition, but I assume he did not pay them the value they were worth before the racial laws so I think it can be said with a fair degree of certainty that he took advantage of them. But let us come to his personal history. Eduard von der Heydt son of bankers, a doctor of law in 1909 founded the banking house E. von der Heydt & Co. in London but was expropriated without compensation as enemy property during the First World War in 1917. Von der Heydt, who was in Germany for a military exercise at the outbreak of war, took part in the fighting in France as a cavalry captain in his Uhlan regiment and was severely wounded in 1915 by a bullet in the stomach, from the consequences of which he suffered for the rest of his life. He switched to diplomatic service in 1918 and took part in secret Anglo-German negotiations, but resigned after a strict rejection of territorial demands in the event of a German victory.

Period 1919-1939

After a childless divorce in 1920 he opened 'Von der Heydt-Kersten's Bank' in Amsterdam but ran into financial difficulties in 1927 and was taken over by the Thyssen family, Heydt remaining a member of the supervisory board. About the Thyssens there is a book about their correspondence with Stinnes Hugo father of my neighbour Edmund. But back to Heydt, the former Emperor Wilhelm II, who was in financial difficulties and living in exile in Doorn in Holland, hired him as a private banker and asset manager and provided

assistance to the Thyssen group when it had problems with banks in Berlin.

On the recommendation of the Russian painter Baroness Marianne von Werefkin, and here the facts are not very clear, I only have an account from an Ascona acquaintance who describes a Heydt who offered half the price set by I don't know who, almost as a joke, and obtained the hill (from one of the artists who managed it I imagine). Von der Heydt bought the Monte Verità in Ascona in 1926 and had an albego built there by Emil Fahrenkamp. He lived in Casa Anatta from 1926 and in a villa a little lower down from 1929, making the mountain a meeting place for important visitors from the worlds of politics, art and society (I imagine and hope unaware of his secret banking activities for the Nazi regime).

In the 1920s, von der Heydt started to collect East Asian and African art (and one of his suppliers was Nell Walden, mistress of the house where I am writing from '32 to '59). He built up one of the world's largest private collections of Chinese and Indian art, leaving numerous works on loan to museums.

Politically, von der Heydt held conservative and national monarchist positions, partly due to his close personal ties to the House of Hohenzollern. In 1926, he joined the veterans of the Stahlhelm (National Socialist League of German Front Soldiers). Although his wife was of Jewish origin and he had numerous Jewish friends and acquaintances, anti-Semitic statements are found in letters from the 1920s. From 1 April 1933 von der Heydt was a member of the National Socialist Party NSDAP, from which he resigned in 1939 after acquiring Swiss citizenship on 28 April 1937. It occurs to me that he might have had his passport renewed in order to get a residence permit here in Switzerland and thus obliged to take the Nazi card while resigning after obtaining the passport ... it is a hypothesis simply based on the bureaucratic practices of the time, and is not substantiated by research or documents.

He then became a member of the Swiss 'Bund treuer Eidgenossen nationalsozialistischer Weltanschauung'.

During the National Socialist era and the Second World War, the August-Thyssen-Bank handled the entire payment traffic of the Nazi defence under Admiral Canaris (in command of the Abwehr, the German military secret service, from 1935 to 1944). Between 1939 and 1943, capital flowed to German agents all over the world, especially in the USA and Mexico, through von der Heydt as Swiss representative of the August-Thyssen-Bank and, from 1940, also through his personal accounts at the Union Bank of Switzerland. Other, less well-documented allegations against von der Heydt concern the procurement of foreign currency and the forwarding of Jewish ransom payments. The extent to which von der Heydt was personally involved in these transactions is still disputed today. On the other hand, he was shown to support Jewish refugees in Switzerland and to be in contact with diplomatic representatives of the Western powers, to whom he provided information and to whom he presented himself as an opponent of the Nazis.

As a result of the payments to German agents, von der Heydt was temporarily remanded in custody in 1946 for violating Swiss neutrality through intelligence activities for a foreign power. A Swiss military court acquitted him of this charge on 19 May 1948 for lack of evidence. The court followed von der Heydt's admission that he had not been informed about the purpose of the payments. The US government came to a different conclusion and confiscated all of von der Heydt's American bank assets in 1948, as well as his art works loaned to the Buffalo Museum of Science, which are now stored in the Smithsonian Institution, as enemy property.

In 1946 von der Heydt donated his collection of East Asian art to the city of Zurich as the basis for the Rietberg Museum. In 1952 he donated his valuable collection of paintings to the Städtisches Museum Wuppertal, which has been called the Von der Heydt Museum since 1961.

In 1956, the Canton of Ticino became the owner of the parts of the collection remaining on Monte Verità, some 500 works of art from the 16th to the 20th century, as well as from China and Japan. In reality, Heidt wanted to leave everything to our region on the condition that a museum was built to house it, but our far-sighted politicians refused and lost an enormous collection that would have become an exceptional cultural tourist attraction... one might wonder why our region was unable to manage such a cultural legacy and did not find the necessary political consensus. But by now these things are said and there is no going back. Great regrets, bad choices that have conditioned our cultural present. Despite the enormous importance of the figures who have inhabited our region in the past, we are cut off from a flow of cultural tourism from which we could have benefited. I remember my own brother opposing the restoration of the San Materno museum during his political activity. I relive with horror the arguments I used to hear at the dinner table in my family, and imagine the same narrow-minded and short-sighted tenor that conditioned the cultural debate in the political gremii who refused to invest in culture. Pioda would have wept. If I then think of how Harald Szemann was kicked out ... forget it!

Despite its more than suspicious past The 'Cultural Prize of the City of Wuppertal', which had been awarded since 1950, was renamed the 'Eduard von der Heydt Cultural Prize' in 1957. Scandalously for me, Eduard von der Heydt became an honorary citizen of the city of Wuppertal in 1952. He was also an honorary citizen of Ascona and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Zurich. In 1958, he was awarded the Grand Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany by the Federal President. In his will, he bequeathed Monte Verità to the Canton of Ticino to make it an international art centre, and our authorities only partially fulfilled their promise.

Since 2008, the Rietberg Museum has been checking the 1600 objects of the von der Heydt collection for their provenance in order to locate art looted by the Nazis. As a result of this examination, in 2010 it was

paid compensation to the heirs for four works of art that von der Heydt had acquired in a forced auction of the estates of Jewish emigrants in 1933.

Von der Heydt's membership of the NSDAP and the accusation that he actively supported the National Socialist regime during the Second World War led to the demand to rename the von der Heydt Museum and the Eduard von der Heydt Culture Prize in early 2000. In October 2002, members of the 'Arbeitskreis Angreifbare Traditionspflege' (Working Group for the Protection of Tradition under Attack) interrupted a symposium on the occasion of the museum's centenary and demanded that the museum be named after the Jewish painter Jankel Adler (1895-1949), who emigrated in 1933.

On 31 January 2006, the president of the Else Lasker-Schüler Society (Hertwart Walden's first wife, whose second wife, Nell Walden, formerly Roslund, built the Louis Pericles house where we live with my wife Greta and where I am writing this book right now), Hajo Jahn, asked that the Eduard von der Heydt Prize for Culture be renamed the Else Lasker-Schüler Prize. In August 2008, the city of Wuppertal decided to rename the Eduard von der Heydt Prize to the 'von der Heydt Culture Prize' in recognition of the patronage of the entire family. The prize has been awarded again under this new name since autumn 2008. So goes the world (disgustingly)!

*** see vdH notes at the end**

To return to our history, Ascona and Monte Verità have never hosted a building owned by the Theosophical Society (such as Naarden in Holland as the headquarters of the European Federation, or Adyar in India as the world centre, Wheaton as the headquarters of the American Section, Krotona in California, etc.) However, important figures in the history of the Theosophical Society and its schisms and offshoots have lived or stayed there. Personalities who were fundamental to the development

of the Theosophical Society have since taken other paths. Compared to the Theosophical Society, Monte Verità and its Utopia remain a different phenomenon with profoundly different developments and ramifications. I am definitely distancing myself from Monte Verità after having studied its history in detail, Theosophy is a different matter altogether and with the Baron or the O.T.O. it really has nothing in common since Monte Verità is something in its own right that has seen many characters with exceptional histories reside in its places. Certainly the theosophical impulse played an important role along with the geographical conditions, Swiss neutrality and the situation of the surrounding region, which did not hinder the development of anarchic-subversive or sectarian germs. These kinds of manifestations have nothing to do with Theosophy. However, it is important to note that freedom and thus political, women's or sexual liberation in the sense of non-repression of diversity are certainly a corollary of Theosophical ideals, which, however, repudiate the use of violence or the drift towards vice, violent anarchy or sectarianism in all its forms. A non-violent anarchy could be talked about at length if we think of the many intellectuals who called themselves anarchists, one among them was Herbert Read ... we will get to him too, never mind.

As for Monte Verità, originally therefore inspired by theosophical ideals, its unique history made it an exceptionally favourable place for artistic, scientific, cultural, spiritual and, of course, theosophical activity to flourish. The esoteric part concerning the T.O. is not part of the history of the Theosophical Society even though Franz Hartmann was initially director of Adyar, but what happens after his resignation no longer concerns the T.S. . The second part of the story of Monte Verità, when the colony fell apart and the founders tried their luck again in Brazil with Monte Sol, sees an ambiguous character as Van der Heydt, William II's banker, who let at least 30 million Marks of the Third Reich pass through his banks. Allegedly without his knowledge. That he took advantage of the Jews' plight to buy their works of art at very low prices, I was told in a chat with a direct witness of those times.

9. VON DER SCHULEMBURG

Let us now return to other neighbours, however ... the Via del Roccolo behind our house is named after a roccolo, which is now located in a villa that belonged to Werner Gebhard von der Schulenburg, who moved there in 1919. In the garden of the house is this tower with a rustic cottage, which was converted into a place to receive the German nobleman's distinguished guests. The intentions of the anti-Nazi pacifist were to avert war and madness, but let us look at his deeds in detail.
Gebhard Werner von der Schulenburg (Pinnenberg 1881 - Magliasina '58, writer, publicist, playwright and member of the resistance) is descended from ancient German nobility of which two castles are documented in 1237. Feudal lords, landowners, state officials, diplomats and officers belong to it.

Despite his artistic aptitude, Werner was enrolled at the age of 10 in the Plön cadet corps, a royal officer school, as was the family tradition. Among his comrades were the two royal princes. In the final officer course at Lichterfelde near Berlin, he also counted Franz von Papen among his comrades. Due to a spinal cord injury, he was forced to leave the army in 1902 with the rank of lieutenant.
He devoted himself to study, in particular to law at the Universities of Strasbourg, Munich, Leipzig and Marburg. He graduated in Erlangen. He dealt with subjects that went far beyond the limits of the university faculty, in particular he was interested in existential issues, the great political questions of the time especially those on pacifism as professed by Bertha von Suttner called the 'pacifist Behrta'. Werner met her in Leipzig in 1906 and kept up a lively correspondence with her for many years. After his state exams he married Viktoria Lutteroth in Rapallo in 1909. In 1911 he received his doctorate in law.
After making a name for himself in the literary sphere with a few novels, a play and two collections of poems, he left his job as a referendary in Hamburg and, attracted by the visual arts, studied art history, first in Hamburg, then in Berlin, from Lichtwark to Max

Liebermann. He occupied his time drawing, painting with watercolours and doing restoration work in the workshops of the Kaiser- Friedrich Museum. Among his teachers he counted Loeschke, Frey and Goldschmidt. He undertook extensive cultural trips to Eastern Europe, Imperial Russia, Italy and Paris. Everywhere he found signs of impending war and included notes on this situation in his travel and opinion reports for the embassy councillor von Bergen, who was to be German ambassador to the Vatican in the Second World War.

Werner completed his study in art history in Freiburg, Switzerland with Professor Leitschuh and his thesis 'The Triumphs of Petrarch in Figurative Art'. In 1915, 'A New Portrait of Petrarch', a study of his habilitation work, appeared.

At the outbreak of the First World War, he was in Arles, southern France and returned to Germany via Italy. He enlisted as a volunteer in the Frankfurt Oder supplementary battalion.

He was injured in a car accident in the second Masurian battle in which his brother fell.

After a long period necessary for Werner's recovery, he was transferred to the General Headquarters in Berlin in 1916 and was assigned to the war press office division.

In 1917-19, he was transferred to the Imperial German Embassy in Berne, serving the military attaché as press officer. This gave him the opportunity to gain experience in neutrality matters and he frequently attended conferences in the headquarters of Ludendorff and Hindenburg.

In 1917, while carrying out an embassy assignment, he was in talks with Lenin to negotiate the modalities of the latter's return to Russia in a plumbed wagon. Werner was also called to be present in Zurich at Lenin's departure. In 1919 he moved to Switzerland, took up residence in Ascona and married a second time in 1921. His new wife was Lisa Schauman, a German-Brazilian and with her he lived a period of intense happiness, travelling a lot and increasing his culture. He bought 'il roccolo'. a small tower with a rustic cottage on a hill (near my parents' house in Via del roccolo) and turned it into a place to receive illustrious guests from all over the world. He travelled a lot in Italy: Milan,

Rome, Florence, Verona and Venice. He wrote the first drafts for the book 'Der Koenig von Korfu' during this period, for other novels and plays that he completed later. He wrote essays on Jacob Burckhardt, Dante, Nietzsche and others. In order to escape the growing confusion, he retired to the Onsernone valley to his estate 'La Monda' in Auressio. Here, too, he received many guests including Max Scheler, Leopold von Wiese, Oskar Walzel, the painters Deckwart and Niemeyer-Holstein. He remained in constant contact with Germany, travelled frequently for conferences, was intensively involved in German-Italian cultural exchange and was always in close contact with Weimar, in particular with Schultze Naumburg and Elisabeth Foerster- Nietzsche.

The evening before the march on Rome he met briefly with Margherita G. Sarfatti after which he was often a guest in her salon in Milan, then frequented by artists and intellectuals. He kept up an intense correspondence with her from 1926 onwards, testifying to a heartfelt friendship.

From 1927 to 1930 he was responsible for the magazine 'Italien', a periodical that aimed to bring Italian culture closer to German culture. He got to know the most important intellectual personalities of that period as well as many artists including Ugo Orietti, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Farinelli, Ada Negri and Emma Gramatica and was intensively involved in Italian-German cultural exchange.

He contributed to the magazine 'Hierarchy'. He wrote in a purely objective manner and from November 1930 onwards spoke out openly against Hitler and his regime.

In 1933, two months after the seizure of power and shortly before the boycott of 01.04.1933 against Jews perpetrated by the Nazis, Edgar Jung introduced him into the circle of Franz von Papen.

In July 1933, Schulenburg participated in the Concordat between the Vatican and the Third Reich as head of Franz von Papen's press office; he observed the implementation of the Four Nations Pact and carried out activities for von Papen's circle in St. Moritz, Switzerland and Paris. After his last mission for von Papen in Rome, Schulenburg returned to Germany to report, but was intercepted by a friend who informed him that an arrest warrant had been issued against him and advised him to seek safety in Switzerland, at that time still his main residence.

During Röhm's attempted coup d'état in 1934, Edgar Jung and Herbert von Bose, Franz von Papen's two closest collaborators, were killed at Nazi hands. A small aside to explain Von Papen: on 1 June 1932, after a deep political crisis in the Weimar Republic, the President of the Republic Paul von Hindenburg appointed him Chancellor on condition that his administration would be politically and socio-economically neutral. He then left his party and put himself at the head of a semi-dictatorial government that was an expression of Germany's rampant capitalism. Essentially anti-democratic, von Papen had in mind the abolition of the Weimar Constitution and the creation of a state governed according to the criteria of census and nobility with the abolition of political parties. In order to achieve his utopian goal, he marginalised the socialists of the SPD and the communists of the KPD, while he did not disdain an alliance with the Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler. Moreover, on 20 July 1932, von Papen, through an emergency decree by President Paul von Hindenburg, assumed full powers in Prussia following the dissolution of the Prussian government (Preußenschlag, Prussian coup d'état); this move had as its official pretext the suppression of the riots that had broken out in the Prussian province, but in reality it succeeded in inextricably linking Prussia to the fate of the Reich. His extremely conservative and reactionary political action (which was nevertheless supported by Pope Pius XI) obviously aroused violent controversy on the left. When former general Kurt von Schleicher also withdrew his confidence on 17 November 1932, Franz von Papen's government finally fell. The move by the former general, who had initially helped him to become Chancellor, was judged by von Papen as a disgrace and a betrayal.

Deputy in the first Hitler government

Von Papen, however, immediately had the opportunity to take his revenge, forging an alliance with Hitler's Nazi Party and favouring his appointment as Chancellor on 30 January 1933, in order to obtain from the Führer the appointment as Vice-Chancellor of his government in return.

Returning to Schulenburg, we add that he did not dare set foot in Germany until the dust had settled. In

1934 after his divorce from Lisa Schauman, he married Marianne Wentzel and moved to the La Monda estate above Auressio in Val Onsernone/Ticino.
In 1936, with the comedies 'Swarzbrot und Kipfel' ('Black Bread and Kipfel') and 'Diana im Bade' ('Diana in the Bath'), Schulenburg's name became known everywhere and with this he believed himself untouchable. He worked directly and personally at the propaganda ministry on behalf of his doctor and other Jewish friends. Schulenburg was banned from his planned trip to South Africa, his plays were declared 'undesirable' and no impresario had the courage to stage them. Forcibly Schulenburg turned away from theatre and returned to writing novels. He strengthened his opposition to the regime and did not give in.
From one day to the next, the most significant theatre-related income was lost and Schulenburg moved to Irschenhausen near Munich, but his name was not forgotten. Walther Wuester, a man in the foreign ministry who appreciated the playwright and novelist Schulenburg in the summer of 1939 offered him work in Rome for the cultural affairs of the German embassy, even without being a party member and without political pressure. In the autumn of 1939, he thus returned to Rome, to the Kaiser-Wilhem Institute where he gained experience in the field of theatre science. Inevitable conflicts soon arose with the German embassy, as Schulenburg categorically refused to collaborate in the interests of National Socialism and only accepted assignments that accorded with his conscience. He cultivated his Italian knowledge and gradually distanced himself from the German cultural environment. He opened a translation office in Rome, which dealt among other things with the translation and reworking of works by Italian authors. With Mussolini, he agreed on the translation of his opera 'Villafranca', which was staged under the title 'Cavour' at the German State Theatre in Berlin on 09.05.1940, and translated Pavolini's 'Die Lichter des Dorfes'.
In constant contact with the former ambassador to Rome, Ulrich von Hassel, Schulenburg practised uncompromising resistance against the Nazi regime, spreading this idea among Italians and Germans. On Whitsun Day 1942, four Schulenburg cousins met and founded the family cell of the resistance movement.

At the request of Ambassador Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg, he held talks with the Pope, Mussolini, Stallforth, US special envoy Myron Tylor and others with the primary objective of bringing the war to an early conclusion. His correspondence with François Poncet also had this aim. The Gestapo got wind of it and interrogations and searches ensued.

In August 1943, the German Gestapo demanded that Schulenburg be present at the liberation of Mussolini. Schulenburg refused with a clear no and was forced to leave the country hastily. Through Germany he returned to Switzerland but the expiry of his tourist visa forced him to leave the neutral country. His wife had remained in Rome, his employees in the translation office were still working there, his works, manuscripts, translations, political annotations, art objects and whatever else remained. He therefore returned to Rome, but shortly afterwards he was again persecuted by the Gestapo who managed to banish him on 23 November 1943.

With a minimum of hand luggage, he travelled to Venice where he had good friends. He found shelter in a hotel where German air force officers were staying - their general Kesselring was also an opponent of Hitler - and resumed his research for the historical novel 'Der Koenig von Korfu' by consulting old documents in the archives of the lagoon city. He was allowed to stay for six months and was then denounced again. The consul warned him in time and Werner fled across the green border into the Bavarian mountains. In July 1944, after the assassination attempt on Hitler (Walkiria assassination attempt) Schulenburg was also wanted by radio. He managed to hide in mountain huts and here, too, his friends helped him. He managed to survive, despite severe heart ailments.

He divorced for the third time. His property in Rome was plundered and all his possessions were lost. He wandered Germany homeless with almost no means and worked tirelessly. In bomb-ravaged Germany, literature was not a popular commodity and was paid very little anyway. Malnourished and almost at the end of his strength, Schulenburg turned to his Swiss friends who were able to get him a residence permit for a year for medical treatment and helped him to recover. On his return to Germany, he stayed on the shores of the Bodensee where, in the villa Elena in Bad

Schachen, finished 'König von Korfu', which was first published in 1950 by Westermann Publisher and immediately became a best-seller.
In January 1951, he met again with Isa Carsen-Iser, a young literary woman he had had the opportunity to date years earlier, and married her in April of the same year. The couple worked hard to prepare his wife, who was a good 40 years younger, to manage both Schulenburg's literary and political archives. The union also produced three children.
In 1954 they moved to Magliasina near Lugano. Despite the favourable climate and the best care, Schulenburg's health deteriorated and he died in 1958 of his fifth heart attack.

Important documents on Schulenburg's cultural activities during the war and his resistance efforts were lost or destroyed during the looting following the entry of the Allies into Rome in June 1944. The post-war reparation process collected important testimonies.
A number of significant documents from the First World War from the war press office, the general command and the general embassy of Imperial Germany in Berne remained thanks to their deposit by Schulenburg in a private archive at the state archive in Basle. There are also some documents relating to the von Papen circle from 1933 and Schulenburg's life in Ticino until 1935.

The post-war Reparation Court - Landgerich Muenchen I, 4. Entschaedigungskammer AZ.EK 10189/53, in a judgement of December 1955, declared Werner von der Schulenburg to be a persecutor of the Nazi regime, recognised his severe heart condition to be a consequence of that persecution, awarded him damages, medical reimbursement for any treatment and a life annuity.

His relative Friedrich Werner (I have not yet been able to work out in what degree, but I think a cousin as they are 6 years apart) was involved in the coup d'état of 20 July 1944 carried out by Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, after the failure of this he was arrested

by the Gestapo and tried in the People's Court; sentenced to death he was hanged in Plötzensee Prison. The assassination attempt of 20 July 1944 (known by the code name Operation Valkyrie) was an attempt organised by German politicians and soldiers of the Wehrmacht, and carried out by Colonel Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, to assassinate Adolf Hitler: it took place inside the Wolfsschanze, the Führer's headquarters in Rastenburg, then East Prussia.

The aim of the assassination attempt was to eliminate Adolf Hitler and, by means of a coup d'état, to establish a new regime with the task of negotiating a separate peace with the Allies, in order to avoid military defeat and the invasion of Germany from the west, continuing the war in the east against the Soviet Union. The bombing was planned by exploiting the possibility offered by the Valkyrie Plan (German: Walküre), i.e. the mobilisation of territorial militia in the event of a coup d'état or internal insurrection, suitably modified by Colonel von Stauffenberg. The explosion of the device killed three officers and a civilian stenographer, but the Führer suffered only more or less minor injuries.

The failure of the coup led to the arrest of around 5,000 people, many of whom were executed or interned in camps. The British historian Ian Kershaw writes of about two hundred people 'passed from the hands of the executioner'.

In this writing I go from one biography to another finding family or intellectual or political references in the lives of these people who have lived in the past close to my home. Power has always been linked to mystical figures and by uncovering the arcana of their kinship ties and studies and their philosophy, the unravelling takes place as if by magic.

As I was writing today, I re-read this chapter on Schulemburg who dealt with Lenin's return to Russia and so I went to see what Lenin was doing in that period before the revolution and what his motives were and I discover that in addition to Marxism his older brother, a revolutionary, was hanged following the assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander III father of Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia the

whose wife much influenced by her children's health problems falls under the influence of Rasputin, whose daughter marries Boris the son of Soloviev the great mystic.

Vladimir Sergeevič Solov'ëv (Moscow 1853 - Uzkoe 1900) was a Russian philosopher, theologian, poet and literary critic.
He played a very significant role in the development of philosophy by influencing the religious thought of Berdjaev, Florensky, Bulgakov, the Russian poetry of the late 19th century (Belyj, Blok) and in the spiritual renaissance of the early 20th century.

10. FANNY

There are so many philosophical, mystical, political twists and turns that you can't get your head around it... this house in Ascona is at the centre of a web of intrigue that spans Russia, Germany, Italy and America, the Russian Revolution, the two wars and the Cold War... to make your head spin!

But back to Ascona ... and always around Monte Verità, which was a meeting ground for many personalities after and during the Theosophical parenthesis. Another of these stories that I am now going to uncover for those who do not already know it is that of Fanny zu Reventlow, one of the guests at the Roccolo di Schulemburg and therefore a neighbour for a time. Esotericism remains as a backdrop this time in the literary sphere.

Countess Fanny Liane Wilhelmine Sophie Auguste Adrienne Countess zu Reventlow known as Fanny zu Reventlow , was born on 18 May 1871 in Husum (Germany) and died on
26 July 1918 in Locarno (Switzerland), is a German writer, painter and translator.

She became famous as the 'scandal countess' or 'Countess Schwabinger' of Munich's bohemian family and as the author of the key novel, Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen (The Notebooks of Monsieur Dame) in 1913, during her lifetime, she published under the name F. comtesse zu Reventlow. Today, she is also known as Franziska Countess zu Reventlow.

Fanny zu Reventlow was the fifth of six children of the Prussian district administrator Ludwig von Reventlow and Émilie, née Countess zu Rantzau (1834-1905). Born in Husum Castle, her brother Ernst Reventlow was a German naval officer, writer, journalist and later National Socialist politician.

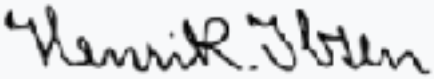
The family met the writer Theodor Storm and the family of Ferdinand Tönnies ,

Ferdinand Tönnies (1855 - 1936) was a German sociologist. A professor at the University of Kiel, dismissed in 1934 for his opposition to National Socialism, Tönnies was one of the founders and first president of the German Sociological Society (1909).

In her autobiographical novel, Ellen Olestjerne (1903), Fanny Reventlow describes the strict upbringing to become a Höhere Tochter (a 'superior' daughter of an aristocratic family) and a young woman she receives from her family and her Magdalenenstift (Altenburg) boarding school for young girls in Thuringia, from which she is excluded because she does not 'slow down her turbulence'. After her father retired, the family moved to Lübeck in 1889.

In 1890, she defied her parents' authority and enrolled in a teacher training course, which she completed in 1892, enabling her to teach in colleges and high schools for girls. The professional training was extremely unusual for a young noblewoman of the time.

Thanks to his circle of friends, united under the name of the 'Ibsen Club' and 'surrounded by an aura of mystery and scandal', he became familiar with modern, socially critical literature and the writings of Nietzsche at a very early age. In 1871, at the age of 27, he made a short stay in Ascona, where he completed the drafting of 'The Birth of Tragedy'. Henrik Ibsen (Skien, 20 March 1828 - Oslo, 23 May 1906) was a Norwegian p l a y w r i g h t , poet and theatre director.



Signature of Ibsen

He is considered the father of modern dramaturgy, for having brought the d i m e n s i o n iù n t i ma of the 19th century bourgeoisie into the theatre, exposing its contradictions. Undoubtedly worth exploring.

When Countess Reventlov's parents discovered the secret exchange of love letters with their Lübeck friend Emanuel Fehling (1873-1932) in 1892,

was placed in the care of a shepherd's family in the countryside, in Adelby near Flensburg, to 'get better'. From there she fled to friends in Hamburg in 1893 and was finally separated from her family. She was not allowed to visit her father who died within the year.

In Hamburg, she met her future fiancé, the Hamburg court councillor Walter Lübke (1861-1930), who financed her studies in Munich at the Anton Ažbe painting school in the summer of the same year. They married in 1894.

This marriage proved to be a stepping stone to freedom. When she returns to Munich in 1895 to continue her painting studies, the marriage ends and Reventlow continues to lead an independent bohemian life, despite constant financial difficulties, illness and multiple miscarriages. She despises the army, the bureaucracy, the aristocracy, the Wilhelminian nationalist spirit that believes exclusively in money and progress, to which her brother Ernst is also attached, as well as the education of young women to become 'Höhere Tochter'. One of my reflections on this story of the 'Höhere Tocher': I often find myself in hotels, particularly at this time a remnant of German upbringing and embodied in guests of the Hotel Ascona who are particularly rigid and assertive, play bridge and develop a particular predisposition to bullying. I imagine that these old-fashioned aristocrats were conditioned from an early age by a very harsh upbringing that left its mark.

On 1 September 1897, his son Rolf (died 12 January 1981 in Munich) was born, but his mother concealed his father's name from him for the rest of his life. Reventlow earned his living partly through literary translations for Albert Langen Verlag and minor literary works for magazines and newspapers (e.g. Die Gesellschaft, Simplicissimus , Neue Deutsche Rundschau , Frankfurter Zeitung , Münchner Neueste Nachrichten). After a few acting lessons in 1898, he obtained a short role at the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz in Munich and occasionally played for the young Otto Falckenberg's Academic and Dramatic Association. At the same time, she worked odd jobs as a secretary, assistant cook, insurance agent, salon hostess and painter. She owes much of her

income to her female 'Schnorrer' skills and her male acquaintances. In Yiddish tales, the Schnorrer is seen as a gentleman beggar, who asks disguising his poverty under the appearance of a person of great respectability, asks without being noticed and feigns indignation when offered what he has asked for. The term is used both in a derogatory and an ironic sense, to indicate a person of great intelligence and ability, who manages to get out of the way without showing it. In Yiddish literature, there are many short stories and novellas in which Schnorrer appears, some also in film and theatre versions. Her experiences with the Munich art scene - in particular with the 'cosmic group' of Karl Wolfskehl , Ludwig Klages and Alfred Schuler , are evoked in the notes of 'Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen', her key humorous novel. Dames sees her as a 'pagan Madonna' and 'the rebirth of the ancient etharians' because of her illegitimate son and her erotic permissiveness. He is also in contact with Oscar AH Schmitz , Theodor Lessing , Friedrich Huch , Erich Mühsam (also to be found at Monte Verità) , Oskar Panizza , Rainer Maria Rilke , Marianne von Werefkin , Alexej von Jawlensky, Frank Wedekind and many other representatives of 'Munich Modernism'. With his son Rolf, he travelled to Samos (in 1900 with Albert Hentschel), Italy (1904, 1907) and Corfu (1906, 1907). In October 1910 at the age of 39, he left Munich and went to Ascona on Lake Maggiore, where he wrote his 'Schwabinger' novels. In 1911, she contracted a white marriage to the Kurland baron Alexander von Rechenberg-Linten, whose inheritance depended on a marriage in accordance with his status. Unfortunately, the money evaporated in the bankruptcy of the bank and she found herself destitute. In 1916, she moved to Muralto, a few kilometres from Ascona. Fanny zu Reventlow dies 26 July 1918 at the age of forty-seven in a clinic in Locarno following a fall from a bicycle, in other versions suicide... one never knows who to believe ... The funeral oration is delivered by the writer Emil Ludwig . His grave is in the cemetery of the Church of Santa Maria in Selva in Locarno . He left a unique example of humorous and satirical literature and a valuable cultural-historical record of Schwabing's bohemian life through his activities. His

novels and short stories are still published and read today. His first autobiographical novel, Ellen Olestjerne (1903), can still be regarded as confessions and a book of self-discovery based on a typical model of the time (cf. e.g. Gabriele Reuter Aus guter Familie 1895). He wrote it at the suggestion (and one could almost say: under supervision) of Ludwig Klages as a kind of ticket to the circle of the 'liberated' (as the Munich bohemians were then called). He uses extracts from his diary and his love letters with Fehling during his youth in Lübeck. Later, however, he distanced himself from his early work and already in 1904 from the 'cosmic group'. With his novels and stories of the 1910s, he entered a new field. His humorous and artificially accommodating conversational style is translated into over forty mostly French novels (including Marcel Prévost). He writes for five imprints for the satirical magazine Simplicissimus . In Amouresken Von Paul zu Pedro (1912), he elaborates a type of Bohemian-style erotic encounter theory in the form of a new letter in the manner of Dangerous Liaisons . His most famous book is the historical novel 'Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen oder Begebenheiten aus einem merkwürdigen Stadtteil', a title that is difficult to translate as 'Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen oder Begebenheiten aus einem merkwürdigen Stadtteil' of 1913, in which the disputes between the disintegrating 'fractions' of the cosmic circle are ironically contrasted by the pathos of a revolutionary relationship. The novel draws its humorous potential mainly from the artificially naive narrator's position of a neutral observer 'Herr Dame' (behind him hides the future Heidelberg psychiatrist Hans Walter Gruhle), comparable to that of Murr the Cat, an erudite feline and connoisseur of the arts, Murr decides to write the account of his earthly passage, but the medium he chooses is rather peculiar: the scattered sheets of another autobiography, that of the musician-philosopher Johannes Kreisler (moody, antisocial composer Kreisler is a musical genius whose creativity is hampered by an excessive sensitivity.) Finally, in Der Geldkomplex (1916) - according to the title page 'Dedicated to my creditors' - Reventlow provides (still in letter form) a vacillating and comical reflection on the pecuniary dimension of bohemian life and at the same time a parody of psychoanalysis . In Reventlow's latest novel, 'Der

Selbstmordverein' (suicide club), despite all the irony, there is a melancholic streak, which corresponds to a more general mood of the era before the First World War, when the old bohemian circles in Munich and Berlin were increasingly transformed into sectarian and reformist circles in retreat areas (Monte Verità) or known for their political action (Republic of Councils, Bavaria). The novel remained unfinished. As 'Countess Schwabinger', she entered the history of modernism in Munich. Her flat shared with her friend Bohdan von Suchocki and Franz Hessel, the 'financier' of the group, became famous in 1903-1906 on t h e corner of Kaulbachstrasse (the house now unfortunately no longer exists). In the 1970s/80s, Reventlow is described as an icon of the sexual revolution and the emancipation of women due to her unconventional lifestyle for her time. Reventlow herself is quite distant and cynical about the women's movement of her time, although she maintained friendly relations with some of its representatives (such as Anita Augspurg and Helene Böhlau). Recently there has been a revival of interest in Reventlow's literary works and a true biography of the 'Countess Schwabing', which is now almost buried behind the hagiographically treated history of literary modernism and bohemian societies from Munich and Berlin.

11. THE COSMICISTS

Reventlow's biography sees her gravitating around the cosmic group or the Cosmicists, I would say we can include them in this story because George lived for a time in Minusio where he died, he is not a neighbour but the intellectual proximity to Reventlow and the fact that he landed in the Locarno region beyond

its importance from an esoteric point of view enticed me to include it in this collage/book. from left to right Karl Wolfskehl, Alfred Schuler, Ludwig Klages, Stefan George, Albert Verwey

The Kosmikerkreis, also known as the Kosmiker for short, around a number of private scholars such as Alfred Schuler (1865-1923), Ludwig Klages (1872-1956) and Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948), was a para-religious group of intellectuals in Munich at the turn of the 19th century.
20th century. The circle was open to numerous guests such as the Dutch poet Albert Verwey (1865-1937), the grammar teacher Ludwig Derleth (1870-1948), the writer Oscar A. H. Schmitz (1873-1931), the poet Stefan George (1868-1933) or the book artist Melchior Lechter (1865-1937).

On the subject of Melchior Lechter, I am going to dredge up an article I had linked from www.theosophyart.org that I have compiled over the years and translate with deepl :

From Creative Reading

www.wouterjhanegraaff.blogspot.nl

22 October 2015

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Theosophy in Secret Germany Melchior

Lechter, Panis angelorum (1906)

In my first blogpost (scive Hanegraff) on creative reading (2012) I wrote about the German poet Stefan George and his 'hidden church of the spirit'. This elitist cult of refined aesthetics and homoerotic spirituality might at first glance have little in common with Madame Blavatsky (ridiculed by George himself as 'die dicke Madame', 'the fat lady') and the popular Theosophy movement that was making headlines at the same time. However, in his excellent recent monograph 'Der George-Kreis und die Theosophie, mit einem Exkurs zum SwastikaZeichen bei Helena Blavatsky', Alfred Schuler und Stefan George (The George Circle and Theosophy: with an Analysis of the Swastika). Jan Stottmeister shows that we can still learn much that has been forgotten about the cultural climate of the early 20th century. The book begins with a well-documented overview of modern Theosophy and the aesthetic environment of the late 20th century, the 'fin-de-siècle'.

What these networks had in common, despite their differences, was their counter-culturalism: From 1889 to the end of the century George moved in counter-cultural circles which, by communicating secret knowledge (esotericism), constituted themselves as the esoteric Other to the outside world. The outside world was the bourgeois society of the late 19th century, experienced as disenchanted, rationalised, dominated by mass culture, and hopelessly ugly. Around George we find aestheticism and occultism, the aesthetics and hermeneutics of secrecy and secrecy, Symbolist artistic programmes and secret teachings, the intertwining of the roles of artist and seer, artistic/religious and other alternative religious constructions of meaning - all belonged inseparably to this milieu. I make an aside to clarify an important point: according to the most important of contemporary 'hermeneutic' philosophers, Martin Heidegger, by an unknown commonality of root, hermeneutics can be connected to the god Hermes in a play of thought that is more binding than the rigour of science. Hermes is the messenger of the gods', who acts as an intermediary between them and mankind by making divine thought clear to them. Hermes is also credited with the discovery of the

language and writing so that men can translate what is infinite in their thoughts into the finite. But let us return to the subject : whether 'secret' meant the essence of a poem which, following Mallarmé, had to remain linguistically beyond the public gaze, so as to be revealed only to the 'âmes d'élite' (elite souls) capable of understanding it; or whether it meant the knowledge claimed by the charismatic leaders of the Orders who promised to initiate the world into their secrets, such distinctions were subordinate to the general desire to delimit, to distinguish oneself, socially, intellectually from the dominant culture of materialism.

Melchior Lechter, Shambhala (1925)

When George began to establish his own circle after 1900 - demarcating his vision from that of competing groups such as the Munich 'Cosmic Circle'. (dominated by Alfred Schuler and Ludwig Klages), claiming his own ultimate and unquestionable authority and instituting the cult of the 'divine boy' Maximin - it became intolerable for der Meister (Georges) to think that his pupils could show allegiance to any other 'Master' (such as the Theosophical Mahatmas) or any other childlike vehicle of divinity such as Jiddu Krishnamurti, the Indian boy elected by the Theosophists as their future world Teacher. As Stottmeister shows, the central figure in George's competition with Theosophy was the now forgotten artist, Melchior Lechter (1865-1937). Lechter turned out to be a fascinating character. He admired J.-K. Huysmans, famous for his novel of extreme fin-de-siecle decadentism, 'A rebours', who followed the example of his protagonist, Des Esseintes, by transforming his home and atelier into a private artistic 'counter-world' (Gegen-Welt) against bourgeois society: a place where everything breathed a refined atmosphere of sacredness that was more reminiscent of a Catholic church than a living space. It became the favourite meeting place of George's circle in Berlin; and of all George's friends, only Lechter was recognised by Der Meister as a 'Master' in his own right. In particular, all of George's

first appeared in limited bibliophile editions designed by Lechter, who thus dominated the visual imagery of George's art religion. However, Lechter was not only an extreme fin-de-siècle aesthete, but also a great admirer of Madame Blavatsky. In his mind, these two perspectives seemed to go perfectly together; hence it is not surprising that hidden references to his Theosophical beliefs are omnipresent in his artistic output, including works commissioned by Madame Blavatsky and George. The fascination with Theosophy among members of his circle became a problem for George. At times he seems to have attempted to make opportunistic use of it for his own ends, as in an intriguing conversation reported by Herbert Steiner (no relation to the founder of Anthroposophy Rudolf Steiner) who claims that George described himself as a messenger sent by the Mahatmas. But in the end, there could only be one Master in George's universe. In October 1910, Melchior Lechter made a trip to India with another central member of George's circle, Karl Wolfskehl.

Both had become members of the Theosophical Society for a short time previously. They made no less than five visits to Adyar and had a private meeting with Annie Besant. They accompanied her and her followers on walks, listened to lectures and met the young "Hindu", "vehicle of the world teacher" Hindu Jiddu Krishnamurti. Upon his return, Lechter published the account of his trip to India as 'Tagebuch der indischen Reise' (Journal of the Indian Journey, 1912) and sent it to George as a Christmas present. This proved to be a fatal miscalculation. George refused to reply and cut all ties of friendship with Lechter. In the following years, the two met awkwardly, but as usual with George, the break was final and irreversible. Henceforth, George's books were published without Lechter's drawings. For Lechter himself, the break was deeply painful. If Melchior Lechter is the central figure in Stottmeister's analysis, separate chapters, full of fascinating information, are devoted to other figures relevant to the

relationship between George and Theosophy, in particular the composer Cyrill Scott (who deserves a lot of space, and I urge you to look him up online); the poet Karl Wolfskehl (the true 'inventor of the cult of George', according to Stottmeister), the writer, spiritualist, theosophist and alchemist Alexander von Bernus ('I know that the dead live, I feel that they are around us. When they walk along the cloisters, It is as if a cold wind blows. I know that the dead live, Yet they are blind'); and even the Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch. Finally, Stottmeister shows that Friedrich Gundolf's profoundly apologetic book George (1920) is permeated not only by a programme of hero-worship, based on the spiritual superiority of Jehoerge, described in biblical terms as 'Way, Truth and Life', as of religion, but also, at the same time, by an urgently felt need to rid him of competition from Theosophy, according to George 'the worst idea of modernity'. From then on - and this is a familiar story in the study of Western esotericism - the dimension of Theosophy and occultism is erased from the standard treatises devoted to Stefan George and his circle. Just as (to cite just one parallel) Swedenborg has been reduced in academic studies of Kant to a ridiculous seer of the Spirit without serious philosophical importance, Theosophy has been reduced to nothing more than the invention of 'die dicke Madame'. In a sharp and sustained critique of the prevailing academic trend in Germany after World War II, Stottmeister observes (with an obvious reference to Adorno's famous definition of occultism) that from an academic point of view, the occultist interests of the intelligentsia - Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin, to name only those closest to Adorno - are no longer noticed. In the decades following the Second World War, historians of modernity henceforth only know one type of occultist: the Nazis. The profound irony is that such notions of 'Nazi occultism' were accepted as historically correct by generations of German academics, in blissful ignorance of the fact that they were thereby giving credence to

occult pseudo-histories (largely originating from Pauwels & Bergier's bestseller Morning of the Magicians).

Sources :

Alfred Schuler, Stefan George and the Western History of the Interpretation of Religion.

Stottmeister, George-Kreis, 323.

See Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Superpower', Creative Reading 2 May 2013.

www.wouterjhanegraaff.blogspot.nl (on Julian Strube's study Vril: Eine okkulte Urkraft in Theosophie und esoterischem Neonazismus, Wilhelm Fink: Munich 2013).

The sign of the Swastika was not only adopted by the Nazis as their symbol, but also appears in the seal of the Theosophical Society as well as in Melchior Lechter's drawings of the books of George's Circle, as well as in the works of Alfred Schuler (the central figure of the Munich 'Cosmic Circle', which originally overlapped with George's circle). As there seems to be a red thread between George and Theosophy that requires interpretation. Stottmeister has very good things to say about what he calls the 'swastika effect', which makes it psychologically impossible for us to see the swastika without being reminded of Nazism. In reality, however, the sign first became popular in apolitical contexts: as a sign of an occultist society that actually promoted brotherhood between races and nations, as a favourite ornament in Jugendstil and Art Deco design, and as a profane commercial logo for products of all kinds. Ironically, from a modern-day perspective, the swastika was seen as a sign of good fortune. Against the backdrop of the popular racial and evolutionary theories of the
19th century, including the anti-Semitic arguments of evolution,

including the anti-Semitic arguments in favour of Aryan supremacy such as Emile Burnouf's La Science des Religions (1870), Stottmeister provides an excellent analysis of the way the Swastika, adopted from India, worked in Blavatsky's context of her 'racial anti-racism', followed by an analysis and impressive discussion of Alfred Schuler's obsession with the symbol and, of course, its appearance in Stefan George's circle. Any further non-political use of the Swastika became impossible after the Second World War, because, as Stottmeister notes, 'the Swastika is a symbol that cannot be used'. c o m m e n t s , 'historical contextualisations were powerless in the face of this reconditioned visual perception'. The sign o f good fortune had been irreversibly transformed into a sign of horror'. However, powerless or not, what is the point of historical research if we do not insist that fiction can be distinguished from reality and that it is important to do so? Like all good researchers in the modern study of Western esotericism, Stottmeister offers us a careful deconstruction of entrenched academic myths that have been taken for granted by scholars for generations and that have obstructed and distorted our view of historical reality. This pars destruens is necessary to pave the way for the pars construens that should follow in its wake: that of reconstructing from the bottom up our standard ways of imagining Western culture.

Let us now return to our cosmicists, who reflected particularly clearly certain intellectual currents of the turn of the century. They were united by their interest in non-Christian and at the same time non-Jewish myths. One of their main points of reference was the work of the Swiss mythologist Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815-1887) on the first matriarchs (Das Mutterrecht, 1861), which they rediscovered and reinterpreted. According to his historiographical conception, the beginnings of human history are characterised by a succession of phases in which first the maternal element would prevail (and with it the symbolism of earth and water, natural law, sexual promiscuity, the community of goods) and later the paternal element (and with it the

celestial symbolism, positive law, monogamy, private property). The transition between these phases would have taken place through moments of violent power of women (Amazonism), first as a rebellion against the physical supremacy of the male in the early days of civilisation and then as a degeneration of the classical phase of the so-called demetric matriarchy, seen by Bachofen as the 'poetry of history', ordered as it would have been according to the peaceful and equitable laws of mother earth. After a few crucial trips to Italy and Greece, it was with the Essay on the Funerary Symbolism of the Ancients (1859) that Bachofen laid the methodological foundations of his work, centred on the definition of the concept of the symbol 'resting in itself'; the latter, representing nothing but itself, draws on the metaphysical truth that finds its concrete incarnation in history. Let me add a thought of my own: the idea of the symbol 'resting in itself' is a very effective ploy to eliminate the problem of the source in mysticism. I always ask myself where mystical thought starts, who "puts the voice of God out there first"? The symbol "resting in itself" is a method of obviating the metaphysical question par excellence.

Returning to our Bachofen, with his work The Maternal Right, also known as The Matriarchy (1861), Bachofen fleshed out his discourse more concretely, declining, through the study of symbols and myths, what he considered to be the primordial essence of the historical dialectic, namely the alternation of matriarchal and patriarchal phases. According to his historiographical conception, the beginnings of human history are characterised by a succession of phases in which first the maternal element would prevail (and with it the symbolism of earth and water, natural law, sexual promiscuity, community of goods) and then the paternal element (and with it the heavenly symbolism, positive law, monogamy, private property). The transition between these phases is said to have taken place through moments of violent female power (Amazonism), first as a rebellion against the physical supremacy of the male in the early days of civilisation, and then as a degeneration of the classical phase of so-called demetric matriarchy,

seen by Bachofen as the 'poetry of history', ordered as it would be according to the peaceful and just laws of mother earth. These theories have inspired much of the most valid modern research on these topics: they have been re-evaluated both from the right (Ludwig Klages, Alfred Baeumler, Julius Evola), in tune with Bachofen's decidedly conservative ideology, and from the left (first and foremost Walter Benjamin, but already Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels). Of great importance was also its reception in the psychoanalytic field, since Freud and Jung, but then above all with the studies of Erich Neumann (present at Eranos), Wilhelm Reich (of whom there are many traces in Luigi Pericle's archives) and Erich Fromm (whom we find near Ascona in Minusio... I remember our theosophist friend Giancarlo Fabbri telling me of meeting him on the lakeside promenade). The matriarchal theme has not least been taken up in recent feminist studies, which have attempted to re-evaluate the historical consistency of Bachofen's hypotheses, recognising in them a valid instrument for founding an alternative socio-political project, centred on typically feminine values and characteristics that the great Basel scholar was able to highlight with undoubted pioneering spirit.

But among the 'greats' in the eyes of the cosmicists were also Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Nietzsche. The cosmicists were enthusiastic about a revitalisation of ancient religions, with different competing designs. Common to all was the rejection of faith in the progress of the founding era and the 'brainwashing' of contemporary cultural debate. The 'pagan Eros' that the cosmicists worshipped was to become cosmogonic world-creator and cosmic world-explainer. Their activity took the form of various fantasies and personality cults (around Stefan George, for example), which were ridiculed by contemporaries such as Otto Julius Bierbaum (in Möbius Steckbriefe, 1900). Cosmicists also took refuge in particular pseudo-poetic and pseudo-religious metaphors; Alfred Schuler, for instance, who felt himself the reincarnation of an ancient Roman, prophesied the appearance of a 'lamp of

blood' in which the recovery of an original unity of feeling and understanding that had been completely lost in the present **would manifest itself.** Schuler had little tangible cultural impact; he could hardly make himself understood outside the narrower confines of the circle. This was certainly also due to the fact that he published almost nothing, even though he had studied the classics. He was more famous for his lectures and spontaneous statements, which contemporaries described as extraordinarily impressive.

Ludwig Derleth left behind works such as the Proclamations, which appeared for the first time in 1904 and for the second time, in a slightly modified version, in 1919, and organised evening readings along the lines of Friedrich Nietzsche's Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Derleth was later parodied by Thomas Mann, who was present at one of the three readings of the 'Proclamations', in his short story Beim Propheten (also from 1904) and again in 1947 in his novel Doktor Faustus as a typical example of the Munich of those years in the character Daniel zur Höhe.

Ludwig Klages, who had originally studied chemistry, tried to approach the 'soul' with his friend Hans H. Busse by founding the science of graphology (German address). His later treatises 'Vom kosmogonischen Eros' (1922) and 'Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele' or 'The Spirit as Opponent of the Soul' (1929) were works of cultural criticism and philosophy. Like Schuler, he also dealt with the psychology of language, 'Die Sprache als Quell der Seelenkunde' or 'Language as the Source of Soul Knowledge' (1948).

Karl Wolfskehl was the financier and social centre of the Bohemian Brotherhood and the host of its meetings. He was (called the 'Zeus of Schwabing' because of his height) a renowned literary historian, anthologist and poet. Cosmopolitans met regularly at his house and celebrated their lavish carnival parties there in carefully chosen historical costumes.

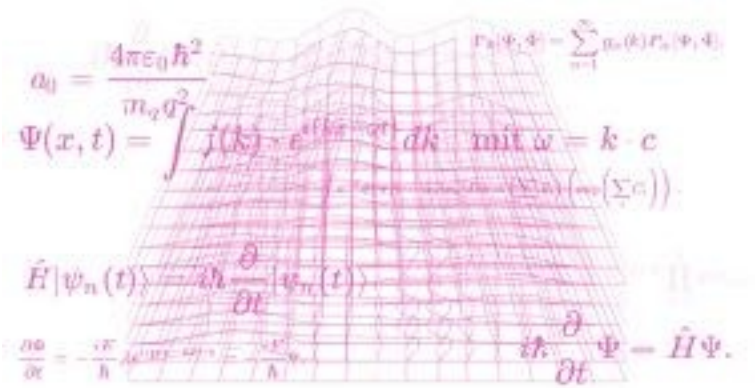
Finally, the famous Countess Fanny zu Reventlow also played a certain role in this circle (although actually against her will) as an inspirational muse, as a projection figure for new ideals of femininity. Fanny embodied the ghost of some cosmicists of the 'rebirth of the hetaera' a type of prostitute in ancient Greece, who served as an artist, entertainer and storyteller in addition to providing sexual services. Unlike the rule for ancient Greek women, hetairas would have been highly educated and were allowed into the symposium. Reventlow symbolised for the Cosmics the 'pagan Madonna', 'Venus of Holstein', but as an erotic centre, admittedly more in theory than in fact. Fanny had personal relationships with members of the circle, for example a long love affair with Ludwig Klages, who was the guardian - but not the biological father - of her illegitimate son Rolf, and with Karl Wolfskehl. However, these relationships were of a private nature and in no way did Fanny play the role of a true hetaera other than in the not very 'cosmistic' fantasies of some cosmists. Nevertheless, she could not avoid being iconised in the circle and became its biting commentator (Schwabinger Beobachter).

The Cosmics and especially the 'Cosmic Crisis' around 1903 (at the end of which Wolfskehl and George distanced themselves from Klages and Schuler) also played an important role in the establishment of the George Circle. A variety of often overlapping 'circles' was typical of Schwabing at the time. George found the role assigned to Fanny Reventlow by the cosmicists rather incomprehensible. Fanny, for her part, is said to have called him the 'Weihenstefan' saint. Nevertheless, towards her, as towards other women such as Ricarda Huch, he behaved in a domineering and contemptuous manner. Moreover, a kind of ascetic celibacy prevailed in his circle, which was interpreted from the outside as hidden homosexuality, especially since the 'handsome young men' (Ludwig Klages himself, Friedrich Gundolf, Roderich Huch or Maximilian Kronberger) presumably meant to George what Fanny Reventlow might have meant to Schuler and Klages (or other Schwabingers like Oskar Panizza).

I would now digress on Klages. Klages believed that Love, an ancestral cosmic force, was impersonal and absolute, wandering in the ether. In those days, scientists also believed in the ether, and today we are witnessing a revival of our hero.

But first I would like to digress on the ether through quantum field theory ...

The quantum field :



The substance of which the world is made.

By going into the infinitely small, it was discovered that there is a network, an interconnected fabric of energy and information that underlies material reality and that winds through and connects the entire Universe.

In this place everything is connected and intertwined and non-locality exists, that property whereby each part is intrinsically connected to all the others and able to communicate with each other instantaneously and independently of distance and where information does not travel but is. It is holographic, meaning that each of its smallest parts intrinsically contains the information contained in the entire Universe. This explains the phrase 'everything is one'. Hence, if you make a change in any small part of it, you see this change everywhere, because

'all is one'. The quantum field is

therefore the bridge that unites all things and is therefore also the bridge between the inner and outer worlds. As we know from experiments carried out in the subatomic mode by quantum physics, the act of observing something is a creative act. The possibility that is observed becomes reality.
We are a quantum-mechanical laboratory creating matter around us. Beliefs are energies that influence matter. The observer 'collapses' the wave into particles and the observed energy becomes things: this is the law of quantum physics. Quantum law says that the environment is an extension of our mind. Here then that by modifying the observer effect we can go and select certain realities, and here then the quantum field is the container of all possible realities just waiting to be observed and in which everything is possible and reflects around us what we believe within us .

Returning to our Klages after reporting this definition of the ether/quantum field ...

We said that Klages believed that Love, an ancestral cosmic force, was impersonal and absolute. That it wandered in the ether, like an energy that came from the worlds of creation. Klages was not a visionary. Or at least, not only. He was a philosopher-poet against the modern age. In the society of technology he saw the negation of man's true identity, which in his view came from the primitive laws of existence, from what he called soul. Soul is the origin, it is the secret of life, it is the seal that every man and every people carries like a symbol. Soul is the fusion with nature, it is the silent voice of the ancestors, which we can no longer perceive. Typical of modern times is the desire to go against the soul, the desire to build artificial ideals, false social relations, deceptive utopias. Against the original purity of life and against the primordial harmony of men and

of things arose one day that absurd vice that is spirit, that is, reason, the rationalist intellect. A destructive energy of man's cosmic roots, the spirit has in every age built impostures: among these, the repressive conscience instead of the free soul, the tyrannical will instead of freedom without limits of space, history instead of timelessness. It is immediately clear that some echoes of Nietzsche resound in Klages: the celebration of origins and roots, the nostalgia for a mythical epoch - that of the 'Pelasgians' - in which men were powers of the universe devoid of anxieties and fears, masters of themselves and of their own sovereign instincts (I don't understand how one can be master of oneself and at the same time have sovereign instincts that are therefore masters ... well, I didn't write this sentence and I sell it to you for what it is ... I would have written sovereign of one's own instincts. I don't understand if you mean this in old Italian or if the translation has changed the original meaning of the sentence). Nostalgia for the time when the myths of ancient civilisations arose, when intuition, the unconscious and sensitive perceptions had not yet been suppressed by the weapons of destruction of the perverse intelligence: concept, judgement, criticism. That was the true life according to our hero: liberation of instincts and sensations, without complexes, without guilt, without any idea of 'sin'. (And here of course the question arises as to whether the Monteverites had read Klages ... if he was born in 1872 and died in 1956, probably yes, or perhaps the zeitgeist ... I'll check now: Klages wrote 14 books and 60 articles between 1910 and 1948, so no ... it's about the zeitgeist !). Klages thinks that this of the rationalist man is instead the triumph of artificial activity, which creates the monsters of technology and material progress. Life as ecstasy. If man were able to return to the magic of origin, he could rid himself of all the anguished burdens imposed by the slavery of modernity, which has robotized brains and hysterilised souls. The free psyche is Eros, cosmic love, romantic detachment from empty earthly interests. In his famous book Of

Cosmogonic Eros, dating from 1922, Klages celebrated

total Love, the magnet that magically attracts two poles even distant from each other, beyond mere sexuality, like a unitary motion of nature and a bond of blood: 'The fulfilment consists in the awakening of the soul, and the soul's awakening is contemplation, but it contemplates the reality of the original images; the original images are souls of the past that appear; to appear they need the bond with the blood of those who are still alive and still have a body'. In this 'mystical marriage' between soul and 'generating demon', the transformation of simple man into absolute, cosmic man is accomplished, in the Platonic manner, according to Klages. Klages loved Romantic culture, which thought in symbols, and which assigned feelings first place in the scale of values. But he also loved Goethe, his search for original phenomena as a manifestation of the divine. Goethe was a poet, a novelist, a scientist. But a scientist who believed in intuitive phenomena, in the magic that is in nature. For instance, his novel Elective Affinities - in which he depicted the case of a pregnancy conditioned by the psychic force of the thought of love, beyond normal biological laws -

**liked Klages very much,
who came to regard Goethe as a master of unconscious wisdom, a poet of the magnetic possibilities of the human psyche. Not, therefore, the solar, Olympian genius we are accustomed to knowing, but a sort of magician investigating the secrets of the soul and the occult powers enclosed in the energies of Mother Nature. We find these themes again in the recent Italian translation of**

a small 1932 book by Klages, Goethe as Explorer of the Soul (published by Mimesis), in which Goethe becomes almost a neo-pagan priest. He, by studying, for example, the metamorphosis of plants, had actually penetrated the world of secret primordial powers: changes, polarities, magnetisms. Klages, with an irrational and religious mentality, therefore sees in Goethe's genius not simply a great poet or novelist, but a man capable of approaching the divine heart of life. A mystical scientist and not a rationalist, Goethe becomes in Klages' eyes the greatest prophet of a return to nature and its laws of attraction between similarities and universal differentiation.

Klages loved nature and was an ante-litteram 'ecologist'. In his

Klages' 1929 masterpiece, The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul - a tome of more than a thousand pages that became epoch-making - wrote that "he who destroys the face of the earth, kills the heart of the earth and deprives of their 'seat' the powers that now have vanished into the ether. The gods have fled the world because man has desecrated the earth and desacralised nature. But beware: this was not just literature. It was much more. In the revaluation of the irrational and the unconscious, there was a declared war on the rationalist, undifferentiated, democratic, atheist, materialist world. Giampiero Moretti has written that in Klages's idea of combining Goethe with Nietzsche was engraved the fate of Europe, 'perhaps from its earliest beginnings, for example, from the moment when the figures of the warrior and the priest-poet took two different, often warring paths'. Now everything is clearer. Far beyond the mediocrity of today's new-age, and with so much more cultural depth, Klages was part of that traditionalist rebellion against the modern world that was conceived in Europe as a defence of the earth, of blood, of instinct, of mythical origin, of the ancestral symbol, of the mystical identity of peoples and human groups. A politically defeated and dispersed culture. But not enough to leave us

imagine that it may sooner or later re-emerge, just like one of those occult laws of life studied by Goethe.

Of the cosmic group we find the aforementioned leader Stefan George ... The great German poet who took refuge in Minusio to escape the ... Nazi fans! (don't worry, I am not making a right-wing turn ... I conceive neither right nor left, I am apolitical).

History is really strange sometimes, Stefan George, Goethe prize winner in '27 the poet worshipped by the Nazis who fled to Switzerland, they did not persecute him but worshipped him! He who refused the post of Minister of Culture. He loved the concept of 'Art for Art's sake' but the Nazis misinterpreted his writings and completely misinterpreted his meaning ... at his funeral, the Swiss hurried to bury him before the Nazi 'Fans' arrived to pay their respects ... a truly singular and ambiguous fate. A young lover dying had almost driven him to suicide.

And then the inner circle, initiatory, esoteric ... wealthy, poet, lived as a guest of friends and admirers. Those were other times indeed!

Stefan George when, in 1892, he published Algabal (once published by Le Lettere, edited by Bianca Maria Bornmann, now defunct) had prepared the altar-book on which the sacrifice to the solar divinity par excellence had just been made: Poetry. After having wandered around Europe, after having taken in, calmed down, digested the lessons of Stephan Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, the Pre-Raphaelites, Algernon Charles Swinburne and, above all, Charles Baudelaire, Stefan saw (symptomatic of prescience, of the 'call') his own path. Of 1892 is the creation of the group of followers within the magazine Blätter für die Kunst (translatable as 'Sheets for Art'), conducted together with Carl August Klein: a mystical circle within which he forges his own aesthetics, his own poetic auscultation. "Georgekreis" will be called his fiery accomplices. For Stefan George, poetry is a religion, the ultimate condensation of the sacred that reveals itself through the lyric-magnet. Poetry is full

of antennae in perpetual electric tension with the High, with the Supreme. The idea of the poet-priest (intermediary between the human and the supernal) typical of the Romantic tradition is mixed with the conjuncture of decadence, of the inspired mechanism of anguish. Decadence': the fall, the collapse, the crumbling of a civilisation that has reached the peak of progress, of its refinement.

Stefan George, face taurine, paradigmatic, and hair spirited, is the spokesman of a new breed of men capable of immediate contact with divinity. In 1933, refusing any relationship with the Nazi regime, which appropriated some of his aesthetic conclusions, he exiled himself to Switzerland in Minusio, a stone's throw from Ascona (how fortuitous!), where he died the same year. At the age of 14, he taught himself Italian. Then he switched to Polish, Danish and Norwegian. He also wrote in English and French. Some of his interpretations of Dante, William Shakespeare, Arthur Rimbaud, Gabriele D'Annunzio are masterly. The perpetual attempt to transcend one's own language (German) with others is a warning: it is impossible to master language, we are the mute lyre on which language acts. One must squeeze oneself, squeeze oneself into pure sound. "In poetry - as in any other artistic manifestation - anyone who is still caught up in the urge to 'say' something or to 'achieve' some effect is not even worthy of entering the antechamber of art. Every spirit of opposition, every quibble or quarrel with life reveals a stage of thought that is still disordered, and must remain excluded from art,' George writes in Days and Works, where poetics becomes ethics and the enigma the inspiration of the real (the book, edited by Giulio Schiavoni, is published by Se; in Italy George, in opposition to his importance, has almost disappeared: in 2018 Elliot published L'anno dell'anima, edited by Giorgio Manacorda).

The return to the banks of one's own language comes true with a series of collections (Hymnen, 1890; Pilgerfahrten, 1891 and, finally, in 1892, Algabal) that already show to what dispersion and chiselling (burin work, goldsmith's work, of unattainable accuracy) the verse is forced. Poetry becomes thinner, dematerialised, it becomes pure crystal, transparent, reflecting (as its author wishes) the gaps of the divine. Yet, in this way, the poem is transfigured, it sinks into the hands of a master (the poet) who takes right upon it, power of death and absolution. The poet becomes an executioner.

Besides, George is not of the time (of this, of others): he transcends. He disembarks. He demands to be sought out, finally surpassed. The bookshop is not his place, perhaps distraction is, discovery by fatality, a talk that implies the woods.
"In the world where he alone initiates and creates/ sometimes enjoys high inventiveness,/ where beyond his will no will holds/ and where he commands the light and the season". In essence, the word is sound (its link with meaning is severed). Poetry does not 'say' but 'suggests' (and 'suggests': the coincidence through which poetry is experienced is not that of 'understanding' but of 'adherence') 'the acute gaze of the One'. The dazzling gallery of (bejewelled) verses suggests an absolute of technique over the necessary instinctual, bestial evidence of poetry. Technique, an obligatory passage that occurs after the dawn of instinct, in this case precedes, dominates, entangles poetry (a convulsive, frenzied, doomed Heliogabalus is instead that of Antonin Artaud, l'anarchiste couronné - "Heliogabalus or the Crowned Anarchist" - published in 1934 and published in Italy by Adelphi).
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"In the beautiful and bold pallor, trace of grave vicissitude,/ would you walk by my side and not only like a shadow!": divinity is mist, elusive, like the underwater essence (full of mosses, corals and sponges) of poetry, transformed into its mirror. "The roof i s glass" ("Das dach ist glas"), the All is glass, eternal mirroring, depicting (stealing) the opposite (in the opposite). In which poetry is thwarted, broken down. The poet, once a master glassmaker, now collects the shattered, glimmering, woundless, wit in blood. (d.b.)

The Cosmists met regularly from 1899 to 1904, but the circle began to disband as early as 1903. The 'great Schwabing quarrel' followed in 1904, when anti-Semitic attacks on Karl Wolfskehl led to quarrels and discord. George, who sided with his friend Wolfskehl, quarrelled with Klages; it is said that the 'lower ranks' of the circle were even involved in nightly fisticuffs. Fanny

Reventlow, who had friends in both 'parties', was caught between the two fronts and from that moment on thought of turning his back on Munich, which he did only six years later and came to Ascona ... The Kosmiker Club helped to establish Schwabing's reputation as an artists' quarter and exerted an influence on the bohemian scene of the fin de siècle up to the esoteric scene of today. In the course of the intellectual-historical examination of the cultural climate that led to the monstrous National Socialism, the circle was examined to see if it was one of the spiritual precursors of the racist ideology of National Socialism. The swastika (a sign originating in Hindu Asia) appeared in the emblems of the circle. However, the cosmicists were only a small part of a subculture of similar aspirations throughout Europe, from which individual aspects of the Nazi worldview also fed. A concrete causality cannot be proven despite the eccentric spirituality. The apolitical character of the circle is proof of this. If Reventlow arrived in Ascona in 1910, a few years before the outbreak of the First World War Jean Arp did so later, in '14. The two came from different towns but the war brought them both to Ascona. They must surely have known each other but so far I have found no evidence other than being mentioned together in the Monte Verità presentations. Fanny had come to Ascona because she was at the mercy of her financial worries, believing that by marrying a Baltic nobleman she would be free of them. But when everything seemed to be taking a turn for the better and the inheritance arrived, the bank in Ticino went bankrupt and the debts became more and more unbearable every day.

After this drama, the Countess in Ascona is in trouble again. In Ascona she receives no mail, she is at the end of the world and does not know what to do with her days. And above all, she is not up to date with what is happening in the city. For her, Ascona is too quiet, too cosy, too lacking in charm. The blue sky alone is not enough for her, it makes no difference to her.

Here are some poems by Georges

: STEFAN GEORGE

I came to you with a prayer
The evening candles burned for you
So over velvet fabrics
I gave you my dowry of diamonds.
But you know nothing of sacrifice.
Of candelabra with raised arms.
Of the cloudless smoke of the brazier Warming the darkness of severe temples. Of angels gathered in niches Reflected in crystal chandeliers.
Of the stammering of burning prayers Of the sighing in the darkness
And nothing do you know of the desires that Groan down from the altar's depths... Take hesitant icy indecisive Shining stones of fervent tears.

Faithfulness obliges me to watch over you I dwell on your sweet suffering It is my sacred wish to be sad To enjoy your sadness with you. A welcome will never greet me How long our union will last Humble and anxious I must acknowledge The inheritance of a destiny of winters.

Stefan George
Written by: Andrea De Candia
Published on 3 August 2017

in Poems (Poesie d'Autore)
REPRESENTATION

I feel the air now of another sphere
and the faces benignly turned to
me before fade into darkness.

And beloved trees and streets as in
the evening darken, that I hardly see
them:
And shadow thou clear - voice to my
torment - in deeper flames now art
quenched
To thrill me with a sudden thrill
after the blind war in which I
delirious.
In circles I melt in light, in sound and
without longing to the fervent breath
In pure praise I surrender myself.
A violent breath now assails me in
the intoxication of ritual where a
crowd
of women begs prostrate on the ground.
And the vapour of slow mists
exhales to a sunlit district,
surrounding only the last alpine gorges.
Candid and soft as milk she trembles
the earth ... over huge crags I pass:
thence enraptured by the extreme
cloud, I swim in a sea of crystalline
light - a spark I am now of the
sacred fire, I am a rumble of the
sacred voice.

Stefan George
Written by: Andrea De Candia
Published on 3 August 2017

in Poems (Poesie d'Autore)
Sometimes late in the evening - it
was the moon -
we set off cheerfully, as if, streaked with
wet flowers, we were crossing the forest
of fairy tales.
You guided me to the enchanted

valleys of naked light and pale
scents; you pointed out to me the
caves where it ripens
the sad love in frost of torment.

Stefan George
Written by: Andrea De Candia

Published on 3 August 2017

in Poems (Poesie d'Autore)
If my lips press yours I live in
your inmost breath
And then from your body that
surrounds me, to which I also turn
on, I untie the knot and withdraw
from you with bowed head:
is that I guess in you my own flesh - in
fearsome dark distances
With thee I blossomed a royal blossom.

Stefan George
Written by: Andrea De Candia
Published on 3 August 2017

in Poems (Poesie d'Autore)
What more could I do if so much I
grant thee? May I mould myself in thy
hands, guide my thoughts to thy heart's
pulse? May thy marrow in me mould
me to thee, And thy gaze inspire me
with thy step? Thou satiate my dreams
with thy colour,
you form my voice, if I pray, you
breathe in my song of stars.

Stefan George

12. LUBICZ

This tormented state of mind is in stark contrast to that of another artist who came to Ascona and Monte Verità: Jean Arp. On the website of the Arp Foundation, which was set up on 4 February 1988 in Locarno by Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach (1902-1994), the esteemed collector and second wife of Jean Arp (1886-1966). She had already started her activity as a collector in 1937. By the end of the 1950s, the collected works formed one of the most significant and important private collections of international 20th century art in Switzerland. In 1959, the year of their marriage, Jean Arp and Marguerite Hagenbach bought the property in Locarno-Solduno *Ronco dei Fiori*, where the artist lived and worked until his death, alongside his wife.

Before reporting what can be found on the foundation's website, it is necessary to make a premise in order to seriously understand the issue of Arp and the esotericism that is repeatedly disavowed by those who guard his work today (and a still too large number of insiders and experts). Every time I come across these people it is the same old story. In this book, by recounting the facts and links between these important and fascinating people, it is not possible to deny the primary source of artistic inspiration in esotericism, spirituality, eastern (but also western) religions

THE MYSTICAL ECSTASY OF THE *FRENCH POET AND*

LITHUANIAN PRINCE, OSCAR VLADISLAS DE LUBICZ MILOSZ,

(MASTER OF SCHWALLER DE LUBICZ EGYPTOLOGIST) WITH

WHOM MIRÒ AND ARP WORKED AT SKT. MORITZ.

On 14 December 1914, Milosz has a mystical ecstasy, which he describes in detail in the second part of *Epître à Storge*:

"On the fourteenth day of December one thousand nine hundred and fourteen, about eleven o'clock in the evening, in the midst of a perfect state of wakefulness, after having recited my prayer and meditated on my daily Bible verse, I suddenly felt, without a shadow of surprise, a change of the most unexpected occurring in my whole body. I first noticed that a hitherto unknown power to rise freely in space had been granted to me; and in the next instant I found myself near the summit of a mighty mountain enveloped in bluish mists of unutterable lightness and sweetness. [...] Then a perfect immobility, an absolute stillness struck the sun and the clouds, giving me the inexpressible sensation of a supreme fulfilment, of a definitive peace, of a complete stasis of every mental operation, of a superhuman realisation of the last Rhythm. The letter H had been added to my name; I felt peace, yes, Storge, Storge! I felt, me! a holy peace, there was no longer in my head any trace of restlessness, nor of pain, I was a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Alas! the eternal and all too brief vision dissolved [...]"

Beginning in 1924 in St. Moritz, Switzerland, René Adolphe Schwaller de Lubicz (who we will explain later) set up the 'Suhalia Scientific Station', a small community dedicated to scientific and spiritual research and craftsmanship, inspired in part by the Goetheanum of the founder of anthroposophy (Rudolf Steiner), where he carried out alchemical research among other things. It was in this workshop that Schwaller succeeded in obtaining the blue and red colours of the stained glass windows in Chartres cathedral without resorting to chemical processes. He also developed an engine running on different fuels, a new propeller model and the model of a boat entirely based on the golden number, which could withstand the strongest storms. Among others, the artists Hans Arp and Miró participated in Suhalia's work.

RENÉ ADOLPHE SCHWALLER DE LUBICZ (1887-1961)

On 7 December 1961, an important scholar of alchemy, esotericism, ancient symbolism and Egyptology, with a first-class humanistic and scientific education, died.

From art to science, from theosophy to alchemy

The biographical notes you are about to read are taken largely from Colin Wilson's *From Atlantis to the Sphinx*, and from other sources, of which a small amount of editing has been done (by the author of the article from which I have taken this text), which I reproduce in italics.

Schwaller was born in Alsace in 1887 into a well-off middle-class family. His father was a pharmaceutical chemist and René spent his childhood dreaming in the forests, painting and doing chemistry experiments. He was always fascinated by art and science in equal measure: René's future partner, Isha, recounted that at the age of 7 Schwaller had a revelation about the nature of the divine and, seven years later, another about the nature of matter.
As a teenager, he moved to Paris to study painting with Matisse, a painter influenced by the ideas of the philosopher Henri Bergson, who spoke in particular of the inability of the intellect to grasp reality that escapes our minds 'like water through the holes in a fishing net', a conception that formed the scholar's natural tendency to distrust 'pure science'. Nevertheless, he threw himself headlong into the study of modern physics, at the time revolutionised by the theories of Einstein and Planck.
In 1913 he became a member of the Theosophical Society and began lecturing and writing articles for the Society's journal (Le Théosophe, edited by Gaston Revel). In his first articles he paid homage to science, the source of all progress, while at the same time attacking its conservative and nihilistic nature. But Schwaller had set himself a difficult task: to attack rationalism with rational thoughts. It was around this time that his interest in alchemy, the science of transmuting matter and searching for the stone, was born.

philosopher, which Schwaller considered to be essentially a quest whose goal is enlightenment and of which the transformation of metals is a kind of metaphor for inner transformation. He made the stained glass windows and the geometry of Gothic cathedrals the object of his alchemical studies, convinced that structure and proportions concealed some arcane knowledge of the ancients.

The antagonism between Guénon and the Theosophical Society dates from this era. It is essentially a rivalry with the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor to which Guenon belonged.

René Guénon

René-Jean-Marie-Joseph Guénon, also known as Shaykh 'Abd al-Wahid Yahya after his conversion to Islam (Blois, 15 November 1886 - Cairo, 7 January 1951), was a French writer, philosopher, esotericist and intellectual.

His work, conceived starting from a redefinition in the traditional sense of the notion of metaphysics, understood as "knowledge of the principles of universal order" from which everything proceeds, does not present itself, in the author's intentions, as a philosophical system based on syncretism[3] or as the formalisation of a neo-spiritualistic thought, but is aimed at exposing some aspects of o s i d e t t "traditional f o r m" (Taoism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Bu d h i s m o r m e t i s m o i b e r a Muratoria,Compagnonage, Paganism, Alchemy, etc.), understood as different expressions of the different expressions of the philosophical and spiritual worlds.), understood as different expressions of the sacred,[4] functional to the development of the human being's possibilities of spiritual realisation.

The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor (translation: Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor) was an initiatory occult organisation that first went public in late 1894, although according to an official document of the order[1] it began its work in 1870. According to this document,

written by Peter Davidson, the order was founded

by Max Theon, who, when in England, was initiated as a neophyte by 'an adept of the serene, ever existing and ancient Order of the original HB of L.'[2].

Theon thus became Grand Master of the Outer Circle of the Order. However, apart from his initiatory role, he seems to have had little to do with the day-to-day running of the order, or its teachings. He seems to have left these things to Peter Davidson, who was Provincial Grand Master of the North (Scotland), and later also of the Eastern Section (America).

The order's teachings drew heavily from the magical-sexual theories of Paschal Beverly Randolph, who influenced groups such as the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) (later led by Aleister Crowley) (Greenfield 1997), although it is unclear whether Randolph himself was actually a member of the order.

9 March 2011, 18:13 - Pino Lo P r e s t i

THE O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis) was an important crossroads of the occultist world in the period between the 19th and 20th centuries, marked by the elaboration of a system of sexual magic, rooted in the transmission of teachings based on the Tantrism of the Austrian Carl Kellner (1850-1905), who, during his travels in the East, came into contact with three 'adepts' (a Sufi, Soliman ben Aifa, and two Tantrists, Bhima Sena Pratapa and Sri Mahatma Agamya Paramahamsa), as well as with the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light organisation.

These teachings were received, by that world of fin de siècle Germany in which there was a flourishing milieu of magical movements and in which Theodor Reuss (1855-1923) found himself operating, with the hypothesis of the establishment of a 'Masonic academy'.

Reuss - deeply involved in the world of the 'fringe freemasonries', the Rosicrucians and the Gnostic churches - organised the O.T.O. in its current form on 20 January 1906, declaring the movement to be a Templar offshoot and 'inner circle' of the various 'fringe freemasonries' he led.

But it was only in 1911 (or 1909, the date is not certain), with the entry onto the scene of Aleister Crowley - coming from his experience in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (of which he founded a branch "the Argenteum Astrum", or "Astrum Argentinum", A.A.), still extant today), that the order's impact on the occult milieu of the time began to assume the importance on which all specialists agree today.

The O.T.O was then the vehicle with which Crowley propagated his 'Law of Thelema' throughout the world

This Order comprises 10 initiatory degrees plus a secret one, as secret is the name of the O.H.O. (Out Head of the Order), the Visible Head of the Order or Frater Superior who represents the World Head of the Order whose identity is known only to the Order's direct collaborators and who remains so for life; whose successor is designated directly by the O.H.O. at the point of death, or by unanimous vote of all the officers of the X°. Crowley became O.H.O. of the O.T.O. in 1921 when he was already living in Cefalù. Under his influence it would take on the character of a constituted and branched Order, especially in central Europe, particularly in Switzerland, with its own original constitution and a tradition that drew on various esoteric traditions such as: the mysterious Ecclesia Gnostica Cattolica, the Order of the Knights of the Holy Spirit, the Order of the Illuminati, the Order of the Temple, the Order of the Knights of St. John, the Order of the Knights of Malta, the Order of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Holy Grail, the Rosicrucian Order the Order of the Rose+Cross of Heredom, the Order of the Royal Arch of Enoch, the Mizraim Rite, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the Swedenborg Rite, the Martinist Order, the Order of Sat B'hai, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, the Hermetic Order of the Golde Dawn, and many others of lesser importance. Many personalities, later linked to various other esoteric associations, were part of the O.T.O.: we recall Harvey Spencer Lewis (1883-1939), founder of the A.M.O.R.C. (Ancient and Mystic Order Rosae Rubae et Crucis Aurea), a movement that draws on the mystery school of the ancient Knights of the Rose+Cross, which today has more than six million members worldwide.

The meeting with Fulcanelli and the creation of the Veglianti

Schwaller was in his early twenties when he met in the Closerie des Lilas, in Montparnasse, an alchemist who called himself Fulcanelli, but whose real name was perhaps Champagne. Fulcanelli's followers called themselves the Brothers of Heliopolis and were devoted to studying the works of 16th and 17th century alchemists. From an ancient volume Fulcanelli stole a faded six-page manuscript. It explained that colour was an important element of the alchemists' secret, but Fulcanelli, whose approach to alchemy was materialistic, could not understand it. Schwaller helped him by interpreting the text and also showed him his manuscript on medieval cathedrals, in which Fulcanelli showed great interest and offered to help him find a publisher. He ended up appropriating most of the ideas for his own Mystery of Cathedrals, published in 1925.

In 1914, as a French national, he was drafted to the front as a corpsman when his country entered the war, and later, through his father's intercession, became part of the army's chemical service.

In the meantime, Schwaller had befriended a French poet and Lithuanian prince, Oscar Vladislas de Lubicz Milosz, who, after the war, knighted him for his services to the Lithuanian people and granted him the right to add 'de Lubicz' to his name. In February 1919, the two founded a political organisation called Les Veilleurs, the Vigilantes, based on Schwaller's elitist ideas, divided into two orders, an internal, esoteric one and an external one. After a few years, tired of the possible political involvement of the group, a possible dynamic in which he saw, like most mystics, a kind of trap (a position towards which I am strongly critical, as S. Brizzi says "if you don't deal with politics sooner or later politics will deal with you"), he moved in 1924 to St. Moritz, Switzerland, where

He set up the 'Suhalia Scientific Station' to continue his esoteric studies with a group of friends who shared his ideas, and devoted himself in particular to studying stained glass, until 1934, when financial problems led to the dissolution of the Suhalia community. Fulcanelli was already dead.

For those interested in the history of Suhalia History in its place today is the Berghotel Randolins. Situated at an altitude of 1970 metres, it fits harmoniously into the beautiful Engadin mountain setting, maintaining its authenticity for the benefit of those seeking new energy in the mountains. The fact that the focus of such a multifaceted accommodation facility is on nature, peace and inspiration can be attributed to its almost 100 years of history.

Its origins, shrouded in legend, date back to 1924 when the Alsatian pharmacist René Adolphe Schwaller Lubricz chose the 20,000 square metre area above St. Moritz for his 'Suhalia' science centre. He built what is now the Chesa Margna with its astronomical observatory and the Chesa Languard and, as a passionate theosophist who also attended Henri Matisse's studio-academy in Paris, he attracted scientists and artists from all over Europe to the Suvretta hill. Physicists, chemists, doctors, astronomers but also artists of the most diverse artistic disciplines met here for interdisciplinary research. Legends tell of princesses and a golden chapel in the Chesa Languard. What is certain is that the institute
'Suhalia' filed a patent for an 'unsinkable ship' and Arab stallions were bred in the Chesa Margna's current ski room. The project was unsuccessful from a financial point of view and, after only four years, Schwaller had to deed the buildings to the bank.

The encounter with Egypt

On 4 October 1927, Schwaller married in a second marriage Jeanne Lamy (widow of his friend Georges Lamy, who had died accidentally the year before), who took the mystical name 'Isha', under which she signed several books. She had met him when she had become a follower of his long before, claiming to have been attracted by a telepathic link. She had always been fascinated by ancient Egypt but Schwaller did not share her interest.

In 1936, he allowed himself to be persuaded to go to Alexandria to study the tomb of Rameses IX in the Valley of the Kings at Thebes, where he had a revelation while observing a representation of the Pharaoh in the form of the hypotenuse of a right triangle whose proportions were
3 -4 - 5 while the raised arm represented an additional unit, called the royal cubit (fig. 3, taken from fig. 108 in Le Temple de l'homme, see note [1]). Clearly, the Egyptians knew the Pythagorean theorem centuries before the Greek mathematician was born.

For fifteen years, until 1951, he stayed in Egypt studying its temples, particularly that of Luxor. This resulted in his enormous three-volume work on geometry, The Temple of Man [1], and his last book, Le Roi de la Théocratie Pharaonique.

The origins of Egyptian civilisation: the Sphinx hypothesis

According to Schwaller, Egyptian civilisation did not arise, as one reads in history books, in 3000 BC with the legendary King Menes. Thousands of years earlier, Egypt was populated by the survivors of Atlantis who had crossed the then fertile Sahara to settle in the Nile valley. The great temples and pyramids of Egypt are the legacy left to us by these survivors. The fact remains that Schwaller believed he had found an answer to the mysteries of Egyptian civilisation: it had been founded by the survivors of the great lost continent that, according to Plato, disappeared in 9500 BC following a volcanic cataclysm.

According to modern historians, the Sphinx probably dates to the time when the second pyramid of Giza was built, i.e. 2500 BC; the Sphinx is thought to be the work of Pharaoh Chephren, son or brother of Cheops, who is thought to have had the Great Pyramid built. This theory is based on the fact that, on the stele between the Sphinx's legs, there is a cartouche with Chephren's name on it; however, this is a recent hypothesis. In 1900, Sir Gaston Maspero, Director of the Antiquities Department of the Cairo Museum, suggested that Chephren had merely unearthed and restored the Sphinx, which was already an ancient monument at the time.

According to Schwaller, the erosion of the Sphinx was not caused by sandstorms but by water. He argued that since the Sphinx is protected to the west by a wall and was buried up to its neck in sand most of the time anyway, the hypothesis of wind erosion was unlikely. But rainfall was scarce in Egypt for thousands of years, otherwise the Sahara Desert would not exist today. If the Sphinx was eroded by water and not sand, it must obviously be much, much older, perhaps thousands of years. If so, the same would apply to the Great Pyramid. However, Schwaller was careful not to publish his hypothesis.

This theory was taken up by the scholar Graham Hancock (on whose research I will not dwell), simply pointing out that all the evidence for the Giza complex convinced him that it was not the work of 'technically advanced primitives'. He also travelled to Peru, to visit and closely study the huge stylised drawings of Nazca, Peru, and the Inca city of Machu Picchu, Lake Titicaca and Tiahuanaco and the great Aztec temples of Central America. Again, the evidence pointed to a civilisation that dated back to a more remote era than the one indicated in the guidebooks. Hancock was particularly intrigued by the legend of one or more white deities who brought civilisation to South America. This deity was called Viracocha, sometimes Quetzalcoatl or Kukulkan, and was depicted as a fair-skinned man with blue eyes, similar to the ancient Egyptian statues of Osiris. When he returned to Egypt, the grandeur of the monuments convinced him definitively that

the civilisations of the Incas and Aztecs dated back many millennia before the dates given in history books, or that an unknown civilisation had existed, lost in the past.

The importance of Schwaller de Lubicz

Schwaller began his book on symbols (Du Symbole et de la Symbolique, Cairo, 1951) and symbolism by pointing out that there are two ways to read ancient religious texts: the exoteric and the esoteric. The exoteric method consists of meanings that can be found in a dictionary or history text, but it is only the foundation of the esoteric meaning that Schwaller calls symbolic (a system of symbols).

I end with these words from Schwaller:

"The sciences, medicine, mathematics and astronomy of the ancient Egyptians were all exponentially more advanced and complex than contemporary scholars recognise. The entire Egyptian civilisation was based on a complete and precise understanding of universal laws... moreover, every aspect of Egyptian knowledge seemed to be complete from the beginning.(...)"

"Science, artistic and architectural techniques, and the hieroglyphic writing system do not show the passage through a phase of development, indeed the achievements of the early dynasties were never surpassed or even equalled. This is now admitted by conservative Egyptologists, yet the magnitude of the resulting mystery is carefully underestimated while many of its implications are ignored'.

I recommend anyone to undertake the reading of the two mighty volumes of The Temple of Man. (René Adolphe Schwaller de Lubicz, The Temple of Man, introduction and notes by Paolo Lucarelli (2 volumes), Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 2000).

13. ARP

I mentioned Schwaller to introduce one of the heavyweights who lived in Ticino :

JEAN O HANS ARP AND TICINO

In Ascona, I drew with brush, Indian ink and broken branches, roots, grasses and stones that the lake had washed up. Finally I simplified these forms and combined their essence into moving ovals, symbols of the metamorphosis and becoming of the body.

From Hans Arp, Wegweiser/Jalons, written in June 1950 in Ascona, in Jours effeuillés, 1966.

Although Jean Arp's artistic and personal journey has been explored in numerous venues, there is one aspect that is mostly overlooked, namely Arp's enduring bond with Ticino and, in particular, with the Verbano region. This bond and the beauty of the place led Jean Arp to choose to spend the last years of his life in Locarno.

Born in Strasbourg to an Alsatian mother and German father, he used two names throughout his life: the German name of Hans and the French name of Jean, alternating them according to the language or the various circumstances in which he happened to refer to himself.

His fame is linked to the overcoming of traditional forms of figurative art, and to the discovery of new forms, ranging from collages to papiers déchirés, to fragments of various materials combined

together.
His work lies at the heart of that vast current of modern art that, from Cubism to Surrealism, set itself the task not of representing reality but of inventing new realities. And on this point I would make an aside. I do not believe that one can invent anything in all honesty. The artist's role is to unveil, to make explicit something that exists, but is invisible to most people's eyes and that the artist's technical ability combined with his spiritual vision make intelligible in the work of art. I do not share the philosophy of the vast majority of art critics simply because they are unaware of spiritual matters or simply ignore them deliberately. This state of affairs is rapidly changing thanks to the work of many new, spiritually aware critics.

He trained at the Ecole des Arts et Métiers in Strasbourg, then, between 1905 and 1907, at the Großherzoglich-Sächsische Kunstschule in Weimar and finally, from 1908, at the Académie Julian in Paris. He published his first poems in 1904 in Paris. In 1911 one of his intimist books (Runes and Bizarre Writings) came out; in 1912 he was in Munich, where he collaborated on Der Blaue Reiter, with Kandinsky and participated in the movement's second exhibition, and two years later he came into contact with the Parisian avant-garde.

In 1914, after the outbreak of the First World War, Jean Arp and his brother François fled from Cologne, where they both lived, and took refuge in Paris. But shortly afterwards, they also had to leave France and take refuge in Switzerland. In 1915, they arrived in Ascona. A choice that does not seem to be accidental, considering that Arp in these years was already developing interests and activities related to philosophy, religion and spirituality in general (Arp read Jakob Böhme, Meister Eckhart and Lao Tse, was interested in oriental mysticism and frequented theosophists such as his friend René Schwaller), akin to what he had been working on for more than a decade in the region and in particular on Monte Verità, on the hill above Ascona. On the other hand, other artists and friends lived in the region in those years: first and foremost the Romanian painter Arthur Segal (1875-1944), whom Arp met in Berlin in 1913 while collaborating on the magazine Der Sturm (I recall that this book

refers to his neighbours

Elisabeth Wiegmann, Sophie Taeuber and Jean Arp in Ascona,

and the house in question was completed in 1934 by Nell Walden, the second wife of Hertwarth Walden, gallery owner and publisher of der Sturm. Nell, thanks to her work as a translator from Swedish during the First World War in Berlin, financed her husband and was also one of the leading figures that Walden will promote. In this regard, please consult the exhibition catalogue STURM-FRAUEN. KÜNSTLERINNEN DER AVANTGARDE IN BERLIN 1910-1932. Segal has lived in Ascona since 1914. In Ascona in 1915 also saw the residence of Adya and Otto van Rees, two artists with whom Arp would collaborate in Zurich in November of the same year. Segal would reside in the Corner House 300 metres away with Hans Arp, Sofie Taeuber, Lou Albert-Lasard, Alexej Jawlenskij and Anna Iduna Zehnder.

Ascona and Monte Verità are also a destination for Jean Arp in the years following, when the artist returned to Ascona in the retinue of Sophie Taeuber, who together with other young dancers stayed on Monte Verità to attend the summer sessions of the 'Dance School' of the dancer and choreographer Rudolf von Laban. Every summer, Jean and Sophie from Zurich came to Ascona and with them were other artists from the Dada movement: Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings (who would later settle in Ticino), Hans Richter, Marcel Janco, etc.

An aside must be made here to situate the house whose neighbours populate this book. Casa San Tommaso (where I am now writing) belonged to Luigi Pericle, who exhibited at the gallery of Trudy Coray-Neuburg, who was the 'Gallerist of the Expressionists' in

Ascona, at a time when Nolde was still accessible and Werefkin not well known. Trudy Neuburg-Coray, founder and

owner of the Castelnuovo Gallery, hosted Macke, Emil Nolde, Jawlensky, Kandinsky and Werena von Werefkin. At that time Trudy Neuburg had probably the largest private collection of Werefkin's works and today this is the origin of the Ascona Museum dedicated to the Russian Marianne von Werefkin 'The Marianne von Werefkin Fondation'. In Ascona, Luigi Pericle exhibited on 14/4/63 at the Castelnuovo Gallery run by the legendary Trudy Neuburg-Coray, daughter of Han Coray, owner of the DADA Gallery where DADA moved to Zurich after the police intervention at the legendary Cabaret Voltaire.

The Ascona gallery had exhibited names such as Alberto Giacometti, Marianne von Werefkin, Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, Klee, Kandinsky, Arp und Sophie Taeuber, Jawlensky, Lehmbruck, Kokoschka, Marcel Janco (from whom this digression starts), Huelsenbeck, Leonhard Frank, Else Lasker-Schüler (Walden's first wife), Frank Wedekind. While the Dada movement was beginning, in 1917, from the Cabaret Voltaire the artists were forced to move to other places in Zurich, such as the Galerie Dada at Bahnhofstrasse 19, and later to Paris and Berlin. The activities at the cabaret generated the Dada cultural movement that had a strong influence on Surrealism. On Monte Verità, together with the local artistic circle - let us not forget Marianne Werefkin and Alexej Jawlensky, who arrived in Ascona in 1918, and also Walter Helbig, Arp's friend and colleague from the days of the Moderner Bund - artists organised shows, parties and exhibitions. It was Helbig who sold the land where Nell Walden was to build this house. Jean Arp himself, moreover, remembers the discovery of fundamental elements for his art on the shores of Lake Ascona in 1917.

In Ascona, the Hagenbach family had bought a holiday home: Arp often stayed there, in the 1930s with Sophie Taeuber and in the 1950s with Marguerite Hagenbach. Thus the plan to settle in the region was born and finally, in 1959, Arp took up residence in Locarno-Solduno, again with Marguerite Hagenbach. Far from experiencing a slow decline or a sort of

Retirement, Arp continued to work: in addition to establishing a studio in his own house, he also took over one of the ateliers in the complex that sculptor Remo Rossi created in the 'Saleggi' area of Locarno. Here, Arp - alongside Hans Richter and Italo Valenti, who are also active in the ateliers - works regularly with the help of his assistants Alberto Meli and Candido Epis, who produce his late works.

Alberto Magnelli, Hans Richter, Jean Arp and Marguerite Arp in Locarno, 1965

In 1965, thanks to the intermediary of Remo Rossi, an exhibition of works by Arp and other artists from the Arp-Hagenbach collection was held in the rooms of the Castello Visconteo in Locarno. Even before the exhibition opened, Arp donated the exhibited works to the City of Locarno, with the aim of laying the foundations for the foundation of a museum of modern art. In recognition of this, the city bestows honorary citizenship on the couple. Jean Arp died in Basel on 7 June 1966 and rests in the Locarno cemetery.

(Veronica Provenzale updated by me in the part about Louis Pericles. Veronica will hopefully understand ...)

A testimony that remains in time and allows us to admire and discover the works of the protagonists of this artistically central epoch on the international scene, which also passed through Ascona, can be found in the Municipal Museum of Modern Art in Ascona, where we find works by artists linked to the Borgo di Ascona, such as Ernst Frick, Otto Niemeyer- Holstein, Werner Müller, Walter Helbig, Paul Klee, Marcel Janko, Ben Nicholson, Hans Arp, Hans Richter, Julius Bissier, Italo Valenti, Arthur Segal, Jakob Flach, Hermann Hesse, Otto van

Rees, Cesar Domela, Albert Kohler, Gordon Mc. Couch, Fritz Pauli, Mario Merz,

Niele Toroni, Paul Klee, Cuno Amiet and Alexej Jawlensky. The museum also includes the Marianne Werefkin Foundation, with 90 paintings and
170 sketchbooks, 500 sketches and the paper collection; the collection of the artist and architect Carl Weidemeyer; the collection of the dancer Charlotte Bara; the collection of the doctor and artist Anna Iduna Zehnder; and finally the Richard and Uli Seewald Foundation.

Another of the historical protagonists who lived in Ascona is Hans Richter.
Born in Berlin in 1888, Hans Richter was a German filmmaker and painter. He experimented with mixing the two art forms in abstract works from the 1920s onwards, when he directed Rythm 21, Ryhtm 23 and Rythm 25 (1921 to 1925). Due to the Second World War, he moved to the United States in 1940 where he continued his interest in avant-garde art. Richter spent the last fourteen years of his life in Locarno, where he died on 1 February 1976.
In the 1950s, the upper Verbano area, between Ascona and Locarno, experienced the extraordinary presence of an intellectual community of artists formed by Hans Arp, Julius Bissier, Ben Nicholson, Hans Richter and Italo Valenti, coagulated around the epicentres of the ateliers of artists Remo Rossi and François Lafranca. An exceptional cosmopolitan climate that marked a fertile season, which from the end of the 1950s onwards would continue for about 15 years, in the name of an increasingly lyrical, synthetic and abstract art, the common feature of all these personalities gathered here in the exhibition.

Hans Arp and Hans Richter, who had already established close relations with the area since the Dada years, in confronting the countercultural, libertarian proposal of a "synthesis of all the arts" of the Monte Verità community in Ascona, when they arrived in Ascona in 1958, renewed and radicalised what they had previously formalised in the name of an increasingly synthetic, concrete and dynamic art. Hans Arp (1887-1966) deepened his proposal of 'concrete art', of an elementary autonomous language, made up of abstract and organic forms, not imitative but intrinsically inherent to the

process of nature itself, because for him the artist must not reproduce but 'produce like nature'. Hans Richter (1888-1976), for whom art can only be dynamic, multimedia, communicative and incisive, after his experience in New York as head of the Institute of Film Techniques at City College, significantly returned to painting, the essence and origin of his entire artistic career, creating dynamic assemblages in which the traditional oil technique coexists, together with papiers déchirés and collage, in a whole under the banner of a dynamic, tense or rarefied spatiality that expands, vibrating beyond the surface of the work, as in The Musician of 1972 or Vibra of 1974.

It is worth noting that Luigi Pericle is on average 20 years younger than these artists and the first part of his career was dedicated to comics and illustration. His hermitage following his success from '61 to '65 explains his absence in the artistic annals of this Ascona art group. Thanks to his recent international rediscovery, it is possible to reconstruct his hitherto unexplored connections.

When Julius Bissier (1893-1965) arrived in Ascona in 1956, he had behind him a long artistic career marked by a consistent self-searching that redeemed him from the existential malaise of a world in which he did not recognise himself. Initially in the ranks of the Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity) - busy probing beyond the appearance of phenomenal reality and the subjective exuberance of expressionism, in the name of a lucid truth without frills - he consciously made a tabula rasa of the past in 1930, abandoning easel painting to devote himself, as a self-taught artist, to the small format, where he gave free rein to his intimate emotions, without inhibitions or preconceptions, creating black marks of free Indian ink on white paper, born in a state of meditative fullness understood mystically. He finally arrives at the formulation of his own personal language, made up of symbols, archetypes with universal value, an art of the essential close to oriental thought, an art of silence with a 'sacred' character, to be contemplated in meditation.

Ben Nicholson (1894-1982) from the 1920s arrived at his own personal style, at once naïve and rigorous where,

In the seeming immediacy of an en plein air painting of landscapes of Italy and Switzerland, nothing is left to chance, so much so that the composition is structured on an analytical research of space and form, which he would further develop from the 1930s onwards by applying the stylistic features of the synthetic cubism of Braque and Picasso. By creating increasingly refined compositions of opposing and interpenetrating planes of both coloured surfaces and, at a more extreme stage, reliefs and painted panels, Nicholson creates the optical illusion of the fourth dimension of objects and spaces that persist and transform over time. With his elementary language of increasingly concrete and absolute abstract forms, Nicholson does not submit to the mathematical rigorism of a Mondrian but prefers to remain in the field of intuition, of existential emotional experience, the leitmotiv of his entire oeuvre, which is particularly attentive to the characteristics and potential of matter that he knows how to reveal with poeticity. Between 1965 and 1968, he also devoted himself to graphic art, producing more than 100 etchings in François Lafranca's atelier in Locarno, where he experimented with all the technical variations, marvelling, in anticipation, at the results of the printed sheet. He was in close contact with the curator of the York Art Gallery (as was our former landlord Luigi Pericle whom Hess introduced to the British public in the 1960s).

Italo Valenti (1912-1995), who grew up in the Milanese milieu in the orbit of the anti-fascist Corrente movement, declined an expressive and poetic synthetic figuration, increasingly articulated in eurhythmias of serial forms (rows of toy trains, kites, spinning boats, etc.) schematised and superimposed, the landing place of abstraction was, so to speak, in his destiny.

Eurythmy is an 'art of movement' based on the esoteric principles of anthroposophy. It was created by Rudolf Steiner together with the dancer Lory Maier-Smits and later developed through the work of his wife, Marie Steiner von Sivers.

According to Steiner, eurythmy can provide a direct connection between the practitioner and the supersensory world, contributing to the overall good health of its practitioners.

It differs from dance proper and rhythmic gymnastics in that it has an individual purpose. Artistic eurythmy is practised by soloists or groups and is also included in theatrical performances. Due to the healing properties of the spirit, it is used in so-called anthroposophical medicine. It is also part of the curriculum of the Steinerian schools (Waldorf schools).

Online I find that : Rudolf Steiner, Carl Gustav Jung, Erich Maria Remarque, Hermann Hesse, Paul Klee, Thomas Mann, Marianne Werefkin and even Krishnamurti were guests of Baron von der Heidt. I gather that these characters were unaware of the true activities of the shady banker, also a Nazi. When they stayed there, nobody knew about the financial activities for the Nazi regime apart from the employees of his banks who kept their mouths shut and moved the Führer's funds without batting an eyelid or being noticed. The secret ... eh !

In 1952, when Valenti decided to make a fresh start, he moved to Ascona and joined Remo Rossi's atelier, definitively abandoning the figurative for the abstract. Now essential forms and colours, no longer referential, are free to express the underlying thought of emotion, which arises from pure contemplation. A transition to abstraction that in Valenti takes place step by step - from the mellow forms of swirling expressive colours, to those increasingly synthetic and tending towards the geometric, up to the use of collage that, in 1982, replaces painting in the name of that lyrical abstractionism that invades and resonates in absolute space. During the Wopart fair in Lugano in 2021, I believe a visitor whose name I cannot remember stated that Valenti and Luigi Pericle were friends. There are no documents to prove this unfortunately. The visitor in question told me later that he could no longer remember the facts of his life well due to his advanced age, so I let it go. But it would make sense given the closeness of age of the two and their similar interests in Ascona in those years. And then they came to Ascona and devoted themselves to informal art in the same years. This text originally created it

Mara Folini and I have taken the liberty of editing it. Since Mara is a researcher at heart in Ascona, I know for sure that she will appreciate these insights and the spirit in which this book is written.

14. FROMM AND PLOZZA

A related and contemporary chapter can be dedicated to Erich Fromm, psychoanalyst, social psychologist and philosopher (1899-1961), born in Frankfurt am Main, died in Locarno. He grew up in a family of strictly religious Jewish wine merchants. Like many of his ancestors, he originally wanted to become a rabbi. He studied law, psychology, philosophy and sociology at the Universities of Frankfurt, Heidelberg and Munich. In 1932, after suffering from tuberculosis, Fromm stayed in Davos for almost a year. In 1934, he emigrated to the US to work as a psychoanalyst in New York. Fromm taught at Columbia University from 1934 to 1939. In 1940 he received US citizenship. From 1941 he was Professor of Psychology in Vermont. 1949 He moved, practised and taught in Mexico City. A heart attack in 1966 forced him to end his activities in Mexico. After several summer stays in Muralto, he rented a flat there from 1969, settled definitively in Ticino in 1974 and collaborated with Boris Luban-Plozza in his 'Ascona model'. Erich Fromm was known as a psychoanalyst and social psychologist, as well as an author and important humanist of the 20th century ('The Art of Loving', 1956, 'Haben oder Sein', 1976). He had a worldwide impact as Erich Fromm. Erich Fromm was married three times: Frieda Reichmann, 1926-1942, Henny Gurland, 1944-1952, Annis Freemann, 1953-1980. After several heart attacks, he died in Locarno. He was cremated in Bellinzona .

Boris Luban-Plozza

I remember a very kind and cultured gentleman who lived 50 metres above. He often came by the hotel. My father always made fun of him and I never understood why even though I was ashamed to hear those useless criticisms of a man worthy of respect and admiration. I unfortunately enjoyed his presence very little because my mind was ensnared by this familiar thought of and from which I hope to free myself by writing these lines.

Boris Luban-Plozza (born 29 June 1923 in St. Gallen ; † 24 December 2002 in Ascona) from Rossa GR was a Swiss physician, psychiatrist, psychosomath and specialist in social medicine. He significantly developed the Balint groups named after Michael Balint . Luban grew up in St. Gallen as the son of Russian parents and attended primary school in Grono . His father was a doctor in Val Calanca in the south of Graubünden. After graduating from high school in Bellinzona, Boris studied medicine in Geneva , Basel and Bern from 1942 . He passed his state examination in Bern, obtained his doctorate and worked as an assistant. In 1954, he took over his father's country practice. He qualified in 1966 in Rome in psychiatry and then taught psychosomatic medicine in Milan, Heidelberg, Freiburg and California. He continued to run a rural medical practice in Val Calanca and practised at the San Rocco Clinic in Grono. He later took over the direction of the Santa Croce Clinic in Orselina and ran a practice in his home town of Locarno. At a time when medicine was becoming increasingly specialised, he advocated holistic medicine, in which the patient is perceived as a whole person and also includes the relationship with the family and the doctor. He called it the therapeutic alliance . He was inspired by the psychoanalysts Erich Fromm and Michael Balint. Since 1968 he has been responsible for the Balint meetings, which modelled the WHO Ascona known since 1985 for his contributions to emotional learning in groups

Balint. In 1992, he founded an international psychosomatic and social medicine foundation in Ascona in order to disseminate his concerns.

1989 Albert Schweitzer Prize

16 honorary university degrees

15. KERENYI

Within a radius of 200 metres I can count Károly Kerényi, who was down here on the Pianezze trail.
Károly Kerényi, born in Timisoara on 19 January 1897 and died in Zurich on 14 April 1973, was a Hungarian philologist and historian of religions who is considered to be one of the founders of modern studies of Greek mythology. He is considered one of the greatest scholars and philologists of the 20th century. He studied myth as a mode of knowledge, also confronting the theories of Carl Gustav Jung. The construction of a 'science of myth' is the thread running through his main works: Kerényi applied hermeneutics, i.e. the interpretation of the text, to Greek mythology in order to clarify its intentions and conscious or unconscious meanings. In this sense, he wrote many essays on the archetypes of Greek mythology. We find him in this dossier because, as a Jew, he lived in Ascona as an exile from 1943. Between 1970 and 1973, he attended courses at the Istituto Ticinese di Alti Studi in Lugano directed by Elémire Zolla.

Born in what was then Hungary in Temesvár, today's Romanian city of Timișoara, he studied classical philology at the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest, with a PhD on Plato, Longinus and aesthetics in antiquity. In the following years he taught in Hungary, made numerous trips to Greece and Italy, and taught courses in Greifswald, Heidelberg and at the University of Berlin. In 1929, he met Walter Friedrich Otto, who influenced him to combine comparative studies of religions and ancient history. His first book Die griechisch-orientalische Romanliteratur in religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung ('The Greek Novel in the Light of the History of Religions'), dedicated to Franz Boll, was published in 1927 and earned him an appointment as Privatdozent in Budapest. He became professor of ancient history and classical philology in Pécs in 1934, then visiting professor at the University of Budapest in 1941, and lived in exile in Switzerland since 1943. Sergej Averincev reported that Károly Kerényi on one occasion said "the spirit of abstraction opened doors for National Socialism when Jews as persons were replaced by the impersonal category of Judentum (German for ethnicity

Jews), eliminating the Jews sounded bad; liquidating Judaism, on the other hand, recalled the description of a kind of logical operation." Having then antagonised Mátyás Rákosi, he never returned to Hungary and remained in Switzerland for the rest of his life. On the fringes of academia, he maintained famous correspondences with Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse, published posthumously by his wife Magda. He also maintained a close friendship with Carl Gustav Jung, who from 1940 invited him constantly to the Eranos Colloquia in Ascona and with whom he published Prolegomeni allo studio scientifico della mitologia.

A Freemason, he was initiated on 9 May 1943 in Zurich into the 'Modestia cum Libertate' Lodge, which belongs to the Swiss Grand Alpine Lodge.

Károly Kerényi studied myth as a mode of knowledge, also confronting the theories of Carl Gustav Jung. The construction of a 'science of myth' is the thread running through his main works: Kerényi applied hermeneutics, i.e. the interpretation of the text, to Greek mythology in order to clarify its intentions and conscious or unconscious meanings. In this sense, he wrote many essays on the archetypes of Greek mythology.

We naturally return to Eranos as we continue this roundup of personalities of Ascona adoption ... The Eranos Colloquia (a word that in Greek means banquet, but of the type that the Latins called coena collaticia, in which everyone brings something) as already mentioned were started in 1933 by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881-1962), inspired by Rudolf Otto (a specialist - in the tradition of Friedrich Schleiermacher - in the history of religions at the University of Marburg, and a translator of Plato). During her first period (1933-1988) in the 'Gabriella House', which her father had bought in 1926 on Lake Maggiore, the annual conference (Tagung) enabled Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn to bring together the leading scholars of Eastern and Western religions of her time in a kind of 'school of spiritual research'. Gifted with a strong will, she succeeded in involving Carl Gustav Jung and Martin Buber (whom she had met at a seminar in 1924 in the Monte Verità community, frequented by personalities such

as the poet Ludwig Derleth, the actor Emil Jannings, Chaim Weizmann, Thomas Mann), involving

his friend Alice Bailey and gradually various scholars, theosophists, and members of the European nobility. Speaking of Alice Bailey: academics cringe when they talk about the influence of the Theosophical Society and people who have served in its ranks and then been removed or resigned from it. These are rather bizarre and unconventional characters, but out of a sense of historical duty I feel compelled to include Alice Bailey's biography within the history of Eranos at the risk of being disavowed in my writings. Personally I try to maintain an equidistant attitude and not being an academic authority on the subject I hope to go unnoticed ... but I find it necessary to tell the facts as they unfolded and lay bare the strange inconsistencies in the motivations and behaviour of the people who populate this story. The things that happen in this strange world come from people, their ideas and their relationships with others. It is strange how Eranos comes after Alice Bailey and her books such as "Treatise on Cosmic Fire" or "Esoteric Astrology" which frankly I have never been able to read because of their incredible complexity and abstruseness. I have dealt with people who followed her teachings but never really delved into them ...

16. Alice Bailey

Alice Ann Bailey, born Alice LaTrobe Bateman (Manchester, 16 June 1880 - New York, 15 December 1949), was a British esotericist, astrologer and theosophist.

In 1907, he left for the United States, where he spent the rest of his life. He wrote many books of spiritualist, occultist, astrological, theosophical and theological style and content.[1]

His works, written between 1919 and 1949, cover a wide range of philosophical and esoteric systems and topics, such as the relationship between spirituality and the solar system, meditation, the psychological and therapeutic fundamentals of the spirituality, the destiny of nations, the moral and political prescriptions for a society of future. His writings provide many information on the nature of the activity of the Hatma, so-called "Masters of appellation referring to the Wisdom', each committed to fostering the improvement of areas specific of human activities, through cooperation and the service of disciples in every nation

Beginning in the 1880s, the information provided by Bailey was further expanded by the work of the Scottish scholar Benjamin Creme. Bailey claimed that most of her works were dictated to her telepathically by a 'Master of Wisdom', also called 'the Tibetan' and later identified as Djwhal Khul, also believed to be a master of Blavatsky.

References: from Blavatsky to Djwal Khul

Her works were greatly influenced by the teachings of Madame Blavatsky, albeit with due differences to the esoteric thought of the first theosophist. Bailey also wrote

on religious themes, making ample reference to the heritage of Christian theology (albeit not in its orthodox form), given that his thought remains little in agreement with any specific religion: his vision of a 'unified society' in fact includes a 'global spirit of religion' that would require men to overcome their particular religions in order to merge into the one universal religion. A unified society and a unified religion would be the two cornerstones that, in Bailey's eschatological vision, would characterise the now future Age of Wisdom, notwithstanding the millenarian conception of the New Age.

'White Brotherhood', whose head is Sanat Kumara, the Age of Aquarius will be inaugurated by Maitreya, the 'Instructor of the World', in charge of one of the three lower departments, the one that presides over the development of consciousness and love, identified by Bailey with the Christ (Imam Mahdi for Muslims: (in Arabic: sي..gtl, al-Mahdi,

read: ' The one guided [by Allah]'[1][2]) or Muhammad al Mahdi (Arabic:s.....gي .tl s،a----------~،a, Muhammad al-Mahdi), is a figure

Arabic fundamental of Islamic eschatology, which re-proposes in other guises the messianic idea typical of Judaism and Christianity. According to Islamic faith, the Mahdī will appear in the world at the end of time, after the Dajjāl (a sort of Antichrist who will declare himself a Muslim) has carried out his devastating work on the consciences of believers. To the Mahdī, therefore, is reserved the antagonistic action to Evil, represented by the Dajjāl, heralding the end of the world (the 'Day of Judgement', yawm al-dīn, i.e. 'The Day of Religion', which will take place after the death of Jesus) in the course of which God will decree for the dead, resurrected of all human generations, the destiny of salvation or damnation). According to Bailey, the next era would be characterised by the great importance attached to an educational method that would have the task of making 'man an intelligent citizen, a wise parent, a controlled personality; it must enable him to play his part in the work of the world and make him a being who knows how to live in peace, in harmony with his neighbour and willing to help him'.

In the treatise entitled Education in the New Age (1954), Alice Bailey presents the teaching of Master Djwal Khul, who emphasises that every area in which man puts his talents to good use, from the educational to the political, from the religious to the economic, must be re-evaluated, and conceived first and foremost in its spiritual meaning and value: 'The word "spiritual" does not refer here to what are commonly called religious matters. Any activity that pushes the human being towards some form of development - physical, emotional, mental, intuitive, social - that is advanced in relation to his present state is essentially spiritual in its nature and a sign of the vitality of the divine entity within'.

The new era

The Age of Aquarius would be characterised by the sense of responsibility to which all aspirants and disciples would be called, irrespective of their nationalities, the fields in which they work, ideological orientations and professed religions: "Students must remember that devotion to the Master or the Path is not enough. The Great Beings seek intelligent co-workers and workers, not devotion to their personality, and they can rely more on a student who walks independently in the light of his soul than on the fanatical devotee. The light of his soul will reveal to the earnest aspirant the underlying unity of all groups and enable him to eliminate the poison of intolerance, fanaticism and separateness that characterise the narrow-minded and beginners on the Path, and will help him to love them so much that they will begin to see more truly and broaden their horizon; it will enable him to truly judge the esoteric value of service, and above all it will teach him to practise that harmlessness which is the pre-eminent characteristic of every child of God.

Among the various requirements of discipleship, harmlessness would in fact represent the first true characteristic of a servant: "A harmlessness that does not utter any word that might harm another person, that does not formulate any thought that might poison or cause misunderstanding, and that does not perform any action that might hurt even the smallest of his brothers; this is the principal virtue that will enable the esoteric student to tread without danger the difficult path of the

development. When the emphasis is on the service of others, and the life force is directed outwards, towards the world, then one is free from danger, and the aspirant can meditate, aspire and work in safety. His motive is pure and he seeks to decentralise the personality and shift the centre of attention from himself to the group. Thus the life of the soul can flow through him and express itself as love for all beings.

The Age of Aquarius would thus be characterised by its emphasis on sharing and brotherhood, and thus on the recognition of the unity of mankind, as of all life forms. Hence the call for a unified society, where men can be inspired by these principles for the practical guidance of conduct and, abandoning all forms of competition, work together to foster peace and reconstruction on a more just basis in every field of human endeavour:
"What is it that stands in the way of world unity and prevents the United Nations from reaching those necessary agreements that are eagerly awaited? The answer is not difficult and involves all countries: it is nationalism, capitalism, competition and greed'. Everyone wants security, happiness and peaceful coexistence, but 'until the great Powers, working together with the lesser ones, have resolved the economic problem, recognising that the resources of the earth belong not to anyone in particular, but to all humanity, there will be no true peace. Oil, wheat, grain belong to all men everywhere'.

Problems of humanity and exploitation of the planet.

In the treatise entitled The Problems of Humanity (1951), Alice Bailey presents Master Djwal Khul's analysis of a range of political, economic and social issues. This analysis anticipates what, from the early years of the 21st century onwards, will be the reflections of the most important exponents of the philosophy of sharing, such as that concerning the problem of capital and labour.
Money, the accumulation of financial assets and the organised possession and exploitation of the Earth's resources represent the next great challenge for mankind: "A single dominant concept can save the world today from an economic struggle, prevent the resurgence of materialistic systems, halt the re-emergence

of the old ideas and put an end to the secretive domination of financial interests and the violent discontent of the masses: to believe in the unity of all men'. This unity must be understood as something worth fighting for, it must underpin all political, social and religious reorganisation and provide the basis for educational systems. The oneness of men, understanding and fair action would be "the only concepts with which to build the new world, to abolish competition, to put an end to the exploitation of one human sector by another and to the inequalities (lack of uniformity and fairness in the distribution) of planetary resources. As long as there are great rich and very poor, human beings will not live up to their lofty destiny'.

According to Master Djwal Khul, men must first recognise that 'the cause of all the world's turmoil, the wars that have ravaged humanity and the misery so widespread can be attributed largely to a group of selfish men who for centuries have exploited the masses and used human labour for their materialistic ends. From the feudal barons of the Middle Ages, to the powerful financial groups of the Victorian era, to the handful of capitalists - national and international - who control the planet's resources today, the capitalist system has established itself and thrown the world into ruin".
According to Master Djwal Khul's analysis, this group would take over the resources and consumer goods necessary for civilised life, which it was able to do because it owned and controlled the wealth. It has given rise to 'the huge inequalities between rich and poor, it loves money and its power, it has supported governments and politicians, it has imposed itself on the electorate, it has enabled petty nationalist policies, it has financed world enterprises and controlled oil, coal, electricity, transport; it directs, overtly or covertly, the banking business'.

In his examination of the situation in the 1950s and the economic and social scenario of the following decades, Master Djwal Khul blames the misery on certain groups of businessmen, bankers, monopolists, and directors of huge corporations, who operate in relation to each other and only for personal gain or that of their companies. They would have no interest in benefiting the public, if not

as the demand for better living conditions puts them in a position - by the law of supply and demand - to provide goods, transport, light and energy, with higher financial returns.

The ramifications of the financial domination of these men and organisations would act in every nation before and after the Second World War. They would represent "the gravest threat to mankind, they dominate politics, they buy eminent men in every nation, they secure their silence with threats, money and fear, they amass riches and acquire spurious popularity with philanthropic undertakings; their families enjoy all the comforts and seldom know God-ordained work; they surround themselves with beauty, luxury, and possessions and turn a blind eye to the poverty, misery, penury of all kinds, starvation, and misery of the millions of men among whom they live; they give to charity and observe religious duties as a balm for their consciences or to avoid income tax; they provide work for thousands, but see to it that the wages are so small as to allow them neither comfort nor culture. In spite of this, power will in future be in the hands of the masses: "They are advancing, and by sheer weight of numbers, by their planned thinking and the ever-increasing interrelationships between the workers' movements all over the world, nothing can stop them today. The main advantage that labour has over capital is that the latter works for many millions of men, while the latter tends to the good of the few'.

Discipleship

In his writings, a new way of understanding discipleship emerges. The old rules for discipleship, which are also valid today, must take into account the mental development of modern man, his store of knowledge and experience, and include new approaches, broader truths, greater freedom of action and constant service to one's neighbour, which goes beyond self-centredness and personal gain and is capable of overcoming doctrinaire separatism, putting human needs before ideologies.
A disciple is distinguished above all by his goodwill: "Goodwill is man's first attempt to express the love of God. Its effect on earth will be peace. It is so simple and practical that its power or scientific dynamic effect cannot be appreciated.

Those who practise goodwill in their families can completely change their attitudes. Goodwill effectively practised among political and religious parties of any nation and among nations can revolutionise the planet".

In order to begin the Path of Discipleship, the sense of brotherhood and the need for sharing between peoples, despite cultural and religious differences, must be clearly perceived, and the unity of the human race, whose end is the return to God, must be perceived.
Added to these elements is a firm and persevering determination to undertake, while serving among men, a path of self-discipline of one's own instinctual nature, bearing in mind that the disciple is formed through the attainment of self-mastery and not through blind obedience to others.

The disciple devotes himself totally to the work of transmuting the lower self, watching over the refinement and enhancement of his physical, emotional, and mental capacities so that he can serve better. Selfless service and meditation are for a disciple the two sides of a single coin, proceeding hand in hand, leading him towards ever higher spiritual progress, until he is able to sum up in his own life the teachings of t h e Buddha and the Christ, seen by Bailey as successive and interconnected.
The example of the Buddha would show the disciple the importance of detachment or non-attachment, impersonality and discrimination. The example of the Christ, on the other hand, would show the importance of subordinating the personality and the individual to the common interest and good, fostering an understanding of teamwork and the growth of an ever more inclusive love.

According to Robert S. Ellwood (born 1933), he is an American academic, author and expert on world religions. He studied at the University of Colorado, Berkeley Divinity School and received a PhD in History of Religions from the University of Chicago in 1967. He was professor of world religions at the University of Southern California from 1967 to 1997 and is now professor emeritus) Bailey's philosophy and writings are still the ideological focus of the groups and organisations she

founded, such as the Lucis Trust, the Arcane School, the New World Servant Group and the Full Moon Meditation Groups.

According to various scholars of the esoteric sciences, including Rudolph Hausner, Andrea Braggio, Oliver L. Reiser and Benjamin Creme, the teachings in Alice Bailey's writings have had the merit, along with the thought of H.P.B. Blavatsky and Helena Roerich, of considering service to suffering humanity as the most important requirement for breaking out of one's selfishness and progressing spiritually: 'One learns mastery by solving problems, correcting mistakes, helping humanity and in self-forgetfulness'.
Acceptance of the principle of sharing, which Bailey discusses in The Problems of Humanity, is also the first step in creating the social conditions for a more just world and for the future resolution of the most pressing problems, such as the exploitation of human labour, the manipulation of key planetary resources and the use of war for private or commercial profit. Despite humanity's deep crisis, new values can be recognised: 'One day the principles of collaboration and participation will replace greed for possessions and competition. This is the inevitable future progress of mankind, prepared by the entire evolutionary process'.

Criticism

Some controversy has arisen regarding certain of the theosophist's statements on nationalism, US isolationism, Soviet totalitarianism, Fascism, Zionism, Nazism, race relations, peoples of African descent, the Jews, as well as Judaism and Christianity as religions. Rabbi Yonassan Gershom, along with others, branded his writings as racist and anti-Semitic.

17. ERANOS bis

But let us return to Eranos and the eminent scholars who do not consider Alice Bailey's theories noteworthy at all:

From 1949 until 1978, it was animated by the orientalist Henry Corbin, who located the Foundation's headquarters in the Eranos House, a beautiful villa in Ascona.

It was there that the Eranos Tagungen took place, conversations aimed at the "study of images and archetypal forces in their relationship with the individual", and more generally at the exploration of man's inner worlds, conducted through the scientific methodologies specific to each of the participants.

Until 1988, the Eranos Colloquia - annual meetings that have always been international and multidisciplinary, and whose proceedings were published in the Eranos Jahrbuch - were attended by intellectuals from various disciplines. religions, sinology, Islam, Egyptology, Indology, chemistry, biology, astronomy, comparative mythology, mysticism, Zen Buddhism, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology), who all shared, however, the research activity, and an interdisciplinary cultural orientation with a broadly spiritualist tone.

Among them: Martin Buber, Carl Gustav Jung, Mircea Eliade, Károly Kerényi, Gilbert Durand, James Hillman, Erik Hornung, René Huyghe, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Hans Leisegang, Karl Löwith, Louis Massignon, Erich Neumann, Adolf Portmann (director of the 'Eranos Colloquia' after Fröbe-Kapteyn's death), Henri- Charles Puech, Gilles Quispel, Erwin Rousselle, Tilo Schabert, Gershom Scholem, Paul Tillich, Hellmut Wilhelm, Robert Charles Zaehner, Marie-Louise von Franz, Heinrich Zimmer (Indologist), and the Italians Ernesto Buonaiuti, Raffaele Pettazzoni and Giuseppe Tucci.

Many intellectuals who seek points of contact between West and East have been meeting in Ascona since 1933 ...

Joseph Campbel was one of the speakers at these Eranos conferences in Ascona. You think of these meetings as something academic and very austere ... then you go to the cinema without knowing that the speakers of these conferences write inspiring works for example
... Star Wars!!! Influences of

Joseph Campbel :

George Lucas was the first Hollywood director to be influenced by Campbell. Lucas stated after the release of the first Star Wars film in 1977 that his story was inspired, in part, by ideas described in The Hero with a Thousand Faces and other works by Campbell. The connection between Star Wars and Campbell was further strengthened when in later reprints of Campbell's book, the image of Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker was used on the cover.
Campbel studied at Columbia University, becoming passionate about Native American history and culture. He travelled with other students to California, Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama and Cuba, then, after graduation, furthered his studies in Germany, studying Sanskrit and Indo-European Philology. Important for Campbell was h i s meeting with Jiddu Krishnamurti, which took place during the

his European journey, but also his friendship with John Steinbeck and Edward Ricketts, which arose during a trip to California, and with Heinrich Zimmer (whose works he edited), as well as his reading of Carl Gustav Jung and, especially at the beginning, when he was thinking of writing works of fiction, Robinson Jeffers, James Joyce or Thomas Mann. Other authors mentioned in his research are Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sinclair Lewis, Leo Frobenius, the German ethnologist Adolf Ellegard Jensen (1899-1965), the psychologists Abraham Maslow and Stanislav Grof and the anonymous author of the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

The Hero with a Thousand Faces, first published in 1949 by Pantheon Books, is a work of comparative mythology in which Campbell, comparing the myths of various world cultures, introduces his own theory concerning the mythological structure of the 'archetypal' hero's journey.

The book 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces', first published in 1949 by Pantheon Books, is a work of comparative mythology by Joseph Campbell. In it, the author, comparing the myths of various cultures of the world, introduces his theory concerning the mythological structure of the 'archetypal' hero's journey.

In writing the book, the author also drew on psychoanalytic theories, in particular those of Carl Gustav Jung, and comparative anthropology and religion texts such as James Frazer's The Golden Bough. Since the publication of The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Campbell's theory has been consciously applied by a wide variety of modern writers and artists. Director George Lucas recognised its influence in the Star Wars films.

The Joseph Campbell Foundation and the New World Library published a new edition of The Hero with a Thousand Faces in July 2008 as part of the Collected Works of Joseph Campbell series of books, audio and video recordings. In 2011, 'Time' included the book in its list of the 100 best and most influential books written in English since the magazine was founded in 1923, Internet Archive.

THE HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES

"...So the new myths will serve the new stories. Seeing *Star Wars* I was reminded of a passage from St Paul: 'I fight against the forces and powers of the enemy'. Even in the hunter's caves of the Stone Age we find scenes of struggle against enemy forces and powers. The struggle continues even in modern technological myths'.

Campbell and Bailey are linked to a leading figure in the esoteric scene. The link between Ascona and Los Angeles and the Philosophical Research Society founded by Manly P. Hall is once again esoteric and involves a group of theosophists including Alice Bailey who as mentioned will be the inspirer of Olga Froebe Kaptein in the prehistory of Eranos before Jung when Froebe goes to America to look for Bailey and brings her to Ascona for the first meetings that will become Eranos later and Joseph Campbel who will live for a time in the Master Building in NY created at the behest of Nicolas Roerich, then everything that follows as a historical corollary, well these pages must have limits so I will not go into it again as it was done at the beginning of the book. But let us take a space-time leap to trace the ideas of those who travelled from Germany to the deserts of Southern California and, finally, define the spirit of the 1960s counter-culture.

18. THE COUNTERCULTURE

Actually, here with the neighbours, we only centre because a proportion of German boys influenced by the Lebensreform before the First World War emigrated to California instead of Monte Verità ...

The extraordinary story of the LA Nature Boys (BY LYRA KILSTON in FEATURES | 24 MAR 13)

We are near Palm Springs, California, a long-haired, bearded man sitting on a tree stump playing the guitar. He is barefoot and wears a loose wrap around his waist. Behind him is a simple hut he built himself, covered with palm fronds. The man is William Pester. He has lived in the desert for years, makes his own sandals and eats mostly raw fruit and vegetables. Despite all this, it is not 1968. It is 1917. And he is German.
Pester, known as 'the hermit from Palm Springs', left Germany in 1906 to avoid military service. He settled in Palm Canyon, a couple of hours' drive east of Los Angeles, where he went on long solitary hikes in the bronze San Jacinto Mountains and sold homemade postcards at a roadside kiosk. These postcards contain health advice drawn from the philosophy of Lebensreform (the reform of life), the late 19th century German cultural movement that advocated a return to nature through practices such as vegetarianism, natural healing and nudism.

In the 1930s, Pester met a fellow wanderer named Eden Ahbez in Tahquitz Canyon. Recognising a kindred spirit, Pester became a mentor to the younger man. Ahbez - who wrote his chosen name in lower case because he believed that only the words 'God' and 'Infinity' should be capitalised - was born into a large, poor family in Brooklyn and was sent by train to an orphanage to live with foster parents in the Midwest. When he

settled in California, he had already embraced the freedom of an atypical lifestyle, claiming to have walked across the country eight times.

Besides Lebensreform, other Germanic ideas were finding fertile ground in early 20th century Southern California. Sexauer's Natural Foods in Santa Barbara, owned by German immigrant Hermann Sexauer, and the Eutropheon, a vegetarian cafeteria in Los Angeles opened by John and Vera Richter in 1917, were centres for the spread of radical ideas imported from Europe. The communities that gathered around these businesses shared not only eating habits, but also an interest in learning about alternative health practices and lifestyles. They shared books on naturopathy and healing by Germans such as Arnold Ehret, who arrived in Los Angeles in 1914 after running the sanatorium of Monte Verità in Switzerland, Louis Kuhne known as the 'father of the detoxifying bath' and Adolf Just, founder of the vegetarian nudist Jungborn colony and author of titles such as Back to Nature! The True Natural Method of Healing and Living and The True Salvation of the Soul (1896). These figures promoted ideals that, over the course of nearly a century, travelled from Germany to the deserts and small health food shops of Southern California, and ultimately defined a 1960s counterculture spirit.

A group of 'Nature Boys' including Eden Ahbez (first row, second from left) and Gypsy Boots (second row, far left), 1948 (courtesy: The Estate of Gypsy Boots)

This interest in alternative lifestyles was akin to a vocation religious. John Richter regularly gave public lectures on the benefits of raw food and natural living at the Eutropheum, while his wife Vera wrote cookbooks such as Mrs Richter's Cook-Less Book with Scientific Food Chart (1925), which condemned the violent act of eating cooked animal flesh and offered chapters on sun-baked bread and 'soups for the toothless'. When not wandering

for the desert, eden abhez occasionally worked as a pianist at the Eutropheon, where he befriended a group of young people with similar views. They too grew long hair and beards, practised vegetarianism and oriental mysticism, and spent long periods of time in nature where they slept outdoors, roamed almost naked and searched for food. They became known in the city as the 'Nature Boys'.

Not much is known about this loose group of proto-hippies other than rumours (Jack Kerouac mentioned seeing 'an occasional Nature Boy saint' in Los Angeles in On the Road [1957]) and a few photos showing them eating watermelons in a canyon, or playing music in the street, shirtless and devout. Yet Ahbez found fame in an unlikely way. In 1948 his song, Nature Boy, sung by Nat King Cole, became number one nationally for eight weeks. (The story goes that ahbez passed the sheet music to Cole's manager, and Cole realised the potential of the unusual melody and haunting lyrics. It has since become a jazz standard). Some have proposed that the inspiration for the title was Ahbez's desert-dwelling Teutonic friend William Pester. The lyrics begin: There was a boy / A very strange and enchanted boy / Said to wander far, far away / Over land and sea / A little shy / And sad of eye / But very wise he was. Ahbez provided the media with an intriguing subject and was interviewed and photographed - dressed and dressed as Jesus - for national magazines during the song's meteoric rise. Although he continued to make and record music for years, Ahbez left the limelight of Los Angeles to return to his simple mountain life.
Reflecting the mentorship between Pester and Ahbez, another popular Nature Boy known as Gypsy Boots also benefited from the influence of a German immigrant. Maximilian Sikinger arrived in the United States in 1935 and hopped a train to California after exploring natural healing, nutrition and the outdoors in Germany. Sikinger met Boots (born Robert Bootzin) in San Francisco, and became his mentor, passing on a strain of Lebensreform philosophy to a new devotee. They joined the Nature Boys circle in the 1940s, during which time Sikinger published a

pamphlet on raw food and meditation that sold thousands of copies. Boots, who later became the better-known Nature Boy, opened the popular Health Hut in Hollywood in 1958. In the early 1960s he appeared regularly on television on The Steve Allen Show, where he climbed on stage with a rope, sipped organic juices and exercised with the host. As a beloved eccentric, he appeared on stage with many psychedelic bands of the late 1960s, and was widely regarded as the 'original hippie', passing the baton to a new generation seeking an alternative lifestyle.

It is not hard to see why Southern California attracted the first lovers of raw food and the outdoors - where better to enjoy nudism, sun worship and year-round fruit and vegetables? The dry climate made it a popular sanatorium as early as the 1870s, when tubercular visitors began to arrive for the sun cures and mineral springs. Being the furthest western frontier from Europe, California famously had a mythical status for people who wanted to escape the ossified traditions of their ancestors and start anew.
But why and how did the alternative lifestyles of the men mentioned above flourish in Germany? The 'return to nature' had other champions in the 19th century (such as Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Leo Tolstoy and George Bernard Shaw), but it was a particularly rampant idea in Germany, which experienced the most extreme pace of industrialisation and urban growth of any European nation in the late 19th century. By 1910, Germany contained as many large cities as the rest of Europe. As historian Michael Green has noted, 'the iron cage weighed heavier, and the struggle against it was fiercer, in Germany'1. The uprisings took many forms and were led by a wide range of people, but a few salient movements, places, and people were the most relevant to the later export of Southern California.

Before talking about Germany, I would like to digress about Shaw. In 1925 Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize, the crowning achievement of an enfant terrible, a wise desecrator who became a solid

institution of non-conformism. Shaw was an exceptional playwright, a master of theatrical technique and always able to calculate and control the effect of each joke. Of his plays survive today the fluency of dialogue, the intelligence and liveliness of debate, the acute characterisation of the characters: they are the modern version of the eighteenth-century 'comedy of manners'. Shaw wrote to a late age, retaining the old witty verve. Sh. is against the lawlessness of socialists, no less than that of individualists. Against conjugal bonds; but also against the harsher and more unreasonable bonds of illicit love. He laughed at theocratic infallibility, but also at that of scientists. He tickled the bohèmes, the unscrupulous, by saying that women are equal to men. But he angered them by adding that men are equal to women. To his own polemical and critical principles, Sh. wanted to add a constructive element, with the theory of those 'vital forces' of which women would be the supreme repository. This is the least convincing aspect of his system; whose compromises and shortcomings one is continually led to forget, due to the sparkle of his observations, the freshness of his findings, and the icasticality of his eloquence.

His aggressive realism, his ingenious and mischievous will to truth, induced Sh. to less sympathetic, sometimes unjust ostentations. But they also inspired him with courageous acts of justice: recall his intervention (December 1935) in the Italian-English conflict over Ethiopia. Where the arguments even escape his grasp is in the theological satire of the Volterian novelette: The black girl in her search for God (1933).

Towards the end of the 19th century in Germany, the Lebensreform movement grew rapidly. As historian Michael Hau writes of its followers, "They believed that modern civilisation, urbanisation and industrialisation had alienated human beings from their 'natural' living conditions, leading them down a path of progressive degeneration that could only be reversed by living in accordance with the nature of man and woman".

As we know, one of the most famous colonies influenced by such thinking was that of Monte Verità, located near Lake Maggiore in Switzerland. It functioned as a loose collection of participants - anarchists, dancers, artists, Tolstoyan ascetics, vagabonds, healers, writers - who passed through, perhaps meeting at dawn for a naked sun salutation, attending lectures on Theosophy, or living in simple huts in the forest. Monte Verità has also hosted well-known personalities such as Isadora Duncan, Carl Jung, Alexei Jawlensky and H.G. Wells. A founding member was Gusto Gräser, born in 1879 in a German pocket of what is now Transylvania. Bearded and beatific, Gräser roamed Europe with his family in a caravan painted with philosophical slogans, spreading his gospel and giving away poems or blades of grass. He was often imprisoned for spreading subversive ideas. Hermann Hesse met Gräser at Monte Verità and found in him a spiritual guide. In fact, Hesse is thought to have modelled the characters in his novels after Gräser's fierce anti-establishment ways. Hesse's writing offers another knot in the thread connecting Germany to the American counterculture of the 1960s: his search for alternatives to Western culture led him to travel to India, which in turn inspired the novel Siddhartha (1922) - necessary reading for the hippie generation more than four decades later.

At the same time as the Lebensreform was spreading, a small group of young people began to take organised nature walks and hikes in the mountains. In 1901 they came together under the name Wandervögel (wandering birds). Within thirteen years they counted

50,000 members recruited from schools across the country. Creating a culture in stark contrast to their parents, the young Wandervogels dressed in ragged or loose clothing such as capes, romantic collars and bright scarves, and their excursions extended into long night hikes where they slept in clubhouses they called nests or anti-houses. They would gather to play folk music, tell stories of medieval Germany around bonfires and scorn the adult world of compulsory education and work. A 1913 Wandervogel magazine article proclaimed: 'Our people have

need whole men, not fragments, such as notaries, officials and courtiers'.

It is clear where the beliefs of the Wandervogel, and the many similar groups that multiplied throughout Germany at that time, reverberated in the anti-system movements of the 1960s. But their influence also had other ramifications. Recognising the power and popularity of youth movements, the Nazi party outlawed them in 1933 to consolidate the youth under the banner of the Hitler Youth. Within a few years, the tradition of organised hiking was replaced by military camps and marches.

Part of the Lebensreform movement also helped lay the foundations for Nazi Germany's racist agenda; some of its supporters emphatically linked the health of the individual body as essential to the hygiene and strength of the nation. As historian Christian Adam notes, one of the most popular books during the Third Reich was Hans Surén's Man and the Sun: The Aryan-Olympian Spirit (1936), a photographic study of nude German revelers accompanied by texts on the benefits of nude hiking, mud baths and yoga. As Adam explains, such images 'contained not only the promise of freedom, but also thoughts of breeding - the body as an instrument of breeding that must be properly trained and nurtured like a racehorse'. Even earlier, the nudist lawyer Richard Ungewitter, who proselytised that Germanic culture should return to the primitive simplicity of a pre-Christian tribal past, published feverish popular treatises promoting nudism, vegetarianism and racial purity. He blamed capitalism, socialism and the unnecessary use of clothing for the loss of Aryan supremacy.
Ahbez's popular song Nature Boy became the main soundtrack of the 1948 pacifist film The Boy with Green Hair, which tells the story of an American boy whose hair suddenly and mysteriously turns green when he discovers he is a war orphan. After being ostracised by the inhabitants of his town, he has a vision of meeting a group of war orphans

in the forest who explains to him that his green hair symbolises the human cost of war. In reality, a new war is already underway, accompanied by the fear of atomic devastation. Ahbez's fiery text repeated at the end of Nature Boy: the greatest thing one learns is just to love and be loved in return, love as opposed to war, in a guileless dichotomy that would re-emerge as a creed of the 1960s peace movement.

Ironically, the film was reviewed at a time when support for the Cold War, and the paranoia of communist sympathisers, was on the rise. RKO Pictures, which purchased The Boy with Green Hair prior to its release, proposed changing some lines of dialogue to suggest the need to prepare for war, rather than condemn it. The script changes eventually altered the plot too much and were abandoned - yet shortly afterwards the director, Joseph Losey, was blacklisted.

The fact that the film's message of peace and tolerance can be framed as anti-American - given that the pursuit of natural living was distorted by German fascism a dozen years earlier - clearly shows how idealism is so often warped to serve the interests of power. And so, the seeds of the desire to live simply, healthily and in harmony with nature, sown in two nations, have grown into very different vines.

One curious thing is the writing without capital letters that lebensreform and anarchy have in common. And so now we are going to talk about the latter because at the beginning of the Louis Pericles discovery I met by chance one of Bakunin's successive owners of the Baronata. As chance would have it, his sister had also been a translator during Operation Sunrise. The Baronata is more than 300 metres from my house but someone like Bakunin I have to squeeze into this book and since Monte Verità takes possession of it I let him in.

19. ANARCHY

"In the Spirit of Bakunin", published in the important journal 'Kain', which he founded in Munich in 1911. In it one reads among other things :

"But in this [...] we want to feel that we are followers of Michael Bakunin, aware that in the face of history this incorruptible free spirit looms larger and more radiant than his scheming and calculating enemies who plot against him with their hired creatures. At the same time we want to defend his teachings, towards which we channel our efforts. / We want to be anarchists. That is: men of upright spirit, free personalities with the courage of truth and the desire for freedom. We want to fight against the powers of oppression and exploitation, not to join with them in order to replace old state decrees with new ones, but to grow coalitions and human laws from the natural right of our lives. We want to fight against constraint and authority, not to stand as powerful figures invested with authority, but to create an order based on justice and spontaneity. We want to storm the ramparts of the constituted powers, to rage against capital and the army, the state and the church. And we do not intend to fight with the weapons of electoral electoral votes and demagogic bargaining, but with that passion of convinced hearts that does not require payment by instalments, that takes charge of everything, starting with the knowledge of what is right.

NEITHER GOD, NOR STATE, NOR SERVANTS, NOR MASTERS

13/4/75, RSI Radiotelevisione svizzera di lingua italiana

One of the founding fathers of modern anarchism, Michail Aleksandrovic Bakunin was born in Tver on 30th May 1814 and died in Berne on 1st July 1876. He lived for many years in Switzerland, hatching the dream of overthrowing the state, the source in his eyes of all oppression. In Geneva he was a key figure of the First

International, in his villa near Locarno he planned insurrections in Italy.

In the pages of Swissinfo, in the article entitled 'The spectre of anarchy', Andrea Tognina describes Bakunin's Ticino period:
"Except for a long interval in Zurich during the summer of 1872, when he tried to bind the new generation of Russian refugees in the city to himself, Ticino became Bakunin's main residence.

Tired of so many battles and defeats, the Russian revolutionary was now entertaining the idea of acquiring Swiss citizenship in order to protect himself for good from the police forces of half of Europe. Someone suggested to him that it would be easier if he became a property owner.

The opportunity presented itself in the summer of 1873. Thanks to capital provided by his friend Carlo Cafiero, the wealthy heir of an Italian merchant, Bakunin was able to buy a large plot of land in Minusio, called the Baronata, where he had a new house built.

However, the idyll did not last long. Bakunin, who had participated in a failed insurrection plan in Bologna in 1874, soon had to give up the Baronata to Cafiero and move to Lugano, where he managed to buy another house, Villa Besso, on credit.

It was this ownership that earned him a paradoxical entry in the burial register of the city of Berne, where Bakunin died in 1876 while visiting friends.

He, who had always fought private property and who had renounced his wealth and privileges to sow the seeds of anarchy in Europe, was enrolled as Michel de Bakounine, rentier'.
On the presence of Michail Bakunin, the most important collection of documents is the one in the possession of the Carlo Vanza Circle, described in the article "Bakunin in Ticino: the documentation available at the CCV" and preceded by a summary of the salient facts. With the original title '100 years ago - Bakunin and Cafiero at the "Baronata"', the television report by Andriano Soldini published here

aired on 13 April 1975 in the television programme 'Incontri. Fatti e personaggi del nostro tempo'. It was a meeting - held in the gardens of Villa Baronata - with the historian Pier Carlo Masini, author of a biography dedicated to the anarchist Carlo Cafiero, a friend of Michail Bakunin.
Son of a wealthy middle-class agrarian family, Carlo Cafiero (1846-1982). The first popularizer of Marx's Capital, in 1873, after being arrested, Cafiero managed to buy a plot of land in Locarno, called La Baronata, in which a house was built to house revolutionaries from all over Europe.

THE BARONADE

Situated in a vast green area in Minusio that originally stretched down to the lake, the Baronata complex has two buildings: the lower, older villa and a second, higher up (hence the name Baronata alta), more recent one.
The wall structures of the lower villa date back to the 17th century, when a Baron Marcacci (hence the name Baronata) wanted it as a summer residence. The villa, almost hidden among the greenery, owes its fame to the stay of the anarchist Bakunin, who bought it in 1873, turning the property into an agricultural colony. The building was home to numerous singular characters, including agitators and utopians. The writer Riccardo Bacchelli recounts these episodes in his novel 'The Devil at Pontelungo'. The current building is probably the result of adaptations of already existing buildings; the loggia on the first floor and the corner tower are interesting.
The upper villa, said to be the work of architect Francesco Galli, was desired by Bakunin, who lived there with his family and numerous friends. Currently private residences.
It is strange to note that I met by chance one of its last owners Pietro Beretta, who helped Szemann finance the Monte Verità exhibition. We met by chance at the museum of modern art in Ascona, I was at school with his son, and he was a support at the beginning of the rediscovery of Luigi Pericle, an inspirer, a supportive role that I always lacked from my parents and my brother.

MICHAIL BAKUNIN

Michail Aleksandrovič Bakunin (AFI: [mʲɪxɐˈil ɐlʲɪksɐˈndrəvʲɪtɕ bɐ

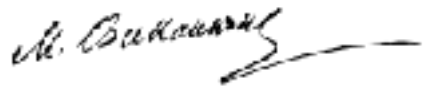
ˈkunʲɪn]; Russian: Михаи́л А л е к с а́ н д р о в и ч Баку́нин?; Prjamuchino, 30 May 1814, 1 8 May of the Julian calendar[1] - Berne, 1 July 1876) was

a Russian anarchist, philosopher and revolutionary, considered one of the founders of modern anarchism, along with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Carlo Cafiero and Errico Malatesta. He was the author of many writings, including State and Anarchy and The Knouto-Germanic Empire. To understand the term, I did a little research. A discipline is a small whip or scourge usually made of leather, hemp or metal used for self-infliction of corporal punishment (self-flagellation), according to a religious ritual.

Also similar to discipline are the cat-o-nine-tails and the knout or knut, which was widespread in Russia from the 15th century to the beginning of the 20th century, but as a form of corporal punishment and which gave rise to the English idiom 'being under the knout' to indicate a very harsh authoritarian regime (in this sense, the term is used by Michail Bakunin for his book The Knout-Germanic Empire, in which he criticises the Russian Empire and the German Second Reich).

"I am a fanatical lover of freedom, I consider it the only condition in which human intelligence, dignity and happiness can develop and grow. Not freedom conceived in a purely formal way, limited and regulated by the state, an eternal deception that in reality represents nothing more than the privilege of some founded on the enslavement of others... No, I refer to the only kind of freedom that deserves this name... the freedom that knows no restrictions except those that are determined by the laws of our personal nature, which cannot be considered true restrictions, because they are not laws imposed by an external legislator, equal or superior to us, but laws that are immanent and inherent in ourselves, constituting the basis of our material, intellectual and moral being: they do not restrict us, they are the real and natural conditions of our freedom. "

(M. Bakunin, The Paris Commune and the Notion of the State)



BIOGRAPHY

TRAINING

Bakunin was born in the small village of Prjamuchino, near Tver'. The son of noble landowners, he attended the artillery school in Petersburg. First in Moscow and then in Dresden, he became interested in philosophy and in particular the writings of Schelling and Hegel. He came into contact with the libertarian conceptions of Proudhon, even though at this stage, Pan-Slavic views prevailed in him.

The event that changed his life, however, was the Dresden Uprising of 1849, or May Uprising, an event pertaining to the People's Spring, during which the German composer Richard Wagner was his fighting partner. Captured by German troops, he was sentenced to death on 14 January 1850, which was commuted to life imprisonment. In 1851, he was transferred to the Peter and Paul Fortress in St Petersburg. There, at the request of Count Orlov, he wrote a confession to Tsar Nicholas I. In 1857, the sentence was commuted to exile for life in Siberia. From here, in 1861, he managed to escape via Japan and the USA.

IN ITALY

Bakunin's birthplace in Prjamuchino

In a conversation with Marx in London on 3 November 1864, the two revolutionaries agreed that Bakunin would work in Italy to seek membership of the International Workers' Association, which had been formed a few weeks earlier, and to undermine the influence of Mazzini, then predominant in workers' societies. That same year he settled in Florence and in 1865 began his stay in Naples, where he founded the newspaper Liberty and Justice and organised a secret association (of which little is known) called the International Brotherhood.

At this point I would make an aside because venturing into the anarchist wikipedia I stumbled upon ethical egoism headed by Max Stirner who is regarded as one of the forerunners of movements such as nihilism, existentialism, anarchism and especially individualist anarchism. He explicitly denies advocating an absolute philosophical position, adding that having to assign himself to some -ism he chooses egoism. Stirner clearly adheres to both psychological egoism and ethical egoism, the antitheses of all more traditional ideologies and social attitudes as he conceived them.

Stirner proclaims that religions and ideologies are primarily based on superstitions and consequently denounces nationalism, statism, liberalism, socialism, communism and humanism as superstitions.

Stirner's philosophy sparked heated debates involving personalities such as Karl Marx, Søren Kierkegaard, Benjamin Tucker, Carl Schmitt, Benito Mussolini, Dora Marsden, Robert Anton Wilson and the Situationists. Friedrich Nietzsche, on the other hand, did not recognise

explicitly his debts to Stirner, and even confided to some of his students his fear of being accused of plagiarism against Stirner.

A digression must be made about Benjamin Ricketson Tucker (South Dartmouth, 17 April 1854 - Monaco, 22 June 1939). He was an American philosopher and one of the most important individualist anarchists and libertarian socialists of the 19th century.

Born in South Dartmouth, Massachusetts, he was one of the most important individualist anarchists in history. The first to translate the summa of Stirnerian thought, The One and His Property, into English, Tucker published through his publishing house the anarcho-individualist periodical Liberty, which had important writers, among them the jurist and legal philosopher Lysander Spooner, Stephen Pearl Andrews and the most important anarcho-individualists of the time. Benjamin R. Tucker had among his teachers of liberty Josiah Warren, a pioneer of cost pricing against capitalist exploitation of consumers.

In 'Liberty' Tucker expounded the theories of the British philosopher Herbert Spencer (and wrote in support of free thought and free love, and in opposition to religious legislation and against prohibitionism. Tucker fought for a libertarian revolution, but one that totally excluded the use of violence (neither bullet, nor ballot).

For Spencer, the limits of human knowledge are inherent in mental processes themselves. Scientific activity is based on tracing particular cases back to general rules. The general rules in turn will be traced back to ultimate principles, which, being no longer traceable to anything else, will in fact be inexplicable. Thus Spencer heralds the relativity of knowledge, which proceeds by generalisations and relations between facts without ever being able to arrive at the unitary principle underlying it all.

But to return to Tucker, the feminist Victoria Woodhull, perhaps the first female candidate for US President, had an affair with Benjamin Tucker. One of Tucker's civil disobediences was to distribute Walt Whitman's forbidden book, Leaves of Grass, which was censored by the picturesque and sexually offensive Comstock laws: no one dared arrest him, then the laws were repealed.

The four monopolies
Tucker argued that the poor conditions of American workers and the world stemmed from the so-called four major legal monopolies, i.e. the monopolistic or 'monopoly' state illegitimately establishes all monopolistic privileges, grants them to exploitative corporations, and defends them through the illegitimate use of force:

The money-issuing monopoly The land monopoly
Tariffs, i.e. high prices, also international, imposed by states Patents on inventions
For example, by imposing high prices (relative to wages), the state induces companies to exploit all consumers (not just workers). Thus protectionism expresses exploitation. The state, however, induces the exploitation of consumers above all through the complex and more powerful banking system: The Central Bank has the aforementioned monopoly of issuance, and demands an interest rate from the ordinary banks, the banks demand higher interest rates from the companies (manufacturing, services and retail distribution), which, to at least cover the costs of the financial system, must obtain even higher rates of profitability, and each company charges prices to the other, and all exploit the consumers. The use of the monopolistic currency unit is ensured by levying taxes in monopolistic currency in every exchange. Only a free market of generalised cost price can provide fairness without forcing.

This text is like Chinese boxes ...
Stirner remains today at the centre of a widespread and animated debate: an extensive secondary literature appears in German, Italian, French

and Spanish, while in English there are only interventions emphasising the anarchist and existentialist interpretations of his thought.

But returning to Bakunin, the first articles against the statist vision of Giuseppe Mazzini, his great adversary, date from this period (1865). With regard to his relations with Freemasonry, it appears that the Russian thinker, during his stay in Florence, was affiliated to the Valle dell'Arno 'Social Progress' lodge (RSAA 32 in 1864) and that he had had previous Masonic experiences in Sweden (1845).
In 1867, he attended the first international congress of the League for Peace and Freedom, convened in Geneva by a committee of liberals, to discuss the 'maintenance of liberty, justice and peace', under the illusion that revolutionary socialism would make inroads into the association. But after the 2nd congress, on 25 September 1868, the faction of revolutionary socialists split from the League for Peace and Freedom by forming the Alliance International of Socialist Democracy, which formally asked to be admitted as a separate group into the International Workers' Association. The request was granted but on the precise condition that the Alliance disbanded and the individual local sections joined the International. In 1869 it endorsed through the organisational role of Carlo Gambuzzi the anti-clerical council in Naples, which took place in opposition to the First Vatican Council. During the war Franco-Prussian war, in 1871 Bakunintentified to foment a popular uprising in Lyon. Bakunin's work in Italy was facilitated by the events of the Paris Commune (1871) that gave enormous popularity to the Internationale led to the definitive break with Mazzini. Mazzini condemned the Paris insurrection, seeing in it the negation of the idea of nationhood, Bakunin on the contrary defended it as a model of anti-authoritarian revolution e federalist (libertarian conception). libertarian conception). In the bitter controversy that followed, many Mazzinians took a position in favour of Bakunin. in Bakunin's favour, joining the fledgling groups of the First International.

THE CLASH WITH MARX

Within the First International, Bakunin quickly found himself in conflict with Karl Marx: Marx argued for the need to strengthen the powers of the organisation's General Council and the primacy of political action with a view to the emergence of a proletarian state, Bakunin on the other hand defended the full autonomy of national federations, put the economic struggle in the foreground and a revolution that should have resulted in a federalist organisation of free communes.

In September 1871, in the impossibility of holding the planned congress, a conference of the International was held in London at which, partly due to the poor attendance of Bakuninist delegates unable to attend due to the events in France, a resolution was passed in favour of the creation of political parties. Against these resolutions in November 1871, the delegates of the Fédération Jurassienne and some expatriates met in Sonvilier and approved a circular in which they accused Marx of wanting to 'introduce the authoritarian spirit into the International' through rigid centralisation.

After the General Council's decision to convene the congress of the International in The Hague (a location difficult to reach for the Bakuninists who had their strongest positions in southern Europe) the Italian federation also decided at the Rimini Conference to fully support Bakunin's positions. At the Hague Congress of 1872 Bakunin was expelled from the International Workers' Association on the charge, among other things, of secretly maintaining the International Alliance for Socialist Democracy (which he had formally pledged to dissolve). In 1872, in Saint-Imier, he organised, with the 'rebel' sections of the International, the first congress of the anti-authoritarian International, which definitively marked the split of the First International into two sections. In 1873 he wrote his only complete work, State and Anarchy.

THE LAST FEW YEARS

In 1874, he moved with his young wife Antonia Kwiatkowska to Minusio, Switzerland, to the villa 'La Baronata', bought to house him by Carlo Cafiero, who sold his property in Barletta to raise the necessary money. He died in Berne on 1

July 1876. Bakunin had three children, Carlo, Sofia (mother of the mathematician Renato Caccioppoli) and Maria. The latter was born in Siberia, where Bakunin's wife had taken refuge after he was expelled from France.

THINKING

> **"It is on the pretense of this pretended representation of the people and the concrete fact of the government of the masses of the people by an insignificant handful of privileged people, elected or not by the multitudes forced into elections and who do not even know why or for whom they vote; it is on this abstract and fictitious conception of what is imagined to be the thought and will of the entire people, and of which the real and living people have not the faintest idea, that the theory of the state and the theory of the so-called revolutionary dictatorship are based in equal measure. "**

(Michail A. Bakunin, State and Anarchy, pp. 162-163).

Bakunin Family Coat of Arms

Apparently asystematic, Bakunin's thought revolves around two fundamental ideas, that of nature (as matter) and that of freedom. For him, nature is the synthesis of life, solidarity, causality brought to universality; it therefore unites the inorganic, the organic and the living, with man at its apex.
In 1871 in 'The World System' he wrote that: "Universal Causality, Nature, creates worlds. It has determined the mechanical, physical, chemical, geological and geographical configuration of our earth and, having clothed its surface with all the splendours of plant and animal life, continues to "create", in the human world, society with all its past, present and future developments'.

Bakunin's materialism (I do not agree with calling it materialism because for him spirit and matter are identical, as in theosophy, and such a system cannot actually be called materialist) is atheistic, monistic and deterministic, he has a harmonistic and unitary conception of the universe, according to which everything is concatenated and progresses together, where the laws that govern brute matter are harmonised with those that promote the development of the human spirit. And so it follows that: "The laws of equilibrium, of the combination and reciprocal action of forces and of mechanical motion; the laws of weight, of heat, of the vibration of bodies, of light, of electricity, as well as those of the chemical composition and decomposition of bodies, are absolutely inherent in all things that exist, including the various manifestations of feeling, will and spirit. These three things, properly constituting the ideal world of man, are but totally material functions of organised and living matter, in the body of the animal in general and in that of the human animal in particular. Consequently, all these laws are general laws, to which all the known and unknown orders of the real existence of the world are subject'.
Bakunin stated in 1873: "Life as a concretely rational movement, is in the world of science the march from the real fact to the idea that embraces it, expresses it and consequently explains it; and in the practical world it is the movement from social life towards its most rational organisation possible in accordance with the indications, conditions, needs and the more or less spontaneous requirements of that same life" (State and Anarchy).

This radical determinism contrasts and is partially inconsistent with an idea of human freedom that appears similar to that of the Stoics, a freedom to do what is already written in the destiny of the laws of matter (of the cosmos?). Thus Bakunin inconsistently 'detaches' man' from blind nature on the basis that man 'has a need to know', and then from this need arises an instance of freedom. Man is born and lives in need, as an animal, but as a thinking being he is free to progress independently of the material nature that underlies him. The intimate urge to know oneself and the

world makes man, necessitated by nature, a being who becomes free to determine his own destiny.
The ultimate in human freedom lies in making revolution and changing the unjust human system that has been determined in past history. Freedom from contingencies and abuses is the supreme good that the revolutionary must seek at any cost, and Bakunin then says: "man [...] must know all the causes of his own existence and evolution, so that he can understand his own nature and mission...". Man therefore has a mission to fulfil, and this mission, since it cannot be entrusted to him by God, for a materialist (admittedly!) atheist, can only be Nature (which is not only matter... eh!).
Nature, however, is in turn necessitated by physical laws, and therefore not free. But Bakunin glosses over all these problems and inconsistencies, concluding that this is possible for the new and revolutionary man: 'So that, in this world of blind fatality, he may inaugurate the human world, the world of freedom'. If on the philosophical level the shortcomings are evident Bakunin finds some coherence by moving to the sociological level, on the basis of the natural and negative principle that: 'In the natural world the strong live and the weak succumb, and the former live only because the others succumb'.

Alexander M. Bakunin, father of Mikhail

Varvara A. Bakunina, mother of Mikhail

In the cruel war of the strong to dominate and to exploit the weak, the just man, the revolutionary, has the inescapable 'mission' to change things and counterbalance the arrogance of the strong and powerful. The world of human freedom is therefore a world based on equality, which is the precondition for any harmonious and just humanity. Freedom from want is indeed unattainable without de facto equality (social, political, but above all economic equality). The phenomena that drive men to inequality and slavery are two: the state and capital. Once these are overthrown, thanks to a strictly popular revolution, Anarchy is achieved, but it is the harbinger of a new, more advanced, classless social order.

But to achieve freedom from the blind mechanisms of nature, one must 'act'. Action therefore becomes for Bakunin the human counterpart to the movement of physical and biological entities and systems. Producing progress and doing justice in the human world is the activist project that is also proposed in these words: 'The intimate nature or substance of a thing is not only known from the sum or combination of all the causes that produced it, it is also known from the sum of its various manifestations or from all the actions it exerts externally. Every thing is what it does [...] its acting and its being are one.

Man can become the champion of ethical action to change the world to make it fairer and more just. But to achieve this, it is not enough just to think well and propose innovative and just ideas: one must act. But acting also means producing the new: 'Since

everything in all the integrity of its being is nothing but a product, its properties or its different modes of action on the external world, which as we have seen constitute its whole being, are also necessarily products'. Bakunin's man, by acting, produces what he intends to become, and what man is and will be is the 'product' of his acting in reshaping a world dominated by blind necessity that produces injustice. Man can thus take the place of a God who does not exist, and 'recreate' a better world according to his will.

THE STATE AND CAPITAL :
BAKUNIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE STATE IS WHAT DIFFERENTIATES THE TWO CURRENTS OF SOCIALISM FROM THEIR FORMATION
19TH AND 20TH CENTURY.
THE STATE, ACCORDING TO BOTH FACTIONS, IS THE SET OF POLICE, MILITARY, FINANCIAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANS THAT ALLOW THE RULING CLASS (THE BOURGEOISIE) TO PERPETUATE ITS PRIVILEGES. THE DIFFERENCE LIES IN THE USE OF THE STATE DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.

For Marxists, there is a stage in the revolutionary process when the state is in the hands of the proletariat which uses it to eliminate counter-revolution. Only after this phase will there be the dissolution of the state apparatus, now deprived of its function, and a classless society can be achieved. According to Bakunin (and according to all anarchists) instead, the state, as an instrument of the bourgeoisie, can only be used against the proletariat. Since it is not possible for the entire exploited class to administer the state infrastructure, an ad hoc bureaucratic class will be needed.

Bakunin and his wife Antonia Kwiatkowska (3 June 1861)

Bakunin feared the inevitable formation of a 'red bureaucracy', master of the state and new ruler (which is a bit like what we have here in Ticino). Equality and therefore freedom, according to the Russian thinker, cannot exist in Marxist society. The state must therefore be overthrown in the revolutionary phase; if the state is the political aspect of the exploitation of the bourgeoisie, capital is its economic aspect. Here the differences from Marxism are non-existent (just think that the first book of Capital was translated into Russian by Bakunin himself).

The difference between the Marxian and Bakunin's conception of Capital is that for Bakunin this is not a basic element of exploitation. Although not made explicit, there is no reference whatsoever in his work to the materialist conception of history (which envisages the economic aspect of society as basic to its analysis).

THE REVOLUTION

AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF BAKUNIN'S THOUGHT IS REVOLUTIONARY ACTION. BAKUNIN PURSUED THIS AIM THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE AND, IN CERTAIN PARTS OF HIS WORK, THE GUIDELINES OF THE RUSSIAN THINKER'S REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPTION CAN BE TRACED.

First and foremost, the revolution must be essentially popular: the meaning of this statement is still to be found in the contrast with Marx. Communists believed in a vanguard that should lead the popular masses through the revolutionary path. Bakunin, on the other hand, envisaged a secret society that would only have to incite revolt, which would then self-organise from below. Another difference with the Marxism è the identification of revolutionary subject. If Marx saw the industrial proletariat as the backbone of the revolution (contrasting it with a reactionary agrarian class), Bakunin believed that the union between the peasantry and the proletariat was the only revolutionary possibility. Marx, in some of his writings, does not deny the possibility that the triumph of the proletariat could come without bloodshed. Bakunin, however, is categorical on this point: revolution, being spontaneous and popular, can only be violent.

THE ANARCHY

Bakunin preferred not to address the post-revolution problem in depth, limiting himself to giving some basic ideas. Indeed, if he had given precise indications of how anarchist societies functioned, he would have denied the need for self-determination. First of all, Bakunin's anarchist thought is based on the absence of exploitation and the rule of man over man. (and here the kettle falls, actually assuming just self-determination presupposes that man is naturally just and this is yet to be proven. I believe that in the natural state man is not just, but selfish, and only a long and profound evolution will make him ethical. This process has not yet been accomplished by everyone and that is why the world and society are what they are).

Industrial and agricultural production is no longer based on the company, but on free associations, composed, administered and self-managed by the workers themselves through plenary assemblies. The aspect of direct participation of the people in politics, taken from Proudhon's thought, is founded on so-called libertarian federalism, a theory that envisages a scale of assemblies organised from the bottom up, from the periphery to the centre.

The fundamental difference between the anarchist organisation desired by Bakunin and an authoritarian conception of society lies in the direction of decisions. If ten free associations (factories, territorial units, etc.) are federated into a larger association, the latter cannot impose anything on the member-associations under any circumstances. It is the members of the smaller associations who, by coming together, can decide on forms of cooperation and mutual aid, so the decision-making process goes from the bottom to the top.

Of course Bakunin is not against delegation in an absolute sense, so federation assemblies need not be plenary; but the mandate is always revocable and the mandatary must obey the assembly that appointed it.

THE COMMON MASTER OF A GENERATION OF REVOLUTIONARIES: HEGEL

At the time of Bakunin's death, a letter that Friedrich Engels sent to Charles Rapaport is very significant, in which the philosopher, after summarising the elements that distinguished his (and Marx's) thought from that of Bakunin, with whom he had polemised for half a century without relenting, concluded with these words at the end: 'But we must respect him - he understood Hegel'.

In fact, the German philosopher was the source from which an entire generation of revolutionaries drew, who through negation of negation gave the new ruling classes and the capitalist economic management system a hard time, proposing the alternative of an anarcho-communist-driven society.

Engels was aware of Hegel's importance and for this reason, despite their differences, saw Bakunin as a respectable interlocutor.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STATE AND ANARCHY

This is Bakunin's best-known text, in which he sets out his position in relation to the world contemporary to him: late 19th century Europe, from the point of view of a Russian thinker and anarchist. The interest in the fate of the Slavic world and the p r e o c u p a t i o n o f c o n t r a p p o s i t i o n shines through in Russia.

between Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism. But his interest is generally directed towards the whole world, with particular attention to that Europe in social ferment.
The workers' movements, the International and the impending Social Revolution are the historical and social conditions that frame his vision of the state. The text itself has no identifiable structure, but presents itself as a long series of interlinked dissertations on the most diverse topics of history, politics, social reflection and philosophy, as well as polemics with Marxists and against all institutions exercising authority.
In this discourse, anarchy is manifested as an ideal social model but, like any political doctrine devoted to action, considered truly realisable. In essence, this text can be seen as a kind of breviary of "epistemes", a source of slogans and strong concepts expressed within a discourse on the state as a source of oppression, a handbook of the anarchist revolutionary that finds much of its persuasive force in its structure that is also anarchic, without division into chapters and reasoned as a stream of consciousness, of which the recurring theme is the oppressor state and the need for the proletariat to get rid of it.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE STATE

> **"In short, the State on one side and the Social Revolution on the other, such are the two poles whose antagonism represents the very essence of current public life throughout Europe".**
>
> **(M. Bakunin, State and Anarchy, Feltrinelli, Milan 1968, p. 32)**

In this passage, Bakunin's position towards the state is clear, which, if it is not abolished, has no way out but to establish itself 'in its most sincere form possible today, namely in the form of a military dictatorship or an imperial regime'.

An anarchist poster in Thessaloniki with quotations from Bakunin: 'The spirit and desire to destroy the state and any kind of authority are not only not the result of an immature adolescent impulse, but are the manifestation of a natural passion for freedom, which rebounds from the depths of your souls'.

That is to say, in the historical moment of great social ferment and revolutionary experiences just past and destined to reappear in the aftermath of the Great War, the struggle between good and evil is the struggle between the state institution and thus the reactionary spirit of the bourgeois class and the Revolution, the instrument of the oppressed proletarian class.

According to these theories, the state as such, and only because it is an emanation and instrument of the exercise of authority, is the source of the domination that the bourgeoisie perpetrates against the people, defending social inequality and the division of labour, in which the real effort is borne by the proletariat, in which the profits from labour are pocketed by the bosses, in which authority, by means of violence, is always exercised by one class in spite of the other in every field, even through culture, which is not distributed equally and using the most disparate moral justifications, to always achieve the same result even in the republican state.

Bakunin says again:

"No state, however democratic its forms, even the reddest political republic, popular only in its false meaning known by the name of representation of the people, will ever be able to give the people what they want, namely the free organisation of their interests from the bottom up, without any interference, protection or violence from above, because every state, even the pseudo-people's state devised by Mr. Marx, represents in essence nothing more than the government of the masses from top to bottom by the intellectual minority, i.e. the most privileged minority, which claims to feel the ideal interests of the people more than the people itself "

This is perhaps one of the author's most original passages, in which he rails not only against economic inequality, but also against high culture, against the idealism of which the theories of Marx and Engels, but also of another well-known thinker of German social democracy, Wilhelm Liebknecht, continue to be the daughters, moreover, the substantial correspondence of interests with the authoritarian state and, to the limit, with nationalism, in participating in the political life of the Reich through the classical forms of the political party (the social democratic party, in fact) is highlighted: 'a party that is by no means popular, given that in terms of tendencies, aims and means of struggle it is a purely bourgeois party'.
The polemic with the Marxists directly touched Marx himself, whose notes we find around this very text and in which we can see the strong distance between two visions that deal with power from opposing perspectives: for Marx the beginning of the social revolution occurs with the destruction of the economic conditions of capitalism, the father of all class inequality, while Bakunin is concerned with the more immediate consequences of a revolution aimed at domination by the proletariat of the whole of society, since any submission to a state would not change the condition of the proletariat, which would continue to be dominated.
Another fundamental point about the state is that, in Bakunin's view,..:

"the state means violence, domination through violence. "

In this short passage, which indeed seems to be able to take the form of a slogan, we find what is a concept that will return again and again in the political theory of many epochs, not least legal theory, in which the state is seen as the only one authorised to the legitimate exercise of force.

Marx, always active in polemics with Bakunin, read his pamphlet ('State and Anarchy') and wrote comments on it. Here is an excerpt :

- **Bakunin: "Universal suffrage through which the entire people elect their representatives and the rulers of the state - this is the last word of the Marxists and the democratic school. All these are lies that conceal the despotism of a minority that holds the government, lies that are all the more dangerous because this minority presents itself as the expression of the so-called will of the people".**
- **Marx: 'With the collectivisation of property, the so-called popular will disappears to make way for the real will of the cooperative body'**
- **Bakunin: "Result: domination exercised over the great majority of the people by a minority of privileged people. But, say the Marxists, this minority will consist of workers. Yes, of course, but by former workers who, once they become representatives or rulers of the people, cease to be workers'.**
- **Marx: 'No more than an industrialist today ceases to be a capitalist when he becomes a member of the city council'**
- **Bakunin: "And from the top echelons of the state they begin to look down on the common world of the workers. From that point on they no longer represent the people, but only themselves and their own claims to rule the people. Those who question this show that they do not know human nature at all."**
- **Marx: 'If only Mr Bakunin had the slightest familiarity with even the position of an executive of a workers' co-operative, he would throw away all his nightmares about authority'.**

THE ANARCHY

Self-portrait of the young Bakunin (1838)

According to anarchist theory, given that every form of state is a form of class domination (no matter what the class, bourgeoisie, aristocracy of the intellect, or monarchy, or whatever) the question arises, what then is the ideal society for Bakunin?

In general, his interest is for a form of self-government, an administration of oneself and of society that goes from the bottom up, in the belief that only in this way can the people be given freedom to truly decide what is best for themselves, the people being the only ones who can truly know what this best is. However, a political project for organising society that is an alternative to the state is not absent:

"First of all, the abolition of misery, poverty, and the complete satisfaction of all material needs by means of collective labour, compulsory and equal for all; and then the abolition of masters and of every kind of authority, the free organisation of the life of the country in relation to the needs of the people, not from the top down according to the example of the state, but from the bottom up, taken care of by the people themselves outside of all governments and parliaments; the free union of the associations of the workers of the land and factories, of the communes, of the provinces, of the nations; and finally, in a not distant future, the fraternity of all mankind triumphant over the ruin of all states "

(M. Bakunin, State and Anarchy, Feltrinelli, Milan 1968, p. 45)

How to justify the presence of an obligation for everyone to work without a guarantor authority? One way to resolve the apparent contradiction is to consider Bakunin's vision from the perspective of populism, which had a good following in Russia at the time, thanks to which Marx's Capital entered that country only five years after its first edition in Germany.
Of populism, Bakunin seems to share Bakunin's exaltation of the life of the peasantry, of their superiority over the more corrupt urban proletariat interested in centralisation on the statist model. The peasant is ultimately ignorant and pure, living in the mir, an agricultural community typical of Russia, which can still be imagined as a 'Gemeinschaft', from which can then emanate that authority necessary to guarantee the compulsory nature of work, which is manual labour, for all. Or one must assume that for Bakunin man is naturally good, non-aggressive and lives by categorical imperatives. This second view does not seem sharable, especially taking into account his vision of the Social Revolution (see below). To clarify the problem, this other passage intervenes well:

"We have neither the intention nor the slightest ambition to impose on our people, or on any other people, any ideal of social organisation taken from books or invented by ourselves, but, persuaded that the popular masses carry within themselves, in the more or less developed instincts of their history, in their daily needs and in their conscious or unconscious aspirations, all the elements of their future natural organisation, we seek this ideal in the people themselves; and since every power of State, every government, by its very essence and by its position outside or above the people, must necessarily aim at subordinating it to an organisation and ends that are alien to it we declare ourselves enemies of every government, of every power of State, enemies of all state organisation in general, and we are convinced that the people can only be happy and free when by organising themselves from the bottom up by means of independent organisations absolutely free and outside all official tutelage, but not outside the diverse and equally free influences of men and parties, they themselves create their own life. "

(M. Bakunin, *State and Anarchy*, Feltrinelli, Milan 1968, p. 167-168)

CRITICS

Bakunin was accused of being a cryptic authoritarian.

In his letter to Albert Richard, he wrote that 'there is one power and one dictatorship whose organisation is healthy and flexible: it is that collective and invisible dictatorship of those who are allied in the name of our principle'. However, Bakunin's followers claim that this 'invisible dictatorship' is used in a metaphorical sense and is not a dictatorship in the conventional sense of the word. Indeed, Bakunin was careful to point out that its members would not wield any official political power: 'this dictatorship will be much healthier and more effective by not being clothed with any official power or inherent character'.

The anarchist historian Max Nettlau describes Bakunin's Panslavism as the result of a nationalist psychosis from which few are exempt. A revolutionary and activist during the uprisings in the Peoples' Spring, following the Dresden Uprising of May 1849, Bakunin was arrested, interned first in the fortress

of Peter and Paul of St. Petersburg, and then transferred to Siberia, managing to escape in 1861.

The publication of *Confession* of 1851, written, or extorted, as one can easily guess, during the first part of his twelve years of tsarist imprisonment, was used to attack Bakunin, since in that text he asked the Emperor for mercy for his sins and pleaded with him to lead the Slavs both as father and redeemer.
Bakunin was a staunch opponent of economic power in the hands of families of Jewish tradition, which earned him accusations of anti-Semitism.
Bakunin manifested these sentiments in his debate with Karl Marx; he claimed that Marxian communism, together with the international banking cartels associated with the Rothschild family, was part of a globally exploitative Jewish organisation:
"This Jewish world, consisting of a single exploitative sect, a race of blood-sucking people, a kind of organic destructive collective parasite, which goes not only beyond the frontiers of states, but [also] of political opinion, this world is now, at least to a large extent, in the service of Marx on the one hand, and of the Rotschilds on the other... this may seem strange. What can there be in common between socialism and a central bank? The point is that authoritarian socialism, Marxist communism, requires a strong centralisation of the state. And where there is centralisation of the state there must necessarily be a central bank, and where such a bank exists, the parasitic Jewish nation can be found, in the act of speculating on the Work of the People'.
Bakunin's anti-Semitism could in turn derive from Proudhon's, considering the French thinker's considerable influence on Bakunin.
Similarly, however, it should be emphasised that Karl Marx himself expressed this view, where in personal letters he spoke of "Ramsgate full of fleas and Jews", as did many fundamental thinkers of the modern era, such as Kant ("Judaism does not constitute a confession but a separate Republic", *Critique of Practical Reason*; in *Anthropology* he defined the "Palestinians living among us" as

"tricksters"), or Hegel, who merely theorised "the inferiority of Judaism to Christianity" and Arthur Schopenhauer ("Judaism and the Bible represented the wrong pole"). These expressions are probably to be placed in a general context of identification between Judaism and the ruling classes.
His Eurocentrism manifested itself in his wish for the creation of the United States of Europe, in his support for Russian colonialism, particularly that practised by his relative and protector Count Nikolay Muravyov-Amursky, and in his indifference to Japan and the Japanese peasants during and after his brief stay in Yokohama (Japan was recognised as the Asian nation most predisposed to revolution following the Meiji Renewal of 1866-1869). Probably, however, the term 'United States of Europe' should be used in the sense that revolutionary republicans (as Bakunin was as a young man) ascribed to the era of the International Workers' Association, i.e. the brotherhood of all workers on the Continent (as described by Kropotkin in the 2nd book of his 'Memoirs of a Revolutionary').

MICHAIL BAKUNIN IN LITERATURE

Michail Bakunin is the protagonist of Riccardo Bacchelli's novel *Il diavolo al Pontelungo*, published in 1927.
Michail Bakunin is among the protagonists of English playwright Tom Stoppard's play 'The Coast of Utopia', which traces the thirty-five years of Russian history from 1833 to 1868, together with other members of the Russian intelligencija of those years, such as revolutionary and philosopher Aleksandr Ivanovič Herzen, literary critic Vissarion Grigor'evič Belinskij, novelist Ivan Sergeevič Turgenev and others.

I like to quote CINEMATOGRAPHIC QUOTES

- **In the 1982 four-part television miniseries *Il diavolo al Pontelungo*, directed by Pino Passalacqua, based on the novel of the same name by Riccardo Bacchelli, Bakunin is played by Paolo Bonacelli. Carlo Cafiero is played by Flavio Bucci. Other actors Rolanda Benac, Nando Gazzolo, Micaela**

Pignatelli, Mariolina Bovo, Giampiero Albertini, Massimo Ghini[30][31].

- In Sergio Leone's film *Giù la testa*, Mallory (James Coburn) talks to Juan Miranda (Rod Steiger) about the revolution and eventually throws away the book he was reading: Bakunin's *The Patriotism.*
- In the film *La Grande Guerra (The Great War)* by Mario Monicelli, with Alberto Sordi and Vittorio Gassman, the latter mentions: '...but have you ever read Bakunin?... ah well, at the first difficult name they mark a visit'.
- In the film *Il figlio di Bakunin (Bakunin's Son)* by Gianfranco Cabiddu, based on the book of the same name by the Sardinian writer Sergio Atzeni, the owner of a shoemaker's shop in a small village of miners lives with a libertarian and independent spirit, to the point of having received the nickname Bakunin from everyone.
- In the 1992 film *Morte di un matematico napoletano (Death of a Neapolitan Mathematician)* by Mario Martone, the story is told of Renato Caccioppoli, an Italian mathematician, the son of Giuseppe (1852-1947), a well-known Neapolitan surgeon, and his second wife Sofia Bakunina (1870-1956), daughter of Michail Bakunin. In particular, the film deals with the last moments of Caccioppoli's life and suicide.
- In Marco Tullio Giordana's 2012 film *Romanzo di una strage (Romanzo of a Massacre)*, Questore Marcello Guida invites Commissioner Luigi Calabresi not to ask questions, but rather to grill '...all these Bakunin...' (frequenters of the anarchist club Ponte della Ghisolfa, including Giuseppe Pinelli and Pietro Valpreda) about the events of Piazza Fontana.

20. JOYCE

In this roundup of neighbours we also include him somewhat forcibly because it is on the Brissago Islands that he writes the part about the sorceress Circe, even though the Islands are more than 300m away. Well, allow me to say this also because Joyce is interested in Theosophy and so ...

From a Catholic and nationalist family, he had left Ireland in 1904 to come and study in Italy, where he met Italo Svevo, with whom an important friendship soon developed. During the First World War he moved to Zurich and later to Paris, spending most of his life in voluntary exile. He rejoiced in his exile status, which to him seemed to echo the fate of the great Italian poet, Dante Alighieri.
After his first works, the short stories *Dubliners* and the novel *Dedalus*, Joyce achieved success in 1922 with the *Uyisses*, in which all the episodes narrated correspond to the events of the Homeric poem, but where the protagonist is no longer the hero engaged in memorable deeds, but rather the ordinary man, the modern man who has to face the problems of everyday existence.
The numerous symbolic correspondences found in the text reveal how fascinated the author was by the medieval conception of art as allegory, and also refer to other literary works, including the *Divine Comedy*. The work, a long interior monologue, also betrays the influence of Freud's emerging psychoanalysis.
Inaugurating completely new narrative modes, which attest to the definitive crisis of the 19th century novel, Joyce is universally recognised as one of the most revolutionary authors of the 20th century. The revolutionary scope of his work extends to language, which, in order to better restore the rhythm of the 'stream of consciousness', undergoes a radical deconstruction: in the last part of *Ulysses*, Joyce had suppressed punctuation; in *Finnegans Wake,* his last work, of 1941, he even distorts the words, creating an almost indecipherable text.

Was Joyce interested in 16th-century occultism or in the occult revival of the 19th century closer to him, such as theosophy?

Joyce gets at everything. In the 1920s she had a book by Rudolf Steiner on the occult significance of blood, pamphlets by Annie Besant and a copy of the *Occult Review*.
Or you could consider the fact, but this is my somewhat provocative theory, that *Ulysses is* set on 16 June 1904 which would be the day Joyce dates the girl who makes him a man and then marries him, et cetera. But on 16 June 1885 the Dublin Hermetic Society was founded in Dublin, which later merged into the Theosophical Society of Annie Besant, and Madame Blavatsky. For some reason our Enlightenment critics glossed over this kind of knowledge, considering it second rate, whereas it is fundamental.
Fundamental because Joyce writes a secret book that you can easily read as a short story with a very simple *plot*, nothing happens in *Ulysses*. But it is important what is behind it, what you can find behind a writing that has to be unveiled, and *Isis Unveiled is* a well-known book by Madame Blavatsky. And you are forced to go deeper and deeper because behind every mask there is another mask, as in Ibsen's Peer Gynt, an author beloved by Joyce.

21 HENRY CORBIN

Henry Corbin (Paris, 14 April 1903 - Paris, 7 October 1978) was a orientalista toric French philosophy, translator, philologist, Islamist and Iranist.

A multifaceted figure of French Orientalism, his work is characterised by an acute interpretation of Arabic and Persian texts of Islamic philosophy. He himself has always refused to call himself an Islamologist, preferring to describe his work as that of a philosopher working on the works of other philosophers. Towards the end of the 1930s, he also became known for his translation of Heidegger's work published in 1937 under the title "Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?", the first French translation of the German philosopher who was then still little known in his own country.

In the course of his research, he traversed different areas of the Islamic tradition, from the thought of the Persian philosopher Sohravardī, to the mysticism of the Sufi master Ibn Arabi, to the theology of Mullā Sadrā Shīrāzī. I think it is important to delve into Ibn Arabi, who inspired me a lot with his depth.

Ibn Arabi: "The Perfect Man (Universal Man) or al-Insān al-Kāmil" was profoundly discussed in written form by Ibn ʿArabī in one of his most prolific works entitled Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam.The assumption o f an idea already common within Sufi culture is applied by Ibn ʿArabī to the profound analysis and reflection on the subject of the Perfect Man and the quest for the realisation of this goal. In developing his explanation of perfect being, Ibn ʿArabī first discusses the question of the Oneness of Existence through the metaphor of the mirror. In this metaphor, Ibn ʿArabī compares an object that is reflected in countless mirrors to the relationship between God and his creatures. The essence of God is seen in the existing human being, as God is the object and human beings are the mirrors. This means two things, that since human beings are mere reflections of God there can be no distinction or separation between the two and without God creatures would be non-existent. When an individual realises that there is no separation between man and God, the path to ultimate unity begins. Whoever decides to walk in the direction of such unity pursues true reality and responds to God's desire to be known. The search within this reality of unity brings about a reunion with God, as well as an improvement in self-awareness.

The Perfect Man, through this development of self-awareness and self-realisation, requires divine self-manifestation. In this way, the Perfect Man becomes both divine and earthly in origin. Ibn ʿArabī calls this the 'isthmus'. Being the isthmus between heaven and earth, the Perfect Man fulfils God's desire to be known and God's presence can be realised through Him by others. Moreover, through self-manifestation, one acquires divine knowledge, which is the primordial spirit of Muhammad and all his perfection. Ibn ʿArabī adds that the Perfect Man conveys the divine spirit to the cosmos.

Ibn ʿArabī also explained the Perfect Man using at least twenty-two different descriptions and various aspects when considering the Logos. Ibn ʿArabī contemplates the Logos, or 'Universal Man', as a mediation between the human individual and the divine essence.

Man in Ibn ʿArabī is the perfect image of the completed creation: 'Who created you, then moulded and shaped you harmoniously? He formed you in the way He willed'. Man's outer image somewhat resembles the world and its macrocosmic dimensions. His inner faculties (intellect, imagination, etc.) bear a resemblance to the higher spheres. The outer and inner resemblance is constantly mentioned in the various chapters of the Futūḥāt as well as in the Mawāqiʿ al-Nujūm (The Setting of the Stars) and the Tadbīrāt al-Ilāhiyya (The Divine Dispositions). Before Ibn ʿArabī, many philosophers, such as the Brothers of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa) and Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), settled on their metaphysical human face of the universe and the cosmological aspect of man.

Ibn ʿArabī means for man a high and distinct degree, that of the Perfect Man (the Quṭb, the Pole), who has philosophical knowledge and mystical experience. Human perfection is associated with the divine image that provides the esoteric secrets of acting upon the creature. Furthermore, the presence of man in the creature contributes to the perfection of its image. The Perfect Man differs from the common man (Ibn ʿArabī speaks of "animal-man" because of his anatomical and physiological characteristics) in that it is he alone, through the appropriation of the Divine Names, who has the creative will and command of the world. Moreover, the Perfect Man is distinguished by the spiritual energy or aspiration (Arabic: himma) that is his instrument of creation. It represents, in the man-animal, the manual side in his products and dispositions.

Apart from belonging to the spiritual entity, the Perfect Man is also distinguished by 'lordship' (khilāfa). He is thus vicarious (khalīfa) and

successor (nāʾib), as being in control of all names and a reduced copy of cosmic and metaphysical reality. This verse teaches us this truth: "He taught Adam all the names".

If God is qualified as a 'hidden treasure', He is hidden behind the form of a Perfect Man and manifests Himself with His Theophany in that perfect form. Being the epiphanic place, the Perfect Man knows himself and knows his Lord who appears in him unlike the animal-man who knows the higher reality through the intermediary of cosmic proofs and signs erected in the world. Meditation on these signs does not go beyond speculative effort alone in him. Rather, the Perfect Man contemplates these signs within him and extracts the pearls of the treasure hidden in his soul. He thus combines meditation and contemplation. This effort of contemplation culminates in the experience of the different modes of (Ḥaḍara) Divine presence. The universal or perfect man is the one who reaches the threshold of the 'Total Presence' (al-Ḥaḍarāt al-jāmʿiyya) that encompasses all other forms of presence and synthesises, actualises, and integrates from an existential point of view the infinite qualities of the divine names that contain the perspective of the principle.

His view of Islam is characterised by the importance attributed to Shiism, both i n its Duodeciman and Ishmaelite versions, which according to Corbin represents the 'original phenomenon' (the phenomenological Urphänomen), from which any form of speculative thought in the Islamic context develops.

Early years in Paris

At the age of 19, in 1922, he obtained a licentiate in scholastic philosophy at the Institut catholique de Paris. His adherence to Protestantism dates back to this period, perhaps due to dissatisfaction with the training he received in a Catholic environment.

He enrolled at the École pratique des hautes études where he was a student of Étienne Gilson, who introduced him to the history of Latin Avicennism, which was the reason behind his decision to take up the study o f Arabic. In 1923, he attended Émile Bréhier's course on the

relationship between thought

neo-Platonism of Plotinus and the Upaniṣad of Brahmanical India, and decided to begin the study of Sanskrit, which he would, however, abandon after only two years.

In 1927, under the pseudonym of 'Trong-ni', he published his first article, Regard vers l'Orient, which foreshadowed the whole future bent of his thought, and in which he did not fail to express his admiration for thinkers such as René Guénon and Ananda Coomaraswamy, whose interest in the American Transcendentalists such as R. W. Emerson (1803-1882), H. D. Thoreau (1817-1862), W. Whitman (1819-1892) should be noted. Coomaraswamy felt in them a spiritual tension akin to his own. Not surprisingly, they were greatly influenced by Eastern thought: Hinduism, Sufism, Taoism, Confucianism were well known to them. Strengthened by this doctrinal, almost sapiential background, Emerson and the others in the group reinforced their polemic against the rationalism and psychological sensectivism of Locke and Hume, which were widespread at the time. Indeed, the Transcendentalists had very little that was 'American', at least in the current sense of that term. Coomaraswamy was also fascinated by the world of the Redskins, whose mythology he later studied with great rigour. He became interested in the movement of the Shakers, quasi-monastic Christian communities, recent though now extinct at the time the author studied them, who produced a craftsmanship that was truly representative of a very high spirituality: severe, impersonal, devoid of surface decoration, but characterised by a harmonious relationship between the parts and a perfect formal unity.

The year 1929 would prove to be a turning point for Corbin. After graduating in Arabic, Persian and Turkish from the Ecole française d'Éxtrême-Orient, on 12 October, during a meeting of the Amis de l'Orient group, he met Louis Massignon, who in fact initiated him into 'oriental theosophy', giving him an edition of Sohravardī's Hikmat al-Ishraq, a book that would guide his philosophical vocation and mark his destiny as a scholar and a man forever. Thus Corbin recalls the words addressed to him by Louis Massignon: 'Tenez - me dit-il - je crois qu'il y a dans ce livre quelque chose puor vous'.

The German Period

Throughout the 1930s he made several sojourns in Germany, and under the guidance of Jean Baruzi deepened various aspects of Protestant philosophy and theology. These were years of deep immersion in German culture and during which he was frantically active as a translator. In addition to some of his own contributions, both on Islam and philosophy, he translates and publishes numerous contributions by other authors in specialist journals. He translates and comments on, among others, Barth, Brentano, Dilthey, Van der Leeuw, Heschel, Jaspers and Kierkegaard.

As far as Van der Leeuw's thinking is concerned (and I have to find the connection to our theosophist J. J, Van der Leeuw of 'Gods in Exile'). :

Gerardus van der Leeuw's work moved along the path of religious studies opened by two other internationally renowned Dutch scholars: Cornelis Petrus Tiele (1830-1902) and Pierre Daniël Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848-1920). If Tiele was among the first scholars to believe that religious experience should be related to man's psychological nature rather than historical processes, Chantepie de la Saussaye pointed out how the very comparison of religions in their historical evolution brought out common structural data such as myths, rituals and beliefs.

Interested in the studies of Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) and those of Nathan Söderblom (1866-1931), like these authors, van der Leeuw also analysed the problem of religion according to the experience of religion. In this, van der Leeuw also followed the approach of other intellectuals contemporary with him, e.g. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), from whom he inherited two concepts: the epoché, i.e. the suspension of judgement on the observed phenomenon, and the 'eidetic' understanding, to grasp the fundamental elements of the observed phenomenon. In philosophical language, this concerns knowledge or (with direct connection to the original verb: root εἰδ- "to see") visuality. In E. Husserl's phenomenology, intuition e., the intellectual insight into essences; reduction e., the act of bringing phenomena present in consciousness back to their pure objective essences. Van der Leeuw was indebted to the German Gestalt

Psychology to which he owes the interpretative matrix, 'ensembleism', in his investigation of experience

religious ("The whole is different from the sum of its parts") . The last element that van deer Leeuw placed at the foundation of the Phenomenology of Religion was hermeneutics, that is, the need to 'understand' (Verstehen) from within the religious phenomenon and experience rather than explaining it causally (Erklären) as a production of historical processes, following in this the footsteps of critical thinkers of Positivism such as Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911).

In Phänomenologie der Religion, van der Leeuw described religion as a 'power' in the making, that is, in search of its fulfilment. Beginning with the 'object', whether through mana or taboo, religion manifests itself as 'power' by virtue of the feeling of awe that the 'object' engenders, whether this is represented by a stone, a chieftain, a tree or fire. This 'potency' of the 'object' is such because it conveys enigmas about destiny. The mana or manas is a term of Melanesian origin found in many Austronesian languages (Melanesian and Polynesian) that generally means
'supernatural force', 'spiritual power', 'symbolic efficacy', and can be translated as 'life force'.

Evocative ritual of a 'reindeer shaman' from the Siberian regions (illustration by Dutch cartographer Nicolaes Witsen, 1692)

Mana could be accumulated in combat, through the art of rhetoric, or by eating an enemy. Great tribal leaders sought and possessed large amounts of mana. It is also a Hawaiian term meaning 'strength from within'.

Returning to Corbin, religion subsequently evolves thanks to the enigma of death and, from the 'object', it moves on to the 'subject': by enhancing and intervening in life and its social aspects, religion is thereby internalised. The third and final phase of this evolutionary process of religion is manifested in the unity and totality that van der Leeuw expresses through the concept of the 'anima' (fundus animae), which is the bearer of the sacred itself and where the object and the subject find their synthesis, representing both the 'interior' and the 'exterior', or the overcoming of duality.

"The fundus animae is the place where God and the soul are one, the one and the same. "The fundus animae is the last possible representation of the soul. It is not even a representation any more; this shows that the man who seeks the soul does not ultimately seek it; what he seeks is always something that lies further away, beyond, epekeina. Very close, yet externally elevated, sublime, God rests in man, there where his unspeakable coincides with man's supreme unspeakable".

(Gerardus van der Leuuw. Phenomenology of Religion. Turin, Boringhieri, 2007 p.241)

Corbin In Hamburg, he came into contact with Cassirer, whose 'philosophy of symbolic forms' was to prove fundamental to the elaboration of the notion of mundus immaginalis.

To 1934 dates his in-depth study of Heidegger's thought, whom he met personally in Freiburg in April of the same year and in July 1936. He translated the text on Hölderlin, the inaugural lecture of the 1929 semester on metaphysics, and the chapters of Being and Time on the notion of being-for-death. The booklet came out in 1938, with the title Qu'est- ce que la métaphysique?, accompanied by an introduction. It is by far the

first French translation of Heidegger, who was almost unknown in France at the time.

The Journey to the Orient

In 1939, the National Library, where he had been working as an Orientalist since 1928, commissioned him to find all of Sohravardī's manuscripts in the National Library in Istanbul. He left for Istanbul on 30 October, accompanied by his wife Stella Leenhardt Corbin and Julien Cain, then director of the library. The undertaking, which should have taken three months, instead lasted six years.

In 1945, after receiving a mission order from the Governorate of Algeria, then a French colony, he left Istanbul and set off for Persia, on a long overland journey through Baghdad and the Zagros Mountains. On 14 September, he arrived in a Tehran that had a population of 800,000 at the time. Again, his assignment was supposed to last for only three months, but his relationship with Iran was destined to last forever, and his stay in Tehran, albeit on and off, was in fact for the rest of his life.

Here, Corbin came into contact with the spiritual universe of Shia Islam, founded a department of Iranistics in annex to the Institut français, and with the help of some Iranian collaborators worked on the "Bibliothèque iranienne', consisting of the French-language publication of unpublished Persian and Arabic classics.

In 1954, the Council of the Religious Sciences Section of the École pratique des hautes études called him to succeed Louis Massignon as director of the Department of Islam and Religions of Arabia. Concerned that he would have to abandon his research activities in Tehran, Corbin obtained a regular leave of absence, allowing him to spend all of the autumn semesters in Iran, from September to December, thus being able to continue his research. Maintaining contact with his 'small and lively' Department of Iranistics in Tehran would prove fundamental to the quality of his teaching at the Ecole pratique: the majority of his courses in Paris were in fact held using materials, sometimes unpublished and manuscripts, directly from the 'Bibliothèque iranienne'

of Tehran. In this regard, Corbin's administration was accused of turning the Department of Religious Sciences into a chair of Shiism.

Of 1964-1965 is his collaboration with Sayyed Jalaloddin Ashtiyani, an eminent figure in contemporary Iranian Shiism, a professor at the theological faculty of Mashhad University, and considered by Corbin to be the heir of Mulla Sadra. The project envisaged the publication of an extensive 'anthology of Iranian philosophers from the 17th century to the present day', largely composed of as yet unpublished manuscripts, collected and introduced by Sayyed Jalaloddin Ashtiyani, and reviewed and summarised by Corbin with a view to their publication in French.

From Iran to Eranos

At the beginning of 1949, he was invited by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn to attend the meetings of the Eranos group, which she founded in 1932 on the inspiration of Rudolf Otto, in Ascona, on the shores of Lake Maggiore. The experience of Eranos, a veritable 'school of spiritual research' in which academics of the calibre of Mircea Eliade, Gerschom Scholem, D.T Suzuki, James Hillman and Gerardus van der Leeuw would participate, would prove to be of fundamental importance for Corbin, who would not cease to be a fervent animator until his death.

Particularly significant for him was his meeting and friendship with the Swiss psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, in his eyes the first scholar in a Western context to have intuited the existence of a 'world of subtle bodies', which Corbin seems to equate with his notion of mundus immaginalis. Between 1970 and 1973, he also taught at the Ticino Institute for Advanced Studies in Lugano, Switzerland.

Spiritual chivalry

In 1974, with the collaboration of some friends and university colleagues, he was among the founders of an 'International Centre for Comparative Spiritual Research', which was given the name 'St. John of Jerusalem University'. "University" to emphasise how it was the fruit of the collaboration of university researchers, "Jerusalem" as the holy city of the three Abrahamic religions, and "St. John" in reference to the order of the Knights of St. John to which Rulman belonged

Merswin, a German mystic whose project of 'spiritual chivalry' the institute drew on.

The purpose of the foundation was to foster Abrahamic ecumenism through the creation of a research hotbed to promote the study, comparison, and spiritual development of the gnostic and esoteric traditions of the three great monotheistic religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

From this same period, and strongly intertwined with the programme of a 'spiritual chivalry', is Corbin's adherence to Freemasonry, often unspoken but now exhaustively documented, which sees him initiated in the Rectified Scottish Rite, a member of a lodge in Saint-Germain en Laye. Corbin was in fact initiated into Freemasonry in the lodge Les Compagnons du Sept No. 3, belonging to the French National Grand Lodge-Opéra, on 5 May 1962, Companion in 1963, and became Master in 1964. In the Rectified Scottish Rite, he became Scottish Master of Saint Andrew's in 1972, Novice Squire in January 1973 and Beneficial Knight of the Holy City (CBCS) on 15 September 1973, with the order name of Eques ab insula viride.

He died in Paris in 1978, the same year as the Iranian Revolution, concerned about the situation that would lead to the establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran within a few months. Although he lived and died in the Protestant confession of Calvinist tendency, and considered his point of view to be that of a 'westerner', Corbin never made a secret of his adherence to the spiritual universe of Shiite esotericism.

The work

The merit of Corbin's research was to have rediscovered the Gnostic tradition of Shiite Islam, a submerged philosophical continent unknown to the Orientalists of his time, thus showing how Islamic philosophy, far from being reduced to the 'Hellenised' Arab philosophers and ending with the peripateticism of Averroes, experienced a further period of flowering from the 12th century onwards, not in the Arab West but in the Persian East. Corbin also contributed to a more adequate understanding of the phenomenon of Sufism, of which he was able to bring out the dimension

authentically Islamic, refusing to reduce it to the categories of Christian spirituality, or the convenient label of syncretism.

With his exegesis, Corbin shows the originality and importance of this tradition over the centuries.

Themes such as that of knowledge and visionary storytelling, the imaginal world and creative imagination, understood as theophanic faculties ("manifestation of divinity" in sensible form), the spiritual body and the heavenly earth, angelology and the drama unfolding in the heavens, are intellectual creations whose development has no equivalent in the Western philosophical tradition, on which is based what Corbin calls a prophetic philosophy, based on the spiritual hermeneutics of the Book, which finds its closest Christian equivalent in Jakob Böhme.
This prophetic philosophy should be regarded as a theosophy capable of reconciling man's visionary faculties with his rational ones.

Corbin's work also goes beyond historical exegesis and acquires a new dimension when he considers this tradition as a possible shelter against the mortal danger to spirituality constituted by secularisation and desacralisation, a danger of which Western nihilism seems to represent the ultimate end.
For Corbin, Shiite esotericism is no less than Abrahamic esotericism, of which it is indeed one of the culminations, and possesses an ever-valid propositional force, capable of drawing the spiritual quest out of the metaphysical blind alley represented by dogmatic theological systems which, by reifying God, make him the metaphysical idol (the Supreme Being) against which atheism is hurled after the weakening of the temporal power of the Christian Churches.

Corbin's work continues through his pupil Christian Jambet, who, without calling it into question, showed how, alongside this esoteric strand, the Shiite tradition also entailed a kalām, i.e. a dogmatic theology that cannot be disregarded when one wants to understand the origins of sectarianism and Islamic fundamentalism, of which Khomeini's Iranian Revolution was for Corbin the most recent manifestation.

21. JACOB BÖHME

Böhme was certainly not a neighbour in the physical sense of the term, but as usual I am taking philosophical licence and adding him to the list because he was close philosophically and then because he was one of the sources of Theosophy before the Theosophical Society. It is important to situate Theosophical thought in a broad sense and Böhme is a good representative.

Jacob Böhme (Alt Seidenberg, 24 April 1575 - Görlitz, 17 November 1624). German philosopher, theologian, mystic and Lutheran. He was one of the leading exponents of modern Christian mysticism and was called 'Philosophus teutonicus' by his contemporaries.

Jacob Böhme, born in 1575 in Germany, was an important German philosopher, theologian and mystic, known as the 'Philosophus teutonicus'. After working as a shoemaker and merchant, he devoted himself entirely to mystical-religious research in the last years of his life. Despite his modest education, he wrote several texts in which he explored his mystical experiences and his view of God and creation. Böhme believed that man can understand the mystery of God and emphasised a divine Trinitarian vision. His works, influenced by 16th century mysticism and natural philosophy, often used alchemical images and metaphors. Although little mentioned in philosophy textbooks, Böhme influenced later thinkers such as Spinoza, Hegel,

Schelling, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Jacob Böhme was born in April 1575 in the German town of Seidenberg, now part of Sulików. A farmer's son, he briefly attended school in the village where he was born, then was sent to nearby Görlitz to learn the trade of shoemaking, which he practised as a master in a workshop near the wall at the Neiße gate until around 1613.

Over the next seven years he combined preaching with business activities, and only in the last four years of his life would he devote himself exclusively to mystical-religious research.
In 1599, he married a butcher's daughter, Catharina Kunschmanns, by whom he had four children. Otherwise he led the modest life of a meek and patient man as far as he could.

Böhme's Tomb in Görlitz

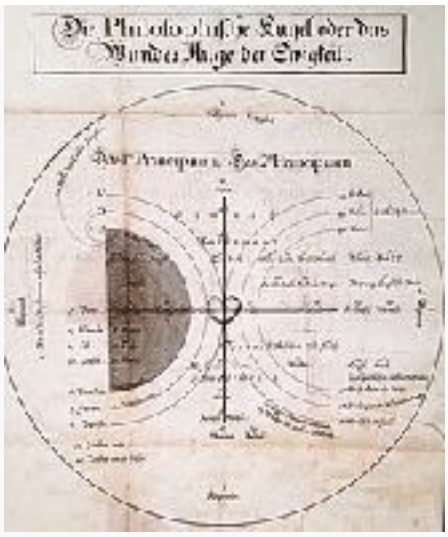
The circulation of his first work, manuscripted and published without his knowledge by an admirer, attracted the mistrust of the pastor of Görlitz, Gregorius Richter, who accused him of heresy and remained his lifelong opponent. When, in 1624, Böhme was called to Dresden to justify his works before a gathering of clergymen, his writings were banned. Richter died just a few months before Böhme, allowing the latter to die, in turn, rehabilitated, thanks to the evangelical confession collected by the new pastor.

His mystical experience, the very fact that he spoke about it and endeavoured to describe it, had been a major scandal in his country, exposing him to attacks from the local religious community, which went so far as to outrage his tomb after his death. On the other hand, he also had many supporters on a personal level, who

worshipped to the point of almost making him an object of worship. Among his followers was the theologian and astronomer Johan Jacob Zimmerman.

Mysticism and thought

Böhme had received a strict Lutheran education, as was normal in his country and social class. Because of his poor education, he said of himself: "I have only read one book, my book, inside me". The need to communicate his mystical experiences, however, drove him towards books and writing. He himself reported having such experiences on three different occasions (1600, 1610, 1617), and how they also involved him physically for several days. Böhme was convinced that man had the capacity to comprehend the mystery of God, which he conceived of as the formless, original reality from which creation comes to life. For this reason, his mysticism could hardly be reconciled with Protestant Christianity, as it challenged the theological crux of the Reformation, which points to the Bible as the only source of contact between man and God, emphasising the unattainability of the latter in other ways. It was precisely for this reason that Lutheranism, being in those decades all bent on founding its own theology in antagonism to that of Rome, did not admit the possibility of the sanctification of the individual man except in the afterlife, and therefore judged negatively the veneration of which Böhme was the object.



Bipolar spheres or 'phases' of Böhme's cosmogony,

drawn by him in Forty Questions on the Soul (1620)

In some respects he appeared closer to the positions of Catholicism, which recognises the possibility of a natural theology and a direct, immediate and personal contact with the divinity, although Böhme departed from it in his exaltation of the primacy of faith. His deep veneration for the Virgin Mary is nevertheless attested.

According to Böhme, in God there is a polarity of opposing forces: on the one hand, He is Nothingness, an unfathomable and indeterminate abyss, from which, however, springs an irrepressible desire for life, through which the different realities in which Creation takes shape. God encompasses both Good and Evil, spirit and matter, light and darkness. Referring back to the Neo-Platonic tradition that saw in God the unity of contraries, as a power dynamically realised in the world, Böhme nevertheless goes beyond the Augustinian conception of evil understood as simple non-being, recognising also the positivity of the negative.

> **"The One, the 'Yes', is pure power, is the life and truth of God, or God Himself. God, however, would be unknowable to Himself and there would be no joy or perception in Him, were it not for the presence of the 'No'. The latter is the antithesis, or opposite, of the positive or truth; it allows this to become manifest, and this is only possible because it is the opposite in which eternal love can become active and perceptible."**
>
> **(Jacob Böhme, Theosophical Questions, III, 2)**

In his work, Böhme particularly emphasises a Trinitarian view of God (God-Christ-Man), which derives from the mutual clash of his Will and Counter-Will, and in which, among other things, Kabbalistic and numerological motifs converge, linked to Hermetic influences.

The writings

Böhme's readings were those of an autodidact, particularly oriented towards knowledge of the German mystics (Meister Eckhart among them), and 16th century natural philosophy, strongly imbued with magic and alchemy, and conveyed through Paracelsus.

The clash-attraction between i two principles opposites, depicted in the alchemical manuscripts of the Aurora Consurgens

His first written work was Morgenröte im Aufgang (also known as Aurora consurgens, or the Rising Dawn), which began circulating in 1618. In it, using the imagery and metaphors of alchemy, Böhme described the development of the self from its initial condition of darkness and immersion in matter, through a long and painful process of annihilation, transformation and resurrection, to the final light of awakening.

In the following years they appeared:

- **1619: Of the Three Principles of Divine Being.**
- **1620: Of the Triple Life of Man. Forty Questions on the Soul or True Psychology. Of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Six Theosophical Points. Of the celestial and terrestrial mystery. Of the last times.**
- **1621: Of the Four Complexions. Apologetic Books against Balthazar Tilken. Memoir for Escias Stiefel.**
- **1622: De Signatura Rerum. Of True Penance. Of True Abandonment. Of regeneration. Of Penance.**
- **1623: Of the Election of Grace. Mysterium Magnum of Genesis.**
- **1624: Table of Principles. Of the Hyperphysical Life. Of Divine Contemplation. Of the Two Testaments of Christ. Dialogue of an enlightened soul with an unenlightened one. Apology against Gregorius Richter. Of 177 Theosophical Questions. Extracts from the Mysteriunm Magnum. Small Manual of Prayers. Table of the Three Worlds. Of the Error of Ezekiel Meth. Of the Last Judgement. Letters to various persons.**

Böhme's fortune

Although Böhme is scarcely mentioned in philosophy textbooks, his writings contain many elements that would later be developed by German metaphysical thought: already with Spinoza of the immediately following generation, and then in the 19th century with Hegel (who considered him "the first German philosopher") and above all Schelling, whom he influenced in particular in his second philosophy; then Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), transcendentalists such as Emerson and Thoreau , Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) to Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) contain echoes of his reflections.

His thought had a major influence on the evolution of the theosophical and mystical strand of Romantic thought that ran through Northern Europe into the 20th century. See other texts cited here

23. ARCADIA

Arcadia not Utopia!

Contrary to what we have heard so far, the term 'utopia', coined by Thomas More, does not have the same connotation as the term Arcadia: it does not resume a society and Nature idealised by man according to his needs; Arcadia represents the spontaneous result of life lived naturally, far from the corruption of civilisation.

Arcadia as a lost world of perfect and lasting happiness, told as a distant and happy memory. William Shakespeare's play A Midsummer Night's Dream is also set within the confines of a kingdom with the same characteristics as Arcadia, ruled by a fairy king and queen. In the last decade of the 16th century, Sir Philip Sidney circulated copies of his heroic poem The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia, establishing Arcadia as a model for the Renaissance.

The theme of Arcadia was also very much in vogue in the 18th century: famous is the village built at Versailles, where Queen Marie Antoinette, having shed her sovereignty, had the opportunity to be a happy peasant girl in an idyllic fairy-tale world.

And following the Arcadian thread of thought, we come to the original idea of Monte Verità, which originated in Slovenia, in a sanatorium in Bled where the pioneers met. The origin: Arnold Rikli (1823-1906, Canton Bern), concerned for the health of his workers, founded a sanatorium in 1854 in the Hungarian town of Veldes, today Bled in Slovenia. Arnold Rikli (Wangen an der Aare, 13 February 1823 - Sankt Thomas, 30 April 1906) was a Swiss physician known as the 'sun doctor'. As a naturopath, he was the originator of the concept of dynamic healing, which can be achieved through sun and steam baths and walking barefoot in the grass, and is considered one of the forerunners of naturism.

The method was based on hydrotherapy as it had been practised since the 1830s by the naturopathic abbot Sebastian Kneipp (1821- 1897), to which Rikli later combined an 'atmospheric cure' that combined cold water jets and steam baths with

strengthening, physical training vegetarian diet and prolonged exposure to the sun. Patients were to heal thanks to this alternation of 'atmospheric stimulation'. While official medicine, which rejected the theories of this self-taught 'Doctor Sunshine', would only begin to treat lung diseases by means of rest cures at altitude thirty years later, the so-called Lebensreformbewegung (Movement for Healthy Living) was soon inspired by Rikli's approach, which in turn was inspired by Kneip, who fell ill with tuberculosis in 1849. Kneipp accidentally discovered the book 'Lecture on the Healing Power of Fresh Water' by Johann Siegmund Hahn. Finding no benefit from the cures of the time, Kneipp decided to apply what he had read: after stripping naked, he jumped into the Danube and immediately put his clothes back on, counteracting the rapid cooling by running home. After only six months of this treatment, the TB had disappeared.

Another source of Monte Veritiana therapy: Arnold Ehret's 'Mucus-Free Diet', which ran the MV kitchen for a while, is still widely followed today! See https://www.arnoldehret.it :

LESSON I
Every disease, no matter under what name it is known to Medical Science, is a clogging of the entire 'plumbing' system of the human body. It follows that any particular symptom is merely an extraordinary obstruction caused by mucus in that particular area. The special points of mucus accumulation are the tongue,... Continue reading

But how did the Ascona epic begin?

The Gotthard railway, which opened in 1882, allowed the dreamers of Monte Verità to think concretely about a project with a milder climate, perhaps overlooking a lake, and the first lake encountered south of the Alps was Lake Maggiore. The Monescia land (on which Monte Verità was to be built) had already been bought by the national theosophist councillor Alfredo Pioda in 1889 without success, and in 1889, in the magazine 'Lux', the organ of the 'International Academy of Spiritist Studies and

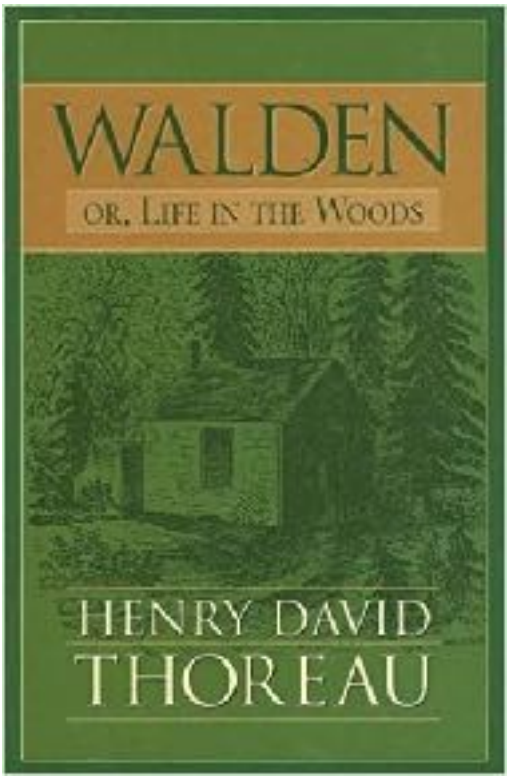
Magnetism" based in Rome, the announcement of the foundation of Fraternitas, a joint stock company, appeared. The aim of the company was the creation of a secular monastery on a hill near Locarno "on free land, in healthy air, far from the world", to welcome "students" of theosophy, to enable them to realise the idea of a life in human brotherhood. The owner of the land on the Monescia heights above Ascona and author of the announcement, Dr Alfredo Pioda from Locarno, a philosopher, historian, liberal-minded politician and national councillor, president of the Milanese theosophical lodge H.P.Blavatsky, co-signer of the appeal, intimate of the founder of the new theosophical society Helena Petrowna Blavatsky, Countess Constance Wachtmeister and Franz Hartmann. In the theosophical circles that the founders frequented, the issue was therefore known.

The first pioneers?

However, it was not Pioda who founded it for reasons we will explain, but sold the land for 140,000 francs at the time to Henry Oedenkoven, the son of industrialists. The founders came from all over: Henry Oedenkoven from Antwerp, pianist Ida Hofmann from Montenegro, artist Gusto Gräser and his brother Karl Gräser from Transylvania. United by a common ideal, they settled on 'Monte Monescia', which they renamed Monte Verità. Dressed in 'reform' clothing and with long hair, they worked gardens and fields, built spartan wooden huts relaxing with eurythmy and integral sunbathing, exposing their bodies to light, air, sun and water. Their diet excluded animal foods and relied entirely on plants, vegetables and fruit. They worshipped nature, preaching its purity and interpreting it symbolically as the ultimate work of art. 'Parsifal's Meadow', 'Valkyrie's Rock' and 'Harras's Leap' were symbolic names that in time were even adopted by the people of Ascona, who had initially regarded the community with suspicion.
Basically it was a boarding house, the price was 5 to 9 Francs per day, double rooms with bathrooms, steam heating. For the winter, sunbathing indoors behind special windows. The service

reduced to a minimum, one had to make up one's own room and serve oneself in the communal canteen where each guest would find cutlery in his or her drawer and the ingredients of the meals.

The ideals of the Monteverites were forged in Munich's artistic Schwabing district where they dreamed of escaping the urban world by following Thoreau's ideal, Walden, life in the woods. Note that Thoreau is a disciple of the spiritualist Ralph Waldo Emerson, who published his first book, Nature, as early as 1836 and founded, with other intellectuals, the periodical The Dial, which would serve as a forum for the Transcendentalism movement.



It is worth noting that for British magistrates working in India during colonisation, one of the main initial motives for acquiring Sanskrit and translating selected Hindu texts was to facilitate political jurisdiction over the Indian population. One of the first Sanskrit texts chosen to be translated was the ancient Hindu legal code, the Manu-smṛti or 'Laws of Manu' - a choice dictated as much by legal and political considerations as by scientific interest. His revolutionary translation, which he entitled The Institutes of Hindu Law (1794), was turned out to be one of the first books that Emerson - and after him, Thoreau - consulted in his first attempts to gain knowledge of Indian traditions.

It should be noted that the Theosophical Society was well preceded by the founding in 1784 of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, an association of scholars initially composed of some thirty British civil servants working in Calcutta under the auspices of the East India Trading Company. The great ambition of the Society was to

discover all that could be known about the human and natural history of the vast Indian subcontinent and to disseminate this knowledge to a wider audience of English and European readers. Within a few years, a torrent of translations, monographs and articles on a wide range of topics published by the Society's press totally transformed European knowledge of various Asian civilisations, past and present.

Returning to our heroes, their social organisation, based on a co-operative system and through which they strove to achieve the emancipation of women, self-criticism, new ways of cultivating mind and spirit and the unity of body and soul, can be defined as a utopian community and takes its cue from Tolstoy (1828-1910), of whom the theosophist Ida Hoffman, Henry's companion, the financier, was an assiduous reader. An inspirational myth was undoubtedly Jàsnaja Poljàna ('Serene Glade'), the estate where the Russian writer, also not immune to theosophical studies, lived, worked and was buried. Tolstoy's fame is also linked to his pedagogical, philosophical and religious thought, which he expressed in numerous essays and letters that inspired, in particular, the non-violent conduct of Mahatma Gandhi (president of the Indian Congress after Annie Besant ... but that is another story).

Gustav Arthur Gräser, also known as Gusto Gräser (Brasov, 16 February 1879 - M u n i c h , 27 October 1958), w a s a poet and pacifist. He is regarded as one of the fathers of the alternative movements and together with his brother Karl Gräser (1875-1920) was one of the founders of the Monte Verità community in Ascona. A pupil of Diefenbach (see Martone's film "Capri Revolution"), he was certainly the true prophet in no uncertain terms who even got himself expelled from Monte Verità because he was against Monte becoming a boarding house with restaurant and accommodation. Graeser will be Herman Hesse's teacher and the two will stay for a period in the Arcegno Grotto in a sort of ascetic/spiritual retreat. (see my and Julian Martin's short film 'The Cave of Freedom'). Their relationship will be a back-and-forth affair and Hesse will recognise his influence on and off. I recommend reading : The protagonist leaves his beloved for a spiritual retreat in a hut, but after a year exhausted he returns to the world and at the 1907 Munich Theosophical Congress finds his lover in the guise of a prominent theosophist ...

In the Munich 1907 photo Steiner and Besant sit 'still' side by side ... the Krishnamurti case has not yet exploded, these are unsuspected times ...

Hesse and Gusto's stay in the Pagan Cave is unofficially documented according to the Hesse Foundation in Montagnola ... the

Heveline Hasler's account reports that the two of them stayed in a cave in Arcegno for a while, eating roots and reading the Bhagavadgītā ... The Gustav Graeser website is a must-visit.

24. HERMANN HESSE AND THE LEBENSREFORM

Hesse's interest in the so-called Lebensreform, a cultural movement that arose at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century in Germany and Switzerland, which proposed a radical reform of the lifestyle in vogue in western cities, and led to the birth of sanatoriums and small utopian communities, has also been discussed. Already in Gaienhofen, on Lake Constance, Hesse had the opportunity to frequent artists and intellectuals whose lives were inspired by the naturist ideas of Tolstoy and H. D. Thoreau. It appears that he appreciated Jugendstil figurative art, German Art Nouveau, and in particular the works of Hugo Höppener, known as Fidus, which appeared in Lebensreform magazines, such as Jugend.
In 1907 Hesse stayed a few weeks at the Monte Verità sanatorium above Ascona in Ticino to follow a naturist therapy aimed at detoxifying himself from excessive alcohol intake. In addition to direct contact with the unspoilt nature of the mountains of Lake Maggiore, the treatment included a strict vegetarian diet and daily sunbathing (heliotherapy). From his encounters with these communities Hesse drew inspiration for characters in some of his short stories.
Other hints can also be found in Peter Camenzind and Demian. On the whole, although sympathising with the reformers, Hesse always kept an aristocratic detachment from them, mainly due to the fanaticism that characterised these circles, for which he always felt a certain, sincere disgust. Hesse also lamented a lack of spirituality in their practices. Carminati writes on this subject:
"In the short story Tra le rocce (Among the Rocks), which is markedly autobiographical and written during the Ascona sojourn or in the period immediately following, a certain positivity is recognised in naturist practices. This is despite the lack of benefits for the spirit, or rather a total lack of spiritual experiences, which for a cultured and evolved being,

an artist endowed with aesthetic-spiritual needs of a certain depth is not an irrelevant detail, they risk proving to be irretrievably abrasive'. I would add, however, that Hesse was not completely detoxified and therefore would have had to wait and do ascetic life a little longer to obtain the spiritual experiences. In the short film I made about Hesse and Graeser's stay in the Grotta dei Pagani in Arcegno, one sees a nervous Hesse who cannot sit still and abandons the hermitage against a relaxed Graeser despite the privations (they ate roots and read Indian classics) who emerges renewed from the 'cave stay'.

('Reformation of Life') was a cultural movement active in Wilhelmine Germany at the turn of the century. The modern urban and industrial society was countered by a new lifestyle, indifferent to social conventions, which advocated values such as a return to nature, nudism, vegetarianism, spiritualism and pacifism.
For the health of the body, bathing and tanning, gymnastics and dancing, to be practised naked, were recommended. Organic farming and a natural diet (avoiding cooked foods and sugar), and abstaining from alcohol and tobacco were promoted.

Leading figures in this diverse movement were t h e Symbolist painter Karl Diefenbach, Abbot Sebastian Kneipp, anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner, writer Herman Hesse and poet Gustav Graser.
Monte Verità, a community and nursing home, was founded in Ascona, Switzerland, where these principles were put into practice, attracting famous guests.

Hermann Hesse (1877 - 1962) and Gusto Gräser :

Hesse got to know Gräser around 1900; his figure and thought are already visible in CAMENZIND. In the spring of 1907, the poet followed his 'friend and guide' to Monte Verità, lived with him in a cave in the Southern Alps, and tried for weeks to be a hermit IN THE ROCKS, fasting and practising nudism. Although this first 'novitiate' failed due to his physical weakness, after ten years away Hesse returned remorsefully to the arms of his friend in 1916. Being with him, he experienced a spiritual rebirth, the great transformation of his life. In Gräser he experienced the guidance of his own self, and in his wife Elisabeth an image of the Great Mother.

The former war volunteer was now transformed into a determined opponent of war and a champion of non-violence. In the second part of DEMIAN he transposed his experiences into poetic form, in essays and appeals he expressed his new attitude. The culmination of his engagement with Gräser, which, however, remained largely anonymous, was the emphatic pamphlet ZARATHUSTRAS WIEDERKEHR (The Return of Zaratusstra) of 1919, which would pave the way for his friend in post-war Germany.

After a new ten-year retreat, which he would later refer to as 'betrayal' and 'escape', Hesse finally found his way back to the much denigrated Gusto around 1930. MORGENLANDFAHRT and GLASPERLENSPIEL (The Game of
Pearls of Glass, who contributed to the Nobel Prize in '46) seal the return to the friend and teacher revered as yogin, confessor and teacher, the renewal of their Monte Verità pact.

25. DIEFENBACH

Karl helm Diefenbach (Hadamar, 21 February 1851 - Capri, 15 December 1913) was a German painter and utopian.
Diefenbach was a pioneer of nudism and the peace movement. The commune he founded in Vienna, active between 1897 and 1899, was one of the models for the Monte Verità settlement in Ascona.
He pursued ideals of social reform by professing a set of ideas, which included living in harmony with nature, rejecting monogamy, being alienated from any religion (although he was a follower of theosophy[1]), and practising a vegetarian diet. When his commune went bankrupt, he moved to the island of Capri, where he spent the rest of his life.
The 'Humanitas' project in Munich Diefenbach was supported by a circle of friends including the pacifist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Bertha von Suttner and the writer Michael Georg Conrad. Members of the Himmelhof commune included international artists such as the painters Frantisek Kupka, Konstantinos Parthenis and Gusto Gräser (one of the founders of Monte Verita in Switzerland), Hugo Höppener, alias Fidus (later a Nazi sympathiser) and animal rights activist Magnus Schwantje and Gustav Klimt. In 1897, Diefenbach founded the naturist commune Himmelhof near Vienna, a precursor to the hippie and New Age communities of the following century. The experiment failed and Diefenbach took refuge in Capri, where he spent his last years poor and forgotten. But among his pupils were prominent artists such as Frantisek Kupka (1871-1957) and Hugo Höppener,
"Fidus' (1868-1948), whose adherence to Nazism - which, however, ends

to ban his artistic activity, deemed 'degenerate' - must not obscure his role as a link between European art inspired by the esoteric theories of the Theosophical Society and the Californian psychedelic artists of the 1960s, who enthusiastically rediscovered him.

What was the influence of the Theosophical movement on Monte Verità? And what was the role of Alfredo Pioda, Franz Hartmann and Constance Wachtmeister?
In 1889, Alfredo Pioda, a national councillor and theosophist from Locarno with Franz Hartmann and Countess Constance Wachmeister, dreamed without the foundation of a lay theosophical convent he would call 'Fraternitas' on the so-called Monescia, today's Monte Verità.

But who are these 3 characters so connected to HPB?

- **Alfredo Pioda (Locarno, 1º November 1848 - Locarno, 7 November 1909) was a Swiss philosopher, jurist and politician.**

Member of the Ticino National Council. Alfredo Pioda militated for the radical liberal party and became party president in 1900.[1] In 1889 Pioda together a Franz Hartmann e Constance Wachtmeister he unsuccessfully tried to realise his dream of building a theosophical convent under the name Fraternitas on the then Monescia, which was largely his property. The convent was not realised by him personally as he sold the land in 1900 to the founders of the Monte Verità cooperative.
-What was the social and economic reality in Ticino at that time?

Pioda had to delegate his dream to the four young men because of the liberal uprisings (remember that Pioda was president of the liberal party, and although he shared their reasons, he had not taken part in the 1890 Revolution) - he became the ideologue of the moderate and pragmatic direction of the government, advocating the need for 'a new form of public life' and 'common work for the common good'. In those years, however, the struggle between liberals and conservatives also reached the point of violence, which Pioda sought to quell.

The so-called revolution of 11.9.1890, i.e. the coup d'état carried out by some Ticino liberal exponents and militants against the conservative government, was the last attempt to change the political order of the canton by force. Ticino by force. The revolutionary movement of 1890 provoked energetic intervention by the federal authorities. The result was a profound change in Ticino's political system, in particular with the election of the government and parliament according to proportional criteria, which forced the main parties to find forms of collaboration. From a turbulent and unstable canton, Ticino thus became a sort of political laboratory of proportional representation - applied for the first time in Switzerland - and of consociativism.

26. ALFREDO PIODA NATIONAL COUNCILLOR THEOSOPHIST

Although I cannot find confirmation on Wikipedia where I find that the first centre was in Vicenza in 1902 in other sources I read that in Italy the first Centro Studi Teosofici was promoted in 1891 in Milan by Mrs J. Murphy in collaboration with a writer from Locarno, Dr Alfredo Pioda. I do not remember where but I read somewhere that the first translation of a pamphlet "Teosofia" of 1889 was the first theosophical publication in Italian. I am not sure of the source, I apologise and perhaps someone could correct me, thank you.

1. The dream of the convent with Franz HARTMANN, H.P.B.'s confidant. He is the faithful administrative director of Adyar, headquarters of the Theosophical Society in India and at HPB's side during the Coulomb scandal, and it is he who accompanies H.P.B. when he leaves Adyar after the Coulomb scandal.
A theosophist in the USA and India, he was president of the Theosophical Society in Germany.

He was Blavatsky's closest confidant and eventually administrative director of the Theosophical Society's headquarters in Adyar. While Blavatsky was away from Adyar on a trip to Europe in 1884, the controversial Coulomb affair began to make waves, affecting both Blavatsky's reputation and that of the Theosophical Society. Hartmann, as a member of the ST Control Council in Adyar, tried to defend Blavatsky, entering

thus in conflict with the faction of theosophists opposed to Blavatzky within the Theosophical Society itself and public opinion unfavourably influenced by the report. These facts put an end to Hartmann's executive function at Adyar and made his further stay in India impossible. Together with Blavatsky, whose stay in India was no longer desired after these incidents, he left the country in the spring of 1885, never to return. Arriving in Naples, he separated from Blavatsky in the best possible way after a few days.
Hartmann can be considered one of the most important pioneers of Theosophy in the German-speaking world. In addition to his many contacts, he reached a wide and influential audience through numerous lectures and publications. He created links between the religious-mystical world of India and Europe, thus contributing significantly to the spread of Eastern philosophies in the West.

2. Countess Wachtmeister
Wife of Count Wachtmeister, Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Countess joined the Theosophical Society in 1881. She died in 1910.

She was the companion and collaborator of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from 1885 until the HPB's death in 1891. She taught extensively in the 1890s and helped Annie Besant form lodges in the United States after the American schism by Judge (one of the founders).

Wachmeister said of Blavatzky: 'I shared her room and was with her morning, noon and night. I had access to all her boxes and drawers, I read the letters she received and those she wrote'. Wachtmeister became Blavatsky's "guardian angel" during the years of the composition of the Secret Doctrine in Germany and Belgium and printed her account of a number of extraordinary events of the time. In his Reminiscences Wachmeister writes: 'The Secret Doctrine will indeed be a great and grandiose work. I have been privileged to observe its progress and to read the manuscripts'.

Wachtmeister wrote: 'When a printed copy was placed in my hands, I was thankful to feel that all these hours of pain, toil and suffering had not been in vain, and that H.P.B. had been able to fulfil his task and give the world this great book, which, he told me, would have to wait quietly until the next century to be fully appreciated, and which would only be studied by a few now.

-The Monte Verità experience between Utopia and reality

Ascona and Monte Verità have never hosted a large Theosophical centre in the strict sense. No property owned by the Theosophical Society has ever been built there (such as Naarden, Adyar, Wheaton, Krotona, etc.). Important figures from the history of the Theosophical Society have lived or stayed there, but Monte Verità and its Utopia remain a phenomenon of historical significance even outside the strictly theosophical sphere, with revolutionary implications in many senses. Certainly the theosophical impulse played an important role together with the geographical/climatic conditions, Swiss neutrality, and perhaps the defiladed geographic position and a certain permissiveness all of Ticino did not hinder the development of anarchic-subversive germs. It is important to note that freedom (and therefore political, women's or sexual liberation understood as the non-repression of diversity are certainly a corollary of theosophical ideals that, however, repudiate the use of violence or the drift towards vice in all its forms). As far as Monte Verità is concerned, thus respecting theosophical ideals, its unique history makes it an exceptionally favourable place for artistic, scientific, cultural, spiritual and, of course, theosophical dissemination.

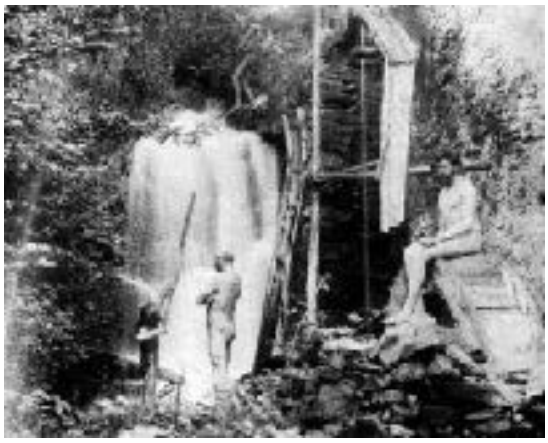
I note here the visitors and the cultural reality of Monte Verità (from Bakunin to Herman Hesse, from Martin Buber to Suzuki) :

In the 19th and early 20th century, Ticino, a republic and a canton since 1803, became a passage to the south and a favoured destination for a group of unconventional loners who found a southern atmosphere in the region,

fertile soil in which to plant those seeds of utopia that they had failed to cultivate in the north.

Ticino came to represent the antithesis of the urbanised and industrialised north, a sanctuary for any kind of idealist. From 1900 onwards, the Monescia mountain above Ascona became a magnet for those seeking an 'alternative' life. These reformers, who sought a third way between the capitalist and communist blocs, eventually found a home in the region.

The intensity of every single ideal lived in this colony was such that



Word spread throughout Europe and even overseas, while over the years the community gradually became a sanatorium frequented by theosophists, reformers, anarchists, communists, social democrats, psychoanalysts, followed by literary figures, writers, poets, artists and eventually emigrants from both world wars:

Raphael Friedeberg, the anarchist doctor who housed his comrades in his house (if I understand correctly, he is the one with the car under the waterfall).

Prince Peter Kropotkin,

Erich Mühsam who called Ascona 'the republic of the stateless', Otto Gross thewho designed a "School for the liberation of humanity',

August Bebel, (in 1869 formed the German Social Democratic Party with W. Liebknecht, fought for women and against anti-Semitism, Friend and correspondent of Marx and Engels)

Karl Kautsky, Karl Johann Kautsky (Prague, 16 October 1854 - Amsterdam, 17 October 1938) was a philosopher, political scientist, economist e politician German, among i most important theoreticians of orthodox Marxism, as well as its greatest representative following the death of Friedrich Engels. He was also

the publisher of the fourth volume of Karl Marx's magnum opus, Capital.
Otto Braun (Königsberg, 28 January 1872 - Locarno, 14 December 1955) was a German politician. A leading exponent of German Social Democracy at the time of the Weimar Republic, he was the leader of Prussia for twelve almost consecutive years and a candidate for Reichspräsident for his party in the 1925 elections.
For his long leadership, he was nicknamed the Red Tsar of Prussia.

perhaps even Lenin and Trotsky,
Hermann Hesse will maintain a critical attitude towards the mountain, and as soon as they throw Graeser out he will go with him to the Cave of the Pagans in retreat, reading oriental classics, meditating and living off the roots ...

26

26. THE POETRY OF ELSE LASKER-SCHÜLER

As already mentioned it was she, his first wife, who renamed Georg Levin 'Hertwart Walden' of der Sturm. Walden was the husband of Nell Walden who built the house in which I am writing. According to Schalom Ben- Chorin Lasker-Schüler was the greatest poetess expressed by Judaism and for Gottfried Benn Else Lasker-Schüler was the greatest poetess Germany ever had. In one of her poems in addition to the Divine Comedy, even Satan acknowledges that Hitler is too bad!

"I skirt love, long since forgotten - in poetry": I would like to caress poverty

by Else Lasker-Schüler

I wish I were there, next to her, in Zurich, on that bench. She sleeps, I pull the leaves from her hair, who knows whether a caress eases the dreams or escapes the iron. "She escapes in April 1933, taking nothing with her, and in the first months she lives in Zurich in absolute destitution, even sleeping 'near the lake, under a tree' and on benches (she was also arrested for vagrancy)" (Maura Del Serra).

The gesture of poetry often coincides with the fall, with dazzling abandon, radical uprooting. That someone lifts you up - or submerges you - is inessential.

According to Karl Kraus, she was 'the greatest lyric poet Germany has ever had' ; Gottfried Benn considered her

'the lyrical embodiment of the Jewish and German elements in one person'. For too long we have forgotten about Else Lasker- Schüler, born 150 years ago. How come? Because it is proper for the saints to be annihilated, the righteous fall into the back of memory - when this happens, History goes upside down. Poets are like exiles, exiled in a diamond inspiration. This poem contains all of Else, with deadly exactitude.

I skirt love in the morning light,
I have lived forgotten for so long - in poetry. You
told me once.

I know the principle
- I know no more
than I do -
but I felt myself sobbing in song.

In your face the propitious smile of the
immortals, when you plunged and lifted up the
peoples in the love psalm of our melody.

*****

Of Else, among the great poets of the century, crumbled to the extreme verse, there is, of course, very little in Italy. Translated by Giuliano Baioni for Nuova Accademia in 1963, her work is collected in a fundamental - but partial - book by Giuntina in Ballate ebraiche e altre poesie (1985; 1995; edited by Maura Del Serra). The rest - La gatta rossa for Sellerio, the letters to Franz Marc for Einaudi - is scattered, partial, often unobtainable.

I return to Else from a loophole, through a story that has the clangour of a parable. It is told by the great poet Lea Goldberg in a blessed book, collecting the Poems of Avraham Ben Yitzhak (Water Bearers, 2018). "We went to the café Zikhl. And as soon as we entered, I saw Else Lasker-Schüler sitting at one of the tables. The café was almost empty and she sat in her usual place, grey as a bat, small, destitute, closed in on herself... The frightening

misery, the mad solitude of the great poetess. Should I not also have been poor, abandoned and almost banished, if I had not lied to myself always, if I had not sinned against truth, purity, poetry? Was not that sitting there like that, so dreadful, symbolic of all the existences made of injustice, led by us, the others, the writers of sometimes lofty verses?" Lea Goldberg sanctions an affinity between purity and poverty, between poetry and the monastery; indeed, between poetry and destitution. As if poetry, verse by verse, robs the poet of everything - a curse in gold.

Lea Goldberg decides to give violets to Else, the great desolate poetess. What an arcane gesture: to give what dies to a dying creature, the last scream of life. "I bought a bunch of violets, and with an uncertain step and the feeling that my face was on fire with emotion and embarrassment, like a high school girl, I approached Else Lasker-Schüler and handed her the violets. She barely raised her head, and her gaze travelled over my face as if it were the surface of an annoying object. 'This is for you,' I told her. Her low voice, which seemed to come from another world, imbued with some form of aversion, apostrophised me: 'What do you want from me?!' 'This is for you,' I repeated. And she exclaimed again, even more resentfully: 'What do you want from me?!' Then I stammered in a weak voice: 'I love your poems. Her face opened and lit up, a sweet gleam of understanding passed in her eyes, she held out her hand and took the violets without a word of thanks. I hurried away, but my friend from time to time peered towards that table and reported to me: 'All she does is sniff them and smile, sniff them and smile'". Not man, but poetry awakens Else - for poetry also accepts the disease of nothingness. Of her said that other poet spirited from nothingness, Avraham, 'She is now so sunk in the well that she can no longer touch the surface of the water with the tip of her finger'.

*****

Born to Jews - her great-grandfather was a rabbi - in Germany, she wrote in German: in 1939 the final trip to Palestine, she died in Jerusalem in 1945. Almost as if in her destiny was fulfilled

of History - the Jewish stories written in German turn the massacre into a pact: 'We want to reconcile at night,/ if we embrace, we will not die.// A great star will fall in my lap'.

*****

Her first husband, Berthold Lasker, a doctor, was the brother of Emanuel, one of the greatest chess players of all time (he was world champion from 1894 to 1921, when he left the title to Capablanca). The marriage, contracted in 1894, lasted a few tormented years - Else said her son Paul, born in 1899, was not Berthold's, she had had him by a 'Greek and prince', Alcibiades de Rouan. Accustomed to living on the wave of the poem, Else married the writer Georg Levin in 1903 - but divorced ten years later. She lives as an amazon ("notorious are the extravagant, oriental-style outfits of ante litteram hippies with an ephebic figure, short hair, a long mouthpiece, odalisque trousers, bracelets and anklets in profusion, flashy rings of tin or coloured glass"), with no other commitment than poetry. She has intellectual relationships with Oskar Kokhoschka, Karl Kraus (whom she calls 'The Dalai Lama'), Gottfried Benn ('The Nibelung'), Franz Marc ('The Blue Knight'), Georg Trakl ('The Golden Knight'). Someone, always, supports her, giving her a home, money. In 1927 her beloved son, Paul, dies, and she dies too, continuously - from 1933 she is on the run from Germany, 'threatened and beaten by the Nazis during public appearances'. She has relationships, from exile, first in Switzerland then in Palestine, with Klaus and Heinrich Mann, "but the bitterness of poverty and isolation are accentuated: the Zionists ostracise her for her ecumenical and pro-Arab attitude, consistent with the dream of integration between Jews, Arabs and Christians" (Del Serra).

*****

The poet has no other cunning than to hurl himself, from the exceptional he milks that which destroys him. (d.b.)

******

To the transfigured

Bitter and scarce was my bread, dead -
and amber the gold
of my cheeks.

With panthers I crawl
into dens at night.

So much is my sorrow in twilight
pain... though the stars
they go down to sleep in my hand.

Of their light thou marvellest -
but the pain
of my loneliness is unknown to you.

Beasts in the streets
have mercy on me; that howling
finally sounds loving.

But escaped the earth, by Sinai
transfigured you smile -
distant stranger passes beyond my world.

Else Lasker-Schüler

from Else Lasker-Schüler, 'Jewish Ballads and Other Poems', edited by Maura Del Serra, Giuntina, 1995

28. D.H. Lawrence

the anarchic, bohemian, nudist, sun-worshipping, vegetarian colony of MonteVerità was a crucial source for the work of D.H. Lawrence

D.H. Lawrence, Eastwood, 11 September 1885 - Vence, 2 March 1930) was an English writer, poet, playwright, essayist and painter, considered among the most emblematic figures of the 20th century. Together with several writers of the period, he was amongi most greatest innovators of Anglo-Saxon literature, especially in terms of the themes addressed. Like Yeats, Lawrence was inspired by the esoteric and the transcendent, albeit from sources closer to Herman Hesse than to Madame Blavatsky; but especially in the field of novels, short stories and literary criticism, Lawrence pioneered his own path towards lust, passion and the creativity of the body, a path that Yeats, especially in his later years, seemed to reject. Yeats, self-described as a 'dying ani- male', seemed to abrogate his physical self, 'a tattered coat ona stick', e dreams memorably of being reconstituted by Greek craftsmen, 'hammered' in gold and enamelled with gold, and then gathered 'in the artifice of eternity' (in all mythologies. The posteriority of these conflicting efforts is ensured by their respective bodies of work, but Lawrence's remains problematic and largely misunderstood because little attention has been paid to what he learned about how to better understand his own body from the people he met who had connections to Ascona and Monte Verità, Switzerland. What Lawrence learnt there, both literally and through his relationship with Emma Maria Frieda Johanna Freiin (Baroness) von Richthofen, has not been clearly identified and explored as catalyst for that dialogical corporality. Lawrence's later writing has an earthy, fleshy, pagan and dialogical character in line with many of the characters in The Mount. Since it is not possible to follow all the leads I will link you to Frieda who has links to New Mexico (colony of Theosophist painters and artists) :
http://www.spesturno.it/LAWRENCE%20A%20SPOTORNO/

menu%20lawrence/personages/frieda.htm . For those who wish to venture out, here is the digression ...

29. MODERN DANCE

Refuge for artists and testimony of an era

Over time, word of the existence of the alternative community of Monte Verità spread, attracting many eccentric personalities from all over Europe and overseas.

Some of the founders - in contrast to the opinion of others - decided to open the doors of the facility to provide paid accommodation. Thinkers, poets, writers and artists saw in the place a refuge from the artificiality of modern life, and resided there, animated by a vivid desire to reconnect with creation.

An emblematic figure who gravitated around Monte Verità was the Hungarian choreographer Rudolf Laban, who decided to stay at the community with a small group of young people from 1913. Laban gave birth to a new type of dance, the 'free dance', characterised by spontaneous movements, freed from the shackles imposed by the norms of classical ballet. Rudolf von Laban was a leading figure in modern dance, one of the main exponents of 'free dance' and the author of a movement notation system called Labanotation.

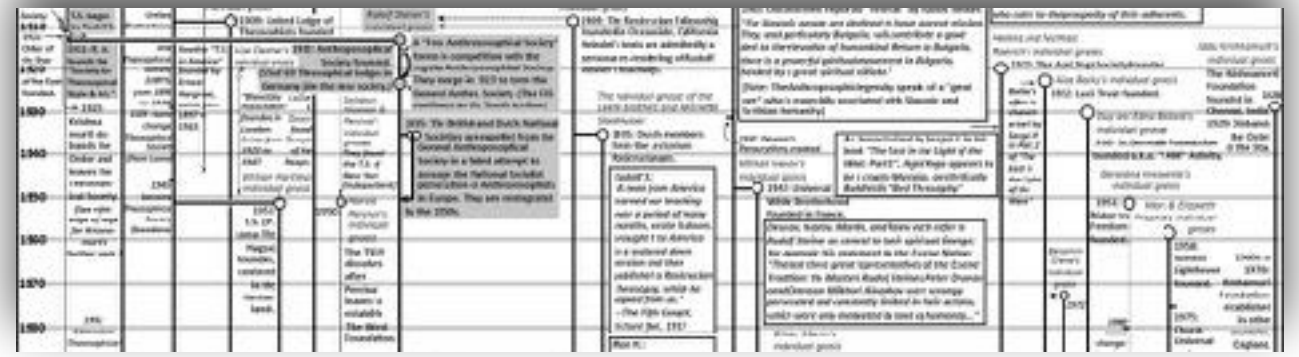
Mary Wigman, considered one of the greatest exponents of German free dance and a pioneer of modern dance since 1913 on Monte Verità. In 1914, she performed the first version of the dance of the witch (Hexentanz), a solo that she later performed in several versions and that became her emblem. In this solo - danced entirely seated - Wigman had her face covered by a mask, which she used with the intention of erasing the individuality of the dancer and thus exalting the universality of the human being. Regarding the use of the mask, the painter Emil Nolde had a great influence on her,

met in 1912 in Hellerau, who introduced her to the fascination of African, Australian and Asian dances and masks.
In 1919, in Hamburg, at the age of 33, she was consecrated by the public as one of Germany's greatest dancers
Isadora Duncan, (San Francisco, 27 May 1877 - Nice, 14 September 1927) was an American dancer, considered one of the most significant precursors of so-called 'modern dance', which she helped to initiate. She made a brief stay at Monte Verità and with Acques Dalcroze, the founder of the rhythmic dance now taught in numerous music schools throughout the world, began the history of artistic experimentation that ended with the difficulties of the final period of the founding couple's management of Monte Verità, when the mimic dancer Charlotte Bara (1900-1987) had the present-day Teatro San Materno (1928) built.

30. Ordo Templi Orientis

The Congress of Ascona 1917,

In 1917, the National Congress of the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) was held in Ascona in the Swiss Ticino, convened under the impulse of its promoter at the time, Theodore Reuss. The aim was to bring together theosophists, vegetarians, occultists and pacifists with the pacifist and anti-nationalist goal of rejecting war (we were then in the third year of the First World War). Reuss' aim was also to have the Ordo Templi Orientis recognised by European esoteric circles. In the Theosophical Society I have never heard of it and the phantom meeting had no historical follow-up. Perhaps some 'theosophists' attended at the time, but I am not aware of any official participation by the Theosophical Society. There are many associations, sects, orders and other organisations or groups in the world that boast true or alleged esoteric credibility and often derive from periods of participation by their founders in the official activities of the Theosophical Society. This diagram alone is enough to give you an idea of how jagged the derivative ecosystem of the TS is.



It is important to note the flourishing of esoteric movements during this period:

Aleister Crowley coming from the Golden Dawn (note that the origins of the document of magic rituals are much debated) appears in the O.T.O. and today seems to have remained its major influence (the famous "do what you want" that will inspire sex, drugs and rock and roll of almost all rock stars from Mick Jagger to the Beatles ... bad example for your children ! But the left-hand path was very much present at Monte Verità and it must be emphasised that Monte Verità was never really a centre of the Theosophical Society which is notoriously RIGHT-HANDED, WHITE BROTHERHOOD CONDEMNING THE USE OF DRUGS.

Esoteric ties appear with many belonging to the DADA movement which also has its metaphysical matrix, we also find Julius Evola there ... esotericism even if politically on the right holds many facets together ... Swiss neutrality helps!

31. DADAISM

Hugo Ball, as co-founder of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, became the leader of the Dada movement in Zurich. It is believed that he chose the name 'Dada', taking a random word from the dictionary. He married Emmy Hennings, another exponent of the Dada movement. A friend of Hesse's with Hennings addicted to various drugs often in Montagnola.
His poem Gadji beri bimba was later adapted for the song I Zimbra, which can be found on the 1979 Talking Heads album Fear of Music.

32. MODERN ART AT THE MOUNT

It was Marianne von Werefkin, not yet living in Ascona, who delivered the invitation of Mikalojus Konstantinas Ciurlionis (1875 - 1911) to the 1913 Munich exhibition by materially bringing him the invitation letter written by Kandinsky. Ciurlionis a Lithuanian painter and musician, is regarded as one of the founders of modern art. His work, condensed into seven years, would influence painters of the calibre of Malevitch and Kandinsky. In 1904 he enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts. During this period he developed a new vision for the Bible and for all religions in general. Fundamental to his new conception of the world and the universe was the work of the French astronomer Camille Flammarion, whose imaginative visions are explicitly quoted in several letters and paintings. Like Flammarion, Čiurlionis was a follower of Theosophy, which also gave impetus to Hilma af Klimt, who made the modern even earlier t h a n Ciurlionis. In this regard I would also point out Georgiana Houghton (spiritualist), Victor Hugo (esotericist), Gustave Moreau (symbolist mystic) and above all, before Malevich, the famous esotericist, astrologer (go and look in Louis Pericles' catalogues for the citation of C. Macel ... small digression and treasure hunt for expert researchers).

Halfway between symbolism and abstractionism, Ciurlionis' canvases are enriched by his mystical, theosophical readings and Lithuanian popular culture. His fondness for the sonata, which he sees as a universal form of expression, drives him to apply this musical architecture in his pictorial approach. In fact, the artist considers many of his paintings to be 'painted sonatas'.

When war broke out in 1914 Marianne von Werefkin and Jawlensky were forced to leave Germany hastily. They first settled in Saint-Prex, then, in 1917, in Zurich, where they frequented the Dada milieu. Werefkin exhibited at the Coray Gallery (whose daughter Trudy Neuburg Coray in Ascona was to manage the Castelnuovo Gallery which also exhibited Luigi Pericle). Then, in order to take care of Jawlensky's "grippe", she installed herself with him in Ascona. This was in 1918, and in 1921 the break between the two was consummated. Jawlensky left for Wiesbaden, with the support of Emmy Scheyer who had meanwhile undertaken to organise exhibitions of his paintings in Germany, and married Helene Nesnakomoff. Werefkin had hired her

in his service in 1895 and he had her son Andreas in 1902. The impossible ideal pact struck between him and Werefkin was irretrievably broken.

The residents of Monte Verità also include
Arthur Segal, who, at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, moved with his family to Ascona to the house at the Angolo right on the bend that leads from the Via collina to Monte Verità. He frequented the Monte Verità community and his house became a meeting place for artists and intellectuals, including Jean Arp, Alexej von Jawlensky, Marianne von Werefkin, Tristan Tzara and Arthur Bryks. The Ascona period marks a moment of radical change in Erich Segal's life and art. Upset by the barbarity of war and politically disillusioned, he questions the ethical principles underlying expressionist art and turns to philosophy: he questions the relationship between ethics, sociality and art, and lays the foundations of his Theory of Equivalence. Segal is in search of an ethical foundation for art that takes the form of formal solutions capable of bypassing the existing value system, based on the concepts of superiority and strength, in order to project a new order onto the canvas, analogical to the possible overcoming of social inequalities and national prevarications.

Arthur Bryks moved to Ascona in 1918, which had become, along with Zurich and Bern, a favourite place for intellectual and artistic emigrants. In that same year, many other artists also moved to Ascona, such as Marianne von Werefkin, Alexej von Jawlensky, Arthur Segal, Cesar Domela, the Dadaists Hugo Ball, Hans Arp, Hans Richter and many others. In Ascona, Arthur Bryks worked in the effervescent environment of Arthur Segal, who was one of his most important teachers in the Casa all'Angolo school. Before settling in Ascona, Arthur Segal (an Impressionist and Dadaist) had lived in Berlin since 1904 and had exhibited at Ertwart's Der Sturm gallery and Nell Walden (who built the house in which I am writing and which belonged to Louis Pericles). Segal's studio was frequented by the most important artists of the time who belonged to the Die Brücke groups (Fritz Bleyl, Erich Heckel, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Emil Nolde, Max Pechstein and Otto

Mueller) and the Der Blaue Reiter group (Vasily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Paul Klee, August Macke, Alexej Jawlensky). When Segal came to Switzerland (1918), the homeland of the painter Giovanni Segantini who so admired and inspired his art, he had already taken part in many exhibitions throughout Germany, switching to Post-Impressionism and then joining the early Expressionists. the arrival of the First World War had horrified him, causing his ideals to collapse. This is why Segal decided to go to Ascona, attracted by the mild climate but also by the effervescence in the philosophical, theosophical and artistic fields. Here, after a period of spiritual convalescence in which he devoted himself to many philosophical-religious writings that later provided the theme for his works, he founded the painting school for pupils already of a certain artistic standing. Arthur Bryks was enthusiastic about Segal's teachings and invited colleagues and friends from various countries to Ascona to meet Segal. In Ascona, there were constant meetings and discussions between artists and intellectuals. It happened that, although everyone had their own studio, artists often met in the heat of an interesting conversation. It happened that two, sometimes three colleagues drew colours from the same palette, using them each in their own way and, some at an easel, some on a table, some resting paper or cardboard on a board (rarely on canvas as it was very expensive at the time), they created works of great interest. During this period, Arthur Bryks befriended many artists and intellectuals including Alexey Jawlensky and Marianne von Werefkin, both of Russian origin like Bryks. And at the same time, Marianne von Werefkin, mistress, patron and financial supporter of Alexej Jawlensky (a former Russian army officer), lost the pension she received from the Tsar with the advent of the Russian Revolution and fell into a period of severe poverty together with Jawlensky. Their many friends, including Arthur Bryks, supported them as best they could. At the beginning of the 1920s, Arthur Bryks followed Arthur Segal to Berlin, starting to work independently and participating fully in the artistic life of the time. Every Tuesday, Arthur Bryks used to go with his friend and artist Hans Looser to Wassily Kandinsky's house and participate in animated discussions with other artist friends such as Paul Klee and Alexey Jawlensky. In Berlin, Arthur Bryks used to attend and teach at the Bauhaus school of architecture, art and design in

Berlin, where Kandinsky also taught. At the same time, his wife Vena attended the Reimann Schule for applied design directed by excellent masters such as Georg Tappert and others. Exercises in the new ornamental structures (which had an influence on quite a few graphic artists) were also applied to ceramics, tapestry and motifs on fabric, the latter field in which Vena Bryks was becoming increasingly successful. This was the seed for Arthur and Vena Bryks' interest born years later in weaving. These were the years of inflation where a work of art sold for 200,000 marks and half a kilo of bread cost 5,000 marks.

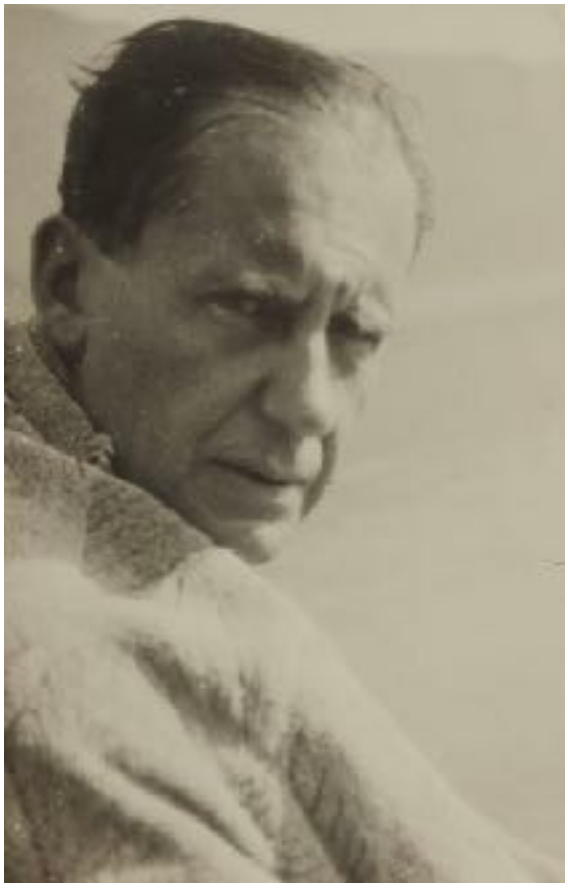
In 1924, the Bryks returned to Switzerland and made their home in Porza (a municipality on the outskirts of Lugano) about 40 kilometres from Ascona. They found a small house on the outskirts of the village with a spectacular view that many friends who had travelled the world described as comparable to that of the Bay of Rio de Janeiro. The climate was as mild as that of Monte Verità and soon the mimosa and wisteria plants planted in front of the house reached the first floor balcony. Banana plants a few metres down formed a grove together with camellias and oleanders. The granite table under the pergola was always laid to please not only the family but also the many guests who came in person from all over the world unannounced. This was the custom in the Bryks family and the interesting hours of visiting many times ended up becoming days, often without interrupting Arthur Bryks' artistic work.
In 1948, Arhtur Bryks met what was to become one of the world's largest private collectors of Italian art, Eric Estorick. Bryks' influence on the young Eric was fundamental, to the point of determining not only his future growth in the field of art collecting, but also and above all to increase his desire to learn more about contemporary Italian art. It was, in fact, Bryks who would show Eric for the first time 'the worn pages of Boccioni's book on Futurism with those marvellous illustrations of the five artists: Balla, Boccioni, Carrà, Russolo and Severini'. From this somewhat chance encounter, as well as from the fortuitous discovery of Boccioni's book, was born in Estorick

dazzling passion for Italian art and, in particular, for Futurist art. It was Arthur Bryks who introduced Estorick to Mario Sironi, one of the key artists in Eric Estorick's very important collection. Recalling this contact with Italian artists, Eric Estorick declared himself to be deeply grateful to Arthur Bryks for having instilled in him the deep passion for Italian art that would last for the rest of his life. Eric recalls with particular gratitude his friendship with Bryks, which unfortunately, for reasons of force majeure, lasted very little longer: 'Arthur Bryks then moved to Israel in the early 1950s and I never saw him again. Over the years I have heard many stories about him and I know for a fact that he would have admired with great pleasure the collection of Italian art that I managed to put together. Arthur Bryks was one of the most creative spirits I have ever been around during the course of my life'. And almost prophetically, the director of the Estorick Museum in London welcomes us for the exhibition 'Luigi Pericles, a rediscovery' in 2022. Ties endure over time and are magically reactivated. https:// www.raicultura.it/tags/luigipericle

El Lissitzky, (1890-1941), born in 1890 in Russia, El Lissitzki was a painter, photographer, printmaker and designer. A leading figure of the Russian avant-garde, he studied engineering before devoting himself fully to the artistic world. At the end of the 1910s he taught architecture and graphic arts in Vitebsk, but already in 1921 he moved to Germany, where he founded the magazine G (Gestaltung) with Hans Richter a year later. He then moved to Switzerland where he created the group and the magazine ABC; at this time (this was in 1924) he lived in Ticino and spent several months between Ascona, Locarno and Ambrì, experimenting and working in the advertising branch at the same time. The following year he returned to Russia and continued his artistic career there, designing, for example, the hall of modern art at the International Exhibition in Dresden (1926). Lissitzky died in 1941 in the Russian capital; he was 51 years old.

- Bauhaus :

Albers, Josef Albers



Walter Gropius in Ascona

1930

Vintage silver gelatin print. 18 x 11.9 cm. Inscribed by Xanti Schawinsky in ink on verso. - Print creased and with a professionally restored tear at right edge. Matted.

The instant portrait of Walter Gropius was probably taken on the terrace of the Hotel Monte Verità. In 1926, the banker and art patron Eduard von der Heydt had bought the legendary mountain with its artists' colony near Ascona and had a hotel built there in the style of the 'Neuen Bauen' overlooking Lake Maggiore. The place had become a fashionable meeting place for the artistic avant-garde around 1930, with Walter Gropius, Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer, Lionel Feininger, Oskar Schlemmer, Xanti Schawinsky and László Moholy-Nagy among its guests. My comment: 'what a nerve the Baron has, though, in view of his Nazi implications'. Josef Albers, who was deprived of his livelihood with the closing of the Bauhaus, emigrated in 1933 with his wife Anni to the United States and shortly afterwards, like Xanti Schawinsky, found a position as a teacher at Black Mountain College, open to the progressive ideas of the Bauhaus. Walter Gropius, with whom he had a close friendship, tried several times, unsuccessfully, to bring Albers to the

Graduate School of Design. Instead, Albers remained at Black Mountain College until 1949, in part due to the special freedoms enjoyed by the faculty.

(Introduction "From Bauhaus to Black Mountain College - Photographs from a Private Swiss Collection", lot 631. Provenance, property of Xanti Schawinsky; private collection, Switzerland. I found these notes under the photo of Gropius taken by Joseph Albers).

César Domela (1900-1992)

Dutch-born sculptor, painter and photographer, César Domela was born in Amsterdam in 1900. A self-taught artist, he emigrated to Switzerland at a young age and lived from 1919 to 1923 in Ascona, near Monte Verità, coming into contact with the artistic currents of the time including Cubism. He then moved to Berlin and in 1924 his first solo exhibition was organised. A year later he became the youngest member of the De Stijl movement and worked with renowned colleagues such as Theo van Doesburg and Piet Mondrian (member of the Theosophical Society). In 1933 he fled the German capital due to the Nazi rise and took refuge in Paris, while in 1936 he was invited to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York for an exhibition. Domela continued his artistic career by turning to typography and new forms. Now considered one of the most innovative artists of the 20th century, he died in 1992 in the French capital.

Ignaz Epper (1892-1969)

A graphic artist and painter considered to be one of the leading interpreters of Swiss Expressionism, he produced his first woodcuts from 1913 and began an apprenticeship as a lithographer in Zurich. In the city on the Limmat, where he lived from 1920 to 1923, he met Fritz Pauli, while Han Coray exhibited his works. In 1919 he married Mischa Quarles van Ufford and together they stayed in Ascona in 1922. Before his marriage, Epper had visited Ticino in 1915-16 and in

1919. In 1932 the

couple decided to move permanently to Ascona and built the house in the Saleggi di Ascona, which is now the home of the Ignaz & Mischa Epper Foundation. In the Borgo, the artist found the desired tranquillity and became interested in the Eranos conferences, where he met Carl Gustav Jung. He maintained contact with Fritz Pauli, who was staying in Cavigliano, and with Robert Schürch, also in Ascona. He died by suicide in the garden of his house in Ascona in 1969.

Hans Arp and Hans Richter arrived in Ascona in 1958 and there renewed and radicalised what they had previously formalised in the name of an increasingly synthetic, concrete and dynamic art. Arp (1887-1966) deepened his proposal of 'concrete art' and Richter (1888-1976), for whom art can only be dynamic, multimedia, communicative and incisive, returned to painting, the essence and origin of his entire artistic career.

At the end of 1915, Arp became involved with another artist who would play an influential role in the history of European modernism, particularly in non-objective art: Baroness Hilla Rebay von Ehrenwiesen (1890-1967, fig. 4.8). Like Arp, Rebay was Alsatian; she came from a family of aristocratic officers in Strasbourg and received a rather traditional art education at the School of Arts and Crafts in Cologne from 1908-09 and the Académie Julian in Paris in 1909-10. His interest in modern art matured during his stay in Munich in 1910-13 and in Berlin in 1913. In December 1915, Rebay travelled to Zurich, where she became acquainted with Hans Arp, who immediately fell in love with her. Rebay and Arp maintained a long-distance relationship until 1917 and in his passionate letters, kept at the Guggenheim Museum, he declared his only love for her: 'Don't disappoint me. I don't think you will ever be happy with another. I have never written like this to a woman before'.

Arp introduced Rebay to the works of Marc Chagall, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Franz Marc and others and put her in contact with Herwarth Walden's Sturm Galerie in Berlin. Thanks to Arp, she approached non-representational art and devoted herself to collage. In May 1917 he participated in a group exhibition at the Dada Gallery in Zurich and, in December 1917, one of his woodcuts appeared on the cover of the Dada magazine. At the Sturm Galerie, in 1917 Rebay met

Walden's assistant, Rudolf Bauer, who became the focus of his attention, care and obsession.
In 1927, Rebay moved to New York, where she was introduced to the industrialist Solomon R. Guggenheim, who commissioned her portrait. In Guggenheim she found an open and generous patron who enabled her, over the next twenty years, to amass a remarkable collection of abstract artworks, particularly by Kandinsky and Bauer. Guided by Rebay's expertise and his access to various art networks, Guggenheim acquired numerous works by contemporary European and American abstract artists. Their mutual trust and admiration became not only the basis for an extraordinary art collection, but also for the construction of one of the most innovative museum buildings in the Western world.

Julius Bissier (1893- 1965) came to Ascona in 1956 and during his stay he arrived at the formulation of his own personal language, made up of symbols, archetypes with universal value, an art of the essential close to Eastern thought, an art of silence with a 'sacred' character, to be contemplated in meditation.

Ben Nicholson (1894- 1982) also devoted himself to graphic art between 1965 and 1968, producing more than 100 etchings in François Lafranca's atelier in Locarno, where he experimented with all the technical variations, marvelling in anticipation at the results of the printed sheet. In connection with Hans Hess also curated Luigi Pericle.

Italo Valenti (1912- 1995) moved to Ascona in 1952 and joined Remo Rossi's atelier, where he definitively abandoned the figurative for the abstract. A transition to abstraction that in Valenti takes place step by step - from the mellow forms of swirling expressive colours, to those increasingly synthetic and tending towards the geometric, up to the use of collage that, in 1982, replaces painting in the name of that lyrical abstractionism that invades and resonates in absolute space.

Franz Kafka had to nurse a tired and sickly body in the sanatoriums of Central Europe at the apex of rocky mountains and on the banks of streams, but the trip Franz Kafka made to Switzerland in the summer of 1911 - documented in the diaries of his friend Max Brod who accompanied him - was one of pure pleasure. He adhered to the countercultural experience of Monte Verità, as did Thomas Mann and Paul Klee, André Gide, Herman Hesse and the philologist Karoly Kerényi; among film directors Billy Wilder, among musicians, Giacinto Scelsi and the pedagogue Émile Jaques-Dalcroze.

Not an artist, Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) holidayed on the hill nearby (hence a neighbour) but I can't find out in which house exactly ...
Born in 1876, Konrad Adenauer was one of the most important statesmen of the
20th century and one of the founding fathers of the European Union, together with the French Robert Schuman and the Italian Alcide De Gasperi. Mayor of his native Cologne from 1917 to 1933, he opposed Nazism in the 1930s and 1940s and then founded the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the late 1940s. At the head of the new party, he was elected as the first West German Chancellor in 1949 and held the office until 1963. He spent long periods of his life in Ascona - especially after concluding his political career, which spanned more than sixty years. He died in 1967. In 2003, the German people voted him 'the greatest German of all time'.

Not residents of Monte Verità but for one reason or another linked to it to be reported :
Elisar von Kupfer : Dandy, cultured, gay interprets theosophy in his own way and founds Clarism by creating a 'stronghold' and a lot of art and literature expressing his sensibilities in complete freedom. 1872-1942. Note the Elisarion mueso in Muralto .

Erich Maria Remarque, author of 'Nothing New on the Western Front' German exile left the region during World War II for Holliwood where he wrote 13 successful screenplays. It should be noted that during the Second World War, German citizens who

did not join the German Nazi party, their passports were not renewed and therefore neither was their Swiss residence permit.
Brigitte Helm, star of the silent film (Fritz Lang's Metropolis or the Lady from Atlantis) who was Jewish, left the cinema in Germany in conflict with the regime.
Nell Walden, financier with her husband Herwart of Der Sturm (gallery and publishing house, Kandinsky, Kokoshka, der Sturm, Blaue Reiter). She was also Jewish in Ascona in 1933 in the house that was to become Luigi Pericle's. (there will be a special section on her at the end).

Artists linked to Remo Rossi ateliers

Jean Arp, Julius Bissier, Ben Nicholson, Hans Richter, Italo Valenti

In 1920, after the founders left for Brazil, a brief bohemian period followed at Monte Verità, which lasted until the complex was bought as a residence by Baron von der Heydt, banker to the former Emperor Wilhelm II and one of the largest collectors of contemporary and non-European art. Bohemian life spread from then on in the village and the valleys of the Locarno region.

However, Monte Verità is also a well-preserved testimony to the history of architecture in a 75,000 m2 natural park: from Adam's Hut to the Bauhaus.

The ideology of the early settlers called for spartan wooden chalet-type dwellings with plenty of light, air and few comforts. Shortly after 1900, the following buildings began to spring up: Casa Selma (now part of the museum route), Casa Aida (now used14), Casa Andrea with its geometric façade, the brighter building (now converted), Casa Elena and the Tea House (now demolished), and the Russian House, a refuge for some Russian students after the 1905 revolution, which will be renovated. The Central House was built for the community and let in lots of natural light, with windows and balconies decorated with 'yin-yang' symbols. (In 1948 the building was demolished to make way for a restaurant and only the rounded staircase ramp remains today).

Henry Oedenkoven built Casa Anatta ('Buddhist concept of non-self') as a residence and place of representation in the Theosophical style with rounded corners everywhere, double wooden walls, sliding doors, vaulted ceilings and huge windows overlooking the landscape as a supreme work of art, a large flat roof and a terrace for sunbathing.

The house name Anatta refers to Anātman, a word composed of the privative prefix a and the word atman, which can be translated as 'self', 'individual personality', 'soul'. It would seem a contradiction to first state the intrinsic non-existence of an entity whose constituents are then listed. But it should be borne in mind that the Buddha did not intend to deny the person, often referred to as nāma-rūpa, i.e. the totality of the physical body that manifests itself to the senses (rūpa, lett. "form") and of its mental and conceptual attributes (nāma, literally "name"), but rather he wanted to lead the disciples' gaze back to what he believed to be the Self: a whole made up of elements that in their simultaneity of activity and interaction between interdependent elements easily give the illusion that there is an absolute, permanent, individual Self capable of surviving the cessation of the body.

In Buddhism, as in other Indian religions and philosophies, we speak of two levels of reality: the conventional reality and the ultimate or higher reality or that of things as they really are. At the conventional level, one can speak of individuals, of selves as separate entities that relate to the phenomenal world with personal and possessive pronouns such as 'I' and 'my'. But just as biology and chemistry tell us that we are composed of dynamically balanced and changing entities, such as tissues, cells, molecules, atoms and so on, so too in Buddhist philosophy the person is composed of elements called skhanda which in turn are divisible into the dharma (sans., dhamma, pāli), the elementary constituents of the sensible world. The difference between the chemist's microscope and the Buddha's gaze is that the latter observes and breaks down phenomena on the basis of their impact on the individual's psychology, cognitive capacity or mentality. However, when in Buddhism we speak of ego, self and ego, we are not dealing with concepts from today's psychology. As Schumann writes, the doctrine of anatman does not make its appearance

in the Buddha's first teaching to the five ascetics of Uruvela, so it would be the fruit of a later elaboration and deepening of his mystical experience and understanding of reality. It appears instead in the anattalakkhana sutta (pāli, sans.), the 'discourse on the marks of the non-Self', where the Buddha states that the five psychophysical aggregates of the person are not the Self because they are compound and impermanent. This is not the same as saying it does not exist, but the Master is reported to regard the Self as the product of a process of attachment or shallow vision. Surely, as with all other aspects of his doctrine, his silence regarding the innermost details of this conception was due both to his desire to avoid encouraging metaphysical speculation and to wanting rather to invite his disciples to push their own investigation by penetrating the problem to its root, arriving at right knowledge through direct experience obtained by a practice only guided, but not dictated, by the Master's teachings.

In essence, the Buddha wanted to point out that what appears to be the Self is only craving, attachment and delusion. Liberation comes through non-attachment, through the abandonment of the Self, but not of the person. If something liable to be called a Self is deemed to exist, it could only be something that remains of the person's identity once attachment to all that is vulgarly called one's 'Self' has been eradicated.

In the main room of this building, Mary Wigman danced, Bebel (the founder of social democracy in Germany), Kautsky (Kautsky was one of the most influential promulgators of orthodox Marxism) and Martin Buber discussed, Ida Hofmann played Wagner and the community held its meetings. Martin Mordechai Buber (Vienna, 8 February 1878 - Jerusalem, 13 June 1965) was an Austrian naturalised Israeli philosopher, theologian and educationalist.

He is credited with the emergence of the Hassidim movement in European culture, but above all he is credited with the idea that life is fundamentally not subjectivity, but intersubjectivity; indeed, for Buber, subject and intersubjectivity are synchronously complementary, and he was so convinced of this that he did not hesitate to state: 'In the beginning is relationship'.

In 1926, Baron von der Heydt converted Casa Anatta into a private residence and decorated it with his collection of African (partly bought by Nell Walden while still in Germany before his move to Ascona), Indian and Chinese art, now in the Rietberg Museum, and a collection of Swiss carnival masks, now in Washington. After the Baron's death in 1964, Casa Anatta, described by the architectural theorist Siegfried Giedion in 1929 as a perfect example of a 'liberated dwelling', fell into disuse and disrepair.

THE FIRST INDEPENDENT CURATOR IN HISTORY

In 1979 it was reopened to host the exhibition 'Monte Verità. The Breasts of Truth' by Harald Szeemann, and since 1981 it has been home to the Monte Verità History Museum (open to the public from April to October). In 1909, the Turinese architect Anselmo Secondo built Villa Semiramis as a guest house and hotel. The villa, clinging to the mountain, has many architectural features of the Piedmontese 'Jugendstil', of which the triangular shutters are the most obvious example. In 1970, the villa was modernised respecting the original style by Ticino architect Livio Vaccini.

The arrival of the Baron on the hill marked the advent of modern architecture in Ticino. The original mandate to build a hotel in the characteristic rational and functional Bauhaus style was given to Mies van der Rohe and was later executed by Emil Fahrenkamp, builder of the Shell building in Berlin and later designer of the Rhein steelworks. During the Second World War, Fahrenkamp accepted commissions from the Nazis, considering himself apolitical. After the war, he continued his profession, but in a more discreet manner. (A nice euphemism for saying that his reputation was blatantly ruined.) After 1945, Fahrenkamp was disavowed at

Because of his closeness to National Socialism, he resigned as director of the Academy and was dismissed in 1946. In 1948, like many great Nazis, he received his 'Persilschein' and retired. His comment: 'It is no longer my time' speaks for itself. During the post-war period in Germany and Austria, the Persilschein was a certificate of exoneration for a person considered incriminated during denazification due to membership in the NSDAP or another Nazi organisation.

THE MONTE VERITÀ HOTEL
Like Casa Anatta, the hotel is built against the cliff face, with simple, clearly recognisable elements and suites with Bauhaus furniture, airy, well-conceived lounges and corridors, and metalwork designed down to the smallest detail. Thanks to the construction of the hotel, Bauhaus masters such as Gropius, Albers, Bayer, Breuer, Feiniger, Schlemmer, Schawinksy and Moholy-Nagy visited Ascona and Monte Verità and discovered what Ise Gropius formulated in 1978: 'The place where our forehead touches the sky...'.

What a strange fate then Baron von der Heidt's secret involvement with Nazism, but the artists arrive before '33 in Ascona (there are photos of Moholy-Nagy from '26 in Ascona) and cannot suspect anything that will happen later.

33. STILL ON THE SUBJECT OF ERANOS

The Eranos Colloquia (a word that in Greek means banquet, but of the type that the Latins called coena collaticia, in which everyone brings something) were initiated in 1933 by Olga Fröbe- Kapteyn (1881-1962), inspired by Rudolf Otto, a specialist in the history of religions at the University of Marburg, and a translator of Plato. Otto stands in the tradition of Friedrich Schleiermacher (among the greatest exponents of the philosophical current of idealism along with Hegel, Fichte and Schelling).
Founded in the 'Casa Gabriella', which her father had bought in 1926 on Lake Maggiore, the annual conference (Tagung) enabled Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn to bring together in a kind of 'research school

spiritual' the leading scholars of Eastern and Western religions of her time. Strong-willed, she succeeded in involving Carl Gustav Jung and Martin Buber (whom she had met at a 1924 seminar in the Monte Verità community, frequented by such figures as the poet Ludwig Derleth, the actor Emil Jannings, Chaim Weizmann, and Thomas Mann), and in involving her friend Alice Bailey and gradually various scholars, theosophists, and members of the European nobility.
From 1949 until 1978, it was animated by the orientalist Henry Corbin, who located the Foundation's headquarters in the Eranos House, a beautiful villa in Ascona.
It was there that the Eranos Tagungen took place, conversations aimed at the "study of images and archetypal forces in their relationship with the individual", and more generally at the exploration of man's inner worlds, conducted through the scientific methodologies specific to each of the participants.

Until 1988, the Eranos colloquia - annual meetings that have always been international and multidisciplinary, and whose proceedings were published in the Eranos Jahrbuch - were attended by intellectuals from different disciplinesand comparative r e l i g i o n s , s i n a n c i n g , i s s i n a l y s i s t i c a l l y s i g n i s t i c a l , e g g g i s l a t i o n a l l y s i s t i c s , e g g i s l a t i o n s , indology, chemistry, biology, astronomy, comparative mythology, mysticism, Zen Buddhism, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology), who all shared, however, the research activity, and an interdisciplinary cultural orientation with a broadly spiritualist tone.
Among them: Martin Buber, Carl Gustav Jung, Mircea Eliade, Károly Kerényi, Gilbert Durand, James Hillman, Erik Hornung, René Huyghe, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Hans Leisegang, Karl Löwith, Louis Massignon, Erich Neumann, Adolf Portmann (director of the 'Eranos Colloquia' after Fröbe-Kapteyn's death), Henri- Charles Puech, Gilles Quispel, Erwin Rousselle, Tilo Schabert, Gershom Scholem, Paul Tillich, Hellmut Wilhelm, Robert Charles Zaehner, Marie-Louise von Franz, Heinrich Zimmer (Indologist), and the Italians Ernesto Buonaiuti, Raffaele Pettazzoni and Giuseppe Tucci.

Martin Buber

The first Jewish cooperative agricultural settlement was founded in Palestine in 1909. The founders of what would become the kibbutz movement believed they were laying the foundations for a new society for Jews, one based on cooperation, equality and communal living. One of the ideologists of the movement was the philosopher Martin Buber. In his book Paths in Utopia, which remains one of the most powerful critiques of authoritarian socialism, he argued that this movement was an example of non-authoritarian, libertarian or 'utopian' socialism that had not failed. Uri Davis challenges this understanding of the kibbutz movement and draws parallels with Buber's own failure to live according to the ethic he advocated.

"Each one must keep and sanctify his own soul in his own way and place, without envying the way and place of others."
(M. Buber, The Way of Man)

Martin Mordechai Buber (Vienna, 8 February 1878 - Jerusalem, 13 June 1995) was an Austrian philosopher, theologian and educationalist naturalised as an Israeli.

He is credited with the emergence of the Hassidim movement in European culture, but above all he is credited with the idea that life is fundamentally not subjectivity, but intersubjectivity; indeed, for Buber, subject and intersubjectivity are synchronously complementary, and he was so convinced of this that he did not hesitate to state: 'In the beginning is relationship'.
hassidism

Chassidism, ḥasidism or hassidism (Hebrew: חסידות?, Ḥăsīdūt) is a Jewish mass movement based on the spiritual renewal of Orthodox Judaism, which arose in 18th-century Poland through the work of the thaumaturge and kabbalist Yisrāēl ben Ĕlīezer, better known as the Ba'al Shēm Ṭōv. Thaumaturgy (a word formed from the Greek θαῦμα thaûma, theme thaumat-, "prodigy" and ἔργον érgon "work") is a branch of religion that deals with prodigies and miracles.

Some prefer to distinguish thaumaturgy from theurgy, which deals with miracles in the strict sense, that is, prodigies of a religious and non-magical nature. This difference remains very subtle, if not an end in itself: in fact, one cannot forget the importance that the power of the saint to also be a thaumaturge has, for popular religiosity as for the Christian Church. Also answering to this appellation are kings known as 'thaumaturges', that is, capable of performing miracles, such as the French kings (from the Capetians to the French Revolution) and English kings (from the Norman Conquest of England to the War of the Two Roses).

But returning to the Chassidic movement ... it has managed to succeed and spread dynamically among Jews in half of Europe, and also in Israel, Canada, the United States and Australia.

Daisetsu Teitarō Suzuki
Many argue that Suzuki's return to the US in 1951 as a professor of Buddhist philosophy at Columbia University - when he was 81 years old - launched the Zen boom in the US and Europe. From then until his death in 1966, Suzuki wrote some of his most famous books:

Zen Studies

(1955), Zen and Japanese Buddhism

(1958), Mysticism: Christian and

Buddhist (1957), and Zen Buddhism

and Psychoanalysis

(1960). He also enjoyed great international fame when speaking of Zen

Buddhism in the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Princeton and many others, and was a regular and distinguished guest speaker at conferences including Eranos in Ascona, Switzerland, and constantly visited by eminent philosophers, theologians and

psychologists of the time. He was

appointed for thePrize Nobel Prize for for peace in . 1963. https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=ClEBRnm8WQM

Joseph Campbell speaker of Eranos :
George Lucas was the first Hollywood director to be influenced by Campbell. Lucas stated after the release of the first Star Wars film in 1977 that his story was inspired, in part, by ideas described in The Hero with a Thousand Faces and other works by Campbell. The connection between Star Wars and Campbell was further strengthened when in later reprints of Campbell's book, the image of Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker was used on the cover.
The Hero with a Thousand Faces, first published in 1949 by Pantheon Books, is a work of comparative mythology by Joseph Campbell. In it, the author, comparing the myths of various cultures of the world, introduces his theory concerning the mythological structure of the 'archetypal' hero's journey.

34. OTHER 'MONTEVERITES

1869: Mikhail Bakunin - The Satan of the Revolt in Locarno.
When Bakunin arrived in Locarno in November 1869, after his adventurous life as a philosopher, revolutionary, prisoner of the Tsar and opponent of Marx in the First International, he was torn between the desire to continue to actively intervene in history, trusting in the revolutionary power of the Latin peoples (Italy and Spain), and the desire to retreat into the private sphere, to give his family a place to stay in an idyllic and peaceful place. Progress in the translation of Karl Marx's 'Capital' into Russian was to provide the financial basis for life in Locarno, but the young activist Netshev convinced him once again of the need for revolutionary propaganda in Russia. It was in Locarno that Bakunin wrote his polemical writings against Mazzini, against the centralisation of state power and therefore in favour of federalism in Switzerland. Locarno was also the scene of the brief and intense friendship with the Italian anarchist Carlo Cafiero, who bought the villa La Baronata in Minusio for Bakunin, which became an obligatory place of pilgrimage for the next generation of anarchists.

The Russian philosopher Michail Bakunin, father of the modern anarchist movement, stayed in Minusio on the Ticino coast of Verbano from 1874. Behind him was a life on the front line as a revolutionary. Condemned to death in 1850 for the events connected with the Dresden Uprising, he was later (having had his death sentence commuted to life imprisonment) deported to Siberia. From the ice region he managed to escape to take refuge first in Japan and then in the United States. His arrival in Italy (in Naples) is dated 1865. In his destiny he still had political commitment and ideological battles until his arrival in Minusio, a guest as mentioned in the residence La Baronata of the anarchist Angelo Cafiero. Only three years later, on 1 July 1876, Bakunin died in Berne where he is buried in the Bremgarten cemetery.

In the mid-1990s, the Tuscan industrialist and anarchist Alfredo Mazzucchelli imagined dedicating a monument to Bakunin to be placed in the hospitable land of Ticino. To this end, he donated a 28-ton block of marble to the city of Locarno and the design of the work, presented in grand style at Monte Verità in Ascona, was entrusted to the pataphysical artist Enrico Baj. Of that fervid idea... the work belongs to all those who have the cult of freedom... nothing came of it, complicit, it seems, in the difficulties of transporting the boulder to Rivapiana di Minusio and the painful death (in 2003) of the great creative artist from Vergiate. And it seems to me that Enrico Baj's words were prophetic when, in the days of the creative impetus and presentations, he declared... To the great comrade Bakunin the honour of having a Non-Monument.

Interesting is the case of one of the great collectors of the 20th century *Nell Walden*, **artist, wife and sponsor of Hertwart Walden, publisher, promoter and gallery owner of der Sturm (Blauer Reiter, Franz Marc, Vasilij Kandinskij, Oskar Kokoschka, August Macke, Gabriele Münter among others) who came to live in Ascona in 1933 as an exile Jew. Her husband Hertwart Walden (born Georg Lewin) was nicknamed after her first wife, the aforementioned Else Lasker Schüler, who was also in Monte Verità, from Thoreau's book Walden, Life in the Woods. <<I went to the woods because I wished to live wisely, facing only the essential facts of life, to see if I had failed to learn what it had to teach me, and lest I should discover at my deathbed that I had not lived... >>. Thoreau was a pupil of the spiritualist Ralph Waldo Emerson, who read the Bhagavad-Gita as early as 1854. In Walden's circle are among others Hilla von Rebay, founder of the Guggenheim N.Y.**

Erich Mühsam was born on 6 April 1878 in Berlin into a family of wealthy Jewish pharmacists. At the age of 17, he was expelled from the grammar school in Lübeck for repeated acts of indiscipline and demonstrations of a socialist nature. From then on, he frequented the artistic bohemian scene and wrote for satirical newspapers.

In 1900, he befriended Gustav Landauer in Berlin and sided with the anarchists. In 1904, he took part in the Monte Verità community (Switzerland). In 1909, in Munich, he founded the Tat group, federated with the Sozialistischer Bund, frequented the bohemian milieu and that of the Kaffeehaus literati. In 1911 he created his own newspaper, Kain, in which he expressed his anarchist pacifism and dealt with the social question of the proletariat. Upset by the declaration of war, he tried in 1916 to unite those opposed to the ongoing conflict. However, he was expelled by the Bavarian government and placed in forced residence in a provincial town. When the monarchy fell on 7 November 1918, he returned to Munich and took part in Kurt Eisner's revolutionary process and socialist government.
He was very active in the defence and support of workers' councils in Bavaria in 1919. Accused of high treason for this, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. In prison, he wrote his most important political works on anarcho-communism. Freed after five years, he resumed his intense activity until 1933 when, captured after the Reichstag fire, he was imprisoned in various prisons and concentration camps, including the Sonnenburg concentration camp. He was murdered the following year in the Oranienburg concentration camp.
"The great evil of which mankind must be freed is the tendency to be complacent about consecrated formulas, which then amounts to a lack of trust in one's own conscience. Once emancipated from the blind and passive belief in formulae, man's wisdom will be able to manifest itself freely. But then it will still struggle to rise from learned science to wisdom animated by the pulsations of life."
Erich Mühsam

Anarchy and Anarchism, in their historical meaning, must be considered synonymous with opposition to any form of authority, which is the principle by which any government governs itself, and all that follows from it, first and foremost the relationship between 'command and obey'.
Anarchists do not profess the absence of order, rules and/or organised structures at all, but propagate the idea of a free order, based on individual diversity, where each individual acts in

full autonomy and self-responsibility, rejecting all forms of authoritarianism. The anarchist believes in the reasons for individuality, but he is not necessarily an individualist, simply his concept of community and sociality is different from the common one, which involves bonds of belonging that the anarchist rejects:

"The bourgeois and traditional exception of anarchy as disorder that disrupts even the thinkability of any society, thus making human coexistence itself impossible, is an insult to the Greek etymon: absence of domination. In contrast, in a strong sense, anarchy is one of the possible forms of organisation of the human being that social bonds are given. It is characterised by the openness of its organisational horizon, which eschews institutionalised stasis in order to valorise a happy and dynamic relationship between the forms of life that each individual intends to elect and the collective order that conditions the individual's possibility of action and expression. In the vibrant tension between these two polarities explodes the concrete space of anarchy as an instance of reciprocal translation to inspire the solution of associated forms of life".

35. ANARCHY AND ANARCHISM

In principle, most anarchists agree that anarchy is the end to which every anarchist strives, and anarchism the path that every individual or association takes to get there. In essence, anarchism is the means and anarchy the end.

Although we are aware, therefore, that the ultimate goal for both is the attainment of an anarchist society, one could nevertheless define as an anarchist the one who lives and acts within the repressive society by putting into practice, on a case-by-case basis, all those strategies and techniques considered useful for the attainment of anarchy, and an anarchist the one who already believes he is living and operating according to the principles of anarchy, albeit in a restricted anarchist community.

For Malatesta, revolution cannot be achieved by pursuing economic interests, because interest is always conservative: only the ideal is revolutionary.

36 HARALD SZEEMANN

If history is invented at Monte Verità, the curator of its museum can be no exception, being the first 'independent curator' of history.
A personal friend of artists such as Joseph Beuys, Richard Serra, Mimmo Paladino and Jörg Immendorff, Szeemann, preferring to work freelance, effectively invented the model of the 'independent curator', i.e. an exhibition organiser unconnected to museum institutions.
In 1972, he was asked to direct Documenta 5 in Kassel and in 1978 he curated an exhibition on Monte Verità, the artistic community founded at the beginning of the century in the Locarno foothills of the Alps.
In 1980 he invented the 'Aperto' section at the Venice Biennale with Achille Bonito Oliva. In 1999, he was appointed artistic director of the same biennale, a position he also held in 2001.

The Truth's Breasts Exhibition :
Anatta House Museum
The Casa Anatta Museum is a museum on the grounds of Monte Verità in Ascona, Canton Ticino, Switzerland. It is the central exhibition space of the museum complex on Monte Verità - the museum circuit, protected as a cultural asset, still includes the Casa Selma, Casa dei Russi and Padiglione Elisarion buildings. The Casa Anatta building has been used as a museum since 1981.

The heart of the museum is the extensive exhibition Monte Verità. The Breasts of Truth by curator Harald Szeemann. This travelling exhibition was first presented in the summer of 1978, spread over six different locations in Ascona and the Brissago Islands. Casa Anatta was also among the exhibition venues at the time. Later, the exhibition was shown at the Kunsthaus in Zurich, the Academy of Arts in Berlin, the Museum of the 20th Century in Vienna and the Villa Stuck in Munich.

"Monte Verita is also an archaeological exhibition and corresponds to a visual report of the excavations carried out. The exhibits are contributions to topical, sometimes explosive themes, from philosophical anarchism to the reform of life, the formation of the communes, the sexual revolution, women's emancipation, the popular initiative against nuclear armament and also for the protection of the environment'.

- Harald Szeemann: The exhibition took three years of preparation. Szeemann collected countless objects and talked to contemporary witnesses for his first independently curated major exhibition. The result was an 'alternative exhibition at the margins of modern European cultural history'. The concept was to make 'mountain history in all its heterogeneity not only comprehensible to the outside world, but also tangible' (Dominik Keller). Szeemann named the individual themes of the exhibition 'breasts', analogous to the multiple-breasted Artemis of Ephesus - subdivided into anarchy, social utopia, soul reform, life reform, spiritual reform, body reform, psychology, mythology, dance and music, literature and art. Not only the history of Monte Verità, but of the whole of Ascona with the Brissago Islands, the Teatro San Materno (Ascona), the Elisarion in Minusio, Armand Schulthess's 'Encyclopaedia of the Forest', and various artists, including Ingeborg Lüscher, Italo Valenti, Gianfredo Camesi.

Starting in 1981, parts of the travelling exhibition, which included many loans, found a home in the Casa Anatta as a permanent exhibition; Szeemann was also responsible for the presentation and later directed the museum. After his death, the exhibits were sold to the Monte Verità Foundation. In 2009, the building, which was in a deplorable state, had to be closed. In 2017, the restored museum was reopened. The exhibition 'Monte Verità. The Breasts of Truth' comprises 975 objects and has been left in its original form, so from a museum point of view it is a kind of restoration of the original 1978 exhibition and not an exhibition on Monte Verità with current museum techniques. Which makes it clear by now how far away utopia is and suggests that by now the object on display is Szeeman's work owned by his wife

Ingeborg Lüscher who chooses to celebrate her property (created by the still great Szeemann) rather than Monte Verità itself, leaving the exhibition to be remade from scratch according to contemporary museum logic. The owner is now in charge and the spirit of Monte no longer exists, and is not even celebrated properly, debased by the restoration of an exhibition that is now old and meaningless. This distortion has taken place once again due to the total ineptitude of our institutions, which already let von der Heydt's priceless works slip through their fingers at the time and are now incapable of adequately celebrating and perhaps reviving such an important phenomenon as Monte Verità, which is a pity indeed. Of course all this is understandable since it was people from outside who made Monte Verità great, and the provincial and culturally backward local reality never produced anything. Everything that has happened in this area has always come from outside, economic development included, due exclusively to the massive influx of foreign black capital 'washed' by our banks and injected into our economy through wild building speculation of secondary residences owned by foreigners or by inland Swiss (this time by bankers who laundered at home). The contemporary desolation manifests itself in winter when these soulless houses stand empty waiting for temperatures to suit the aged bones of their owners.

Originally, the exhibition 'The Truth of a Mountain' was set up in four small rooms in the basement, with information about the exhibition in the remaining rooms.

Anatta House

The year of construction of Casa Anatta is usually given as 1904, and 1905 for the inauguration. However, more recent literature mentions that it is more likely that the building was constructed after 1907-08, as it was not mentioned in earlier reports and is not visible in older photographs, unlike the main building. The name of the building derives from the Buddhist doctrine of anātman (Sanskrit, anattā, pāli), which affirms the non-existence of the ātman, i.e. a permanent individual self.

The wooden house served as a residence for Ida Hofmann and Henri Oedenkoven and as a social house for the cooperative on Monte Verità founded four years earlier. The architect is unknown, but Henri Oedenkoven was certainly involved in the project, influenced by Theosophical Art Nouveau.
Oedenkoven moved from the Casa Anatta in 1913, Hofmann later lived in the Casa Bianca. From 1920 there was a children's home on Monte Verità, and the Casa Anatta served as a restaurant with dancing and music. From 1926 it was the home of Eduard von der Heydt, who had lived in Ascona since 1929. Part of his art collection was housed in Casa Anatta. Two reconstruction phases are documented for the years before and after 1926, with modifications and additions, such as the extension of the second floor and the porticoes in the basement, which were later walled up. From 1942, the house served as an annexe to the hotel on Monte Verità, then as simple guest accommodation. When the house became a museum in 1981, it had to be restored and renovated. A kitchen was removed and the large staircase recreated.

The building has a cross-shaped ground plan and extends over three floors The entrance to the museum is located in the brick basement. The first floor above contained the main rooms - the additional light originally came from a skylight similar to an atrium. The floor above is much smaller and still includes a small 'tower room' in an elevated position. The second floor also originally housed the main entrance, which was moved to the south by von der Heydt. Already in the early days the house had central heating.

Characteristic of the building are the double wooden walls - horizontal on the outside, vertical below -, the high rooms as well as the rounded corners and vaulted ceilings in the rooms. Sliding doors, large windows, as well as a flat roof over much of the first floor, where Oedenkoven could stand naked without being disturbed, give the house an additional character of its own.

'The house [...] is of great historical and artistic value and must be considered one of the first European buildings in which a unity of function and form was achieved with a simple, linear structure'.

In the early 2000s, the building was in poor condition, rotten and damp. A temporary roof protected the structure After several years of restoration under the aegis of the then museum director Lorenzo Sonognini, Casa Anatta was reopened in May 2017 The rather crowded exhibition rooms contrast with the original, sparsely furnished house, which did not even have pictures hanging on the walls so as not to distract from the image of the green landscape visible through the windows

The museum circuit includes:

Casa Anatta, with exhibitions on the history of Monte Verità and its colony.

The Selma House is a typical 'light air hut' built in 1904 in the early days of the colony.

The Elisarion Pavilion is a wooden pavilion carved out of a former sun room. Today it houses Elisar von Kupffer's gigantic painting Clear World of the Blessed (1923).

The Russian House was named after Russian visitors and reopened in 2015 after renovation.

World War II period :

Casa Anatta, also known as Casa Pontremoli, was also a hub for the partisan struggle:

During World War II, it was inhabited by the family of Mario Pontremoli and the Levi Broglio family, owners of the Casina delle Rose, Gabriele D'Annunzio's beloved home in Venice. Casa Anatta during the war was a fundamental centre for the coordination of partisan moves, especially for the Battisti brigade.

Important figures such as Ferruccio Parri, Prince Carlo Caracciolo and Allen Dulles (whom we will see in Ascona at the end of World War II during the Intelligence Operation Sunrise) stayed overnight as guests of Mario Pontremoli.
"The Pontremoli engineer had come to pick us up to accompany us to Ascona where we would meet the guide. We spent the evening in Pontremoli's house, then went to sleep in a cottage on the hill. It was a small cottage consisting of three small rooms. It stood halfway up a pine forest overlooking the lake, and I thought it would have been an enviable stay in other times. Parri and I slept in one room. Selva, the guide that Arca had sent us, slept in the next room."
(Edgardo Sogno)
'I used to cross the border via Casa Pontremoli, at Monte Verità, to bring weapons'.
(Carlo Caracciolo)

In one of the villas near Monte Verità, another very important story took place:

37. THE HUMAN ENCOUNTER CENTRE

The Centro Incontri Umani Foundation is a Swiss foundation. The Foundation was created by Dr Angela Hobart of London, in memory of her parents, Dr Edmund and Margiana Stinnes-Von Gaevernitz of Ascona. Its aim is to promote encounters between researchers, artists and other people from various countries, scientific disciplines and professions, with particular reference to intercultural relations in the political, social, religious, medical and artistic spheres. The Foundation aims to develop exchanges that can be a factor of vitality and regeneration in today's world characterised by intense political, social and inter-ethnic conflicts and tensions.

Maya Hirsch, granddaughter of Edmund Stinnes

The houses of the Centre 200 metres from the boundary of the Monte Verità park were built at the beginning of the 20th century. The orientation of the Centre, in keeping with the ideals upheld by the Stinnes- Gaevernitz family, is to encourage international understanding, respect and peace. These ideals resonate with the aspirations of human beings from all strata of society and are realised through projects in favour of human dignity and diversity. They often work quietly, discreetly, to bring the peoples of the earth together.
The events are commemorated on the plaque affixed to the outside wall of the small pink house adjacent to the big house, the centre's headquarters. They indicate the approach and philosophy that the owners of the Human Encounter Centre wish to be perceived.

According to an odious rereading, things did not turn out exactly as explained in these lines and you can read about it later in the biography of Allen Welsch Dulles, which according to a present-day rereading is a far cry from the heroic, biased and perhaps naive description of the lady owner of the house who wants to embellish pro domo sua historical facts that are very important no doubt but not as heroic as she makes them appear. But

Let's start by transcribing what can be found online in the presentation of their 'Human Encounter Centre'.

The protagonists of the events called 'Operation Sunrise'.

Gerhard von S. Gaevernitz, 1864-1943 Gero von S. Gaevernitz, 1901-1970
Edmund Stinnes, 1896-1980 Edmund Stinnes 1896-1980, and Margianna Stinnes - S. Gaeverniz, 1904-1989
'Sunrise' is the code name given to secret diplomatic activities during the period at the end of the Second World War. It is an exciting story about a secret meeting in Ascona, in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, in 1945 to negotiate the end of the war in Italy. These meetings involved Allen Dulles, a member of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services), forerunner of the CIA, of which he was director during the years 1953-61. Dulles had come to Switzerland specifically to gather information on how to support resistance forces against the Nazis and fascists. Other important participants in the meetings were: Gero von Schulze Gaevernitz, a good friend and close associate of Dulles; General Max Waibel, a senior Swiss intelligence officer; and various senior Allied generals and Italian army leaders. General Wolff deserves special mention. He was Himmler's personal representative and commander of all SS troops in Italy, so his presence was crucial in the discussions. Switzerland's neutrality during the war allowed it to maintain vital links with both German and Allied intelligence.
Edmund Stinnes, a successful German-born entrepreneur and eldest son of Hugo Stinnes, especially made his house in Ascona available for these secret negotiations. Gero von Schulze Gaevernitz, of German Jewish origin and naturalised American citizen, was the brother of Edmund's wife Margianna Stinnes. His father Gerhart von Schulze Gaevernitz was a well-known professor of political science at the University of Freiburg in Germany. He had helped draft the pre-Hitler Weimar Constitution and fought throughout his life to promote rapprochement between Americans, British and Germans.

During the delicate negotiations, General Wolff and other senior officials decided to defy Hitler and Himmler's orders to make 'scorched earth'. Hitler's orders involved burning and destroying the remnants of Italian industry and economy and the rest of Europe, even Germany itself. Thanks to his charisma and his close contact with senior members of the Resistance Movement in Germany, Gero von Schulze Gaevernitz was a key figure in securing the secret surrender of a million Nazi and fascist men in Italy, thus averting 'scorched earth'.

Some historical reports downplay the Sunrise and in particular the page on Terence Airey, the American envoy where it is said that the three met SS General Karl Wolff and Airey tried to negotiate a meeting between Wolff and General Alexander to discuss the surrender of German forces in Italy. However, he failed to arrange the meeting and when the Soviets found out, the US and UK were accused of going behind the backs of their allies. Wolff was then protected by Dulles and Lemnitzer, much to Airey's disdain.
On 2 May 1945, Winston Churchill announced to Parliament the first major German surrender, when Germany capitulated to the Allied forces. Churchill declared: 'The war against fascism and Nazism on this front is over'.

This brief account of events is taken from 'The Secret Surrender' by Allen Dulles, Harper and Row Publishers, New York, First Edition, 1966.
The Italian Wikipedia page, as objective and comprehensive as it can be, mentions: Clash between allies
The Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee (Combined Chiefs of Staff, the assembly of the British and US Chiefs of Staff) had agreed to send the Allied military representatives Lemnitzer and Airey to Switzerland for talks with Wolff, but had also warned at once that it considered it necessary to inform the Soviets of these meetings, while the British commanders-in-chief proposed that Soviet representatives could take part in the talks. On 12 March, therefore, the British ambassador, Archibald Clark Kerr, and the US ambassador, Averell Harriman, in Moscow informed

directly to Vyacheslav Molotov the news of the secret meetings in Switzerland; the Soviet foreign minister, already informed by the secret service, made no objection in principle but requested the participation of three senior Soviet officers in the talks. General John R. Deane, the US military representative in Moscow, objected to this proposal and in the end the Soviet representatives were not accepted on the grounds that these were only preliminary talks that would soon be transferred to the Allied headquarters in Caserta, where permanent representatives of the Red Army were already present.

The 'Big Three', Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Stalin, during the Jalta conference in February 1945, after the apparent agreement during the Crimea meetings, had strong disagreements about secret talks with the Nazis in Switzerland.
Molotov did not welcome these Allied decisions and demanded the immediate interruption of the secret talks; on 22 March, in response to a minimising note from the British ambassador Clark Kerr denying the existence of real negotiations, a polemical official Soviet note was issued denouncing secret negotiations 'behind the backs of the Soviet Union' which could be a prelude to a separate peace between Nazi Germany and the Western Allies. Stalin's suspicion and mistrust were not dispelled by a reassuring personal message from President Roosevelt on 25 March about the 'Berne negotiations' and were instead increased by news of the transfer of at least three German divisions deployed in Italy to the eastern front. The Soviet dictator then replied to the president on 29 March, emphasising the obvious signs of a weakening of German resistance against the western allies, in contrast to the strengthening of the Wehrmacht's opposition against the Soviets, perhaps linked to obscure intentions of the Nazi leadership to 'open the Italian front to the allied armies'.

A further message from Roosevelt on 1 April, in which the president repeated that no negotiations were taking place and that the German troop movements could not be connected with the ongoing talks in Switzerland, prompted Stalin, in his reply of 3 April, to express the

his disappointment at the Soviet non-participation in the talks, at the risk of furthering Nazi manoeuvres to spread mistrust and divide the Big Three. The Soviet dictator also insinuated that the president had 'perhaps been misinformed by his collaborators' about the ongoing negotiations which, according to his 'colleagues and military experts' were actually aimed at breaking the resistance against the Western Allies and transferring the mass of German troops eastwards.

An embittered and weary President Roosevelt responded on 5 April with the bitterest message ever sent to the Soviet dictator, in part drafted by General George Catlett Marshall, in which he rejected all the accusations, emphasised the straightforwardness and sincerity of the Anglo-Saxon behaviour and accused Stalin's informers, "whoever they may be", of "despicable mystification" of the thinking of the president and his "reliable collaborators". Stalin replied again with a final missive on 7 April, written in dry but friendly terms, in which he described his collaborators and informers as "honest and modest people who have no intention of offending anyone", capable and trustworthy (as evidenced by their exact comments on the movements of the German reserves in February 1945); he also confirmed that the German troops were fighting desperately in the east while showing signs of giving way against the westerners, that troop transfers against the Soviets were continuing, and above all that 'the Soviet view', regarding the need to remain united and to allow the participation of all the Allies in any talks with the Germans, was 'the only correct one'.

President Roosevelt died on 12 April and this lively exchange of correspondence was the last contact the president had with Stalin; the disagreements between the Anglo-Saxons and the Soviets, however, provoked an Allied rethink and on 21 April new directives arrived from Washington to the headquarters in Switzerland with the order to immediately break off further contacts and talks with Wolff or his emissaries.

The final negotiations and the German surrender

The aims were different: the Italians wanted to hasten the surrender to avoid further unnecessary destruction; the Americans to be able to concentrate their forces in Germany; the Germans to negotiate a safe-conduct to Germany that would avoid retribution once the war was over and, in the event that it continued, to be able to join their military forces there intent on facing the advance of the Red Army [unsourced].

On Friday, 20 April 1945, General Heinrich Vietinghoff gave the order for the 10th and 14th Armies to retreat towards Rovereto, with the assent of Rudolf Rahn ambassador to the RSI. Residual fascist forces instead regrouped in vain in the republican Alpine redoubt. Mussolini's death at Giulino di Mezzegra on 28 April rendered all vain hopes of further resistance futile.

According to agreements between the parties, by 29 April 1945 the German forces signed the surrender of Caserta (which only became fully operational on the morning of 3 May) on behalf of themselves and the Italian Social Republic, limiting to a minimum the opportunities for confrontation with the Allied forces that had in the meantime advanced into northern Italy.

And this is a translation of what we find on the English Wikipedia (which is then written by Americans or Englishmen?) :

Denial (following Russian indignation at being excluded from the secret talks on the pretext that they were only preparatory).
Roosevelt denied that surrender negotiations were taking place in Switzerland. Dulles, however, appears to have entered into a verbal agreement, apparently at his own discretion, to protect SS General Wolff from the Nuremberg trials while the details of the surrender were being worked out. Although Switzerland was neutral during the Second World War, Swiss intelligence officer Max Waibel and school director Max Husmann organised the meetings. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill followed the discussion closely and said he believed that the 'misunderstandings' with the Soviets had been resolved with Roosevelt's death on 12 April. Churchill referred to

cynically to the negotiations as Operation Crossword, apparently because he found them disconcerting. Despite warnings from other officials that they were violating the Casablanca Agreement, which required all dealings with Axis members to be in terms of unconditional surrender, Dulles worked in favour of Wolff, who was determined to end the war before the 'communists' reached Trieste. [American historian Gerhard Weinberg wrote: "The whole 'Sunrise' episode reflects very badly on the judgement of Allen Dulles, who was carried away - and beyond the orders of the JCS - by the prospects of a major coup". Repercussions

On 22 March, Molotov, in his letter to the American ambassador, wrote that for a fortnight, negotiations had been taking place in Berne behind the backs of the Soviet Union between representatives of the German Military Command on the one hand and representatives of the American and British Command on the other. The Soviet government considers this absolutely inadmissible'.

This led to Roosevelt's letter to Stalin on 25 March and Stalin's reply on 29 March.

British aid to partisans in northern Italy, April-May 1945. The Western Allies' protection of Karl Wolff risked bringing them into conflict with the partisans.

Consequences

President Harry Truman officially ended the talks with the Germans in Switzerland and ensured that a Soviet general was represented at the talks in Caserta, Italy, which led to the surrender of the entire armed forces. Nevertheless, the repercussions of the incident seem to have discouraged full Soviet participation in the UN founding conference that month.

Wolff and his forces were being considered to help implement Operation Unthinkable, a secret plan to invade the Soviet Union supported by Winston Churchill at the time. Wolff later proved complicit in the assassination of

300,000 Jews. On 26 April, the SS general was captured by Italian partisans, but was rescued by Dulles' Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and Swiss intelligence. Despite promises

made by Wolff in March to Dulles in Berne, Vietinghoff delayed the surrender as long as possible, allowing Wolff to sign the instrument of surrender only on 29 April 1945.
The actual surrender in Italy was signed on 29 April 1945, with the agreement of a cessation of hostilities on 2 May. Wolff justified his actions to officials in Berlin by explaining that the agreement had prevented 'a communist insurrection' in northern Italy. Wolff and his officers were not interned, but celebrated the resolution at Gestapo headquarters in Bolzano for several days together with Allied commanders. The Americans periodically had to repel partisans attempting to capture the Germans. Victory Day in Europe was celebrated on 8 May.

Galbraith's evaluation
In 1979, the economist John Kenneth Galbraith, who had known Dulles when he was director of the CIA in the 1950s, wrote that during 1960-1961 Dulles proved 'a master of disastrous ineptitude. In those months he sent Gary Powers to the Paris summit, helped overthrow the neutralist government of Souvanna Phouma in Laos (which later had to be restored) and was the man at the head of the organisation that was responsible for the greatest blunder in our history, the Bay of Pigs... These were not the results of a shrewd administrator or even half-intelligence. Nor was shrewdness the quality emphasised by those of us who were not loyal to the organisation and who knew him in those years. Although such judgements must be offered (and received) with caution, by some, certainly, he was considered amiable, pleasant but mentally very, very weak. Perhaps, according to the most charitable view, he was past his best moment at the time of his great failures... beyond doubt that not only was he past his best moment, but that his best moment never was. Never, not even in the Bay of Pigs, was his capacity for miscalculation more disastrous than in his handling of Operation Sunrise, as the Wolff negotiations were called... He wanted to go out with a bang. Those who thought he foresaw the Cold War and those who thought he helped cause it were wrong. He was just Allen Dulles'.

In short, opinions do not agree and as always it is difficult to understand all the intrigues but one thing is certain: the war ended but the cold war began and the world was divided into 2 blocs.
However, there are a few things that do not add up for me about our Dulles. On the Italian Wikipedia I find :

Dulles financier
Until 1942, he worked as a lawyer and financier for 16 years. He joined the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry. He was active in the Republican Party. He worked in the same company in which his older brother worked, the United Fruit Company.

As a lawyer he defended two of the most important American Mafia bosses between the wars: Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky. (and that for me should be enough to categorise him as a super influential 'villain').

As a financier, Dulles worked in New York for Sullivan & Cromwell, a Wall Street securities investment firm, as managing partner, where he successfully engineered the largest Treasury loan ($30 million) to the National Socialist German government, as well as other foreign loans, and became the State Department's point man on foreign loans during 1926-1933.

In 1930, Allen's brother John Foster Dulles, on behalf of the wealthy Czechoslovakian-born Petscheks family, instructed his brother to sell the shares in Silesian Coal to George Menane, the Petscheks family's front man. Dulles then resold the shares to Schacht, the Nazi Minister of Economics. After the sale, Dulles became director of the Consolidated Silesian Steel Company; he had only a small share in the company, the rest belonged to Frederick Flick. It later became the Silesian-American Corporation, managed by Prescott Bush and his father-in-law George Walker. Following the Second War

world, on 8 November 1942, President Roosevelt ordered the confiscation of the shares.

In the period from 1926 to 1933, Dulles became the chief arms negotiator for the State Department until 1942. Brown Brothers had merged with Harriman & Co. of New York to form Brown Brothers Harriman. Averell Harriman was a rail transport industrialist and Dulles was a close friend of his. Brown Brothers Harriman poured money into the coffers of the Nazi Party, bringing Adolf Hitler to power. Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. transferred millions of dollars in gold, steel, fuel, coal and US government bonds by sea to Germany, which Hitler used to build his war machine.

This seems in stark contrast to Harriman's biography: William Averell Harriman (New York, 15 December 1891 - Yorktown Heights, 26 July 1986) was an American businessman, diplomat and politician.

The son of E. H. Harriman, owner of the Union Pacific Railroad, one of the world's leading railroad companies in the late 19th and early 20th century, upon his father's death he inherited one of the most conspicuous fortunes of the time. After studying at Yale Harriman followed his father's career in business, becoming president of the Union Pacific and managing director of the Illinois Central Railroad. He built the largest civilian commercial fleet in the United States during World War I, establishing the Merchant Shipbuilding Corporation and later turned to finance. In 1925, he visited the Soviet Union and negotiated with Lev Trockij to acquire manganese mines in the Caucasus. He then founded Brown Brothers Harriman with his brother Roland in 1931, still the oldest of Wall Street's merchant banks still in operation.

When his childhood friend, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, became President of the United States in 1933, Harriman approached the Democratic Party and was one of the few businessmen who supported the New Deal. He was chairman of the National Recovery Administration from

1934 to 1935 and his influence was decisive for the appointment of Harry Hopkins as Secretary of Commerce in 1938.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Harriman became Roosevelt's personal envoy to Winston Churchill and Iosif Stalin, with the aim of establishing a direct link with the leaders of Nazi Germany's enemy countries *(a couple of lines earlier 'Harriman poured money into the coffers of the Nazi Party bringing Adolf Hitler to power')*. In this capacity Harriman was the negotiator of the Rent and Loan Act, which supported Britain and Russia with materials and armaments in the most difficult moments of the conflict. Harriman was a trusted man and close confidant of both Churchill and Roosevelt, but was also appreciated by Stalin and became a key figure in Allied diplomacy throughout the conflict. This role was reconfirmed with his appointment as ambassador to the Soviet Union, a post he held from 1943 to 1946. During his tenure, Harriman took on the delicate task of maintaining Great Alliance diplomatic relations, gaining the trust of the Soviets and succeeding in preventing the USSR's annexation of the Japanese island of Hokkaidō. He participated as a diplomatic advisor in all the major inter-allied conferences of the war, in Casablanca, Teheran, Jalta and Potsdam.

Known in diplomatic circles as 'the Crocodile' for his sly but tough negotiating style, Harriman became after the conclusion of the world war one of the Wise men, the architects of the post-war world order. Briefly ambassador to London in 1946, he was the inspiration behind the famous telegram drafted by George F. Kennan, whom he called to work at the Moscow embassy and later his successor, that defined the Truman Doctrine of containment of the Soviet Union, a pillar of the Cold War. As Secretary of Commerce in the Truman cabinet (1946-1948) and later director of the European Recovery Program (1948-1950), Harriman was, together with his close friend, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, one of the main architects of the Marshall Plan and among the founding fathers of the Atlantic Pact.

But let us pick up the threads of Dulles' biography :

In Cologne on 4 January 1933 there was a secret meeting between Hitler, von Papen and Baron Kurt von Schroder, head of an international banking empire. Baron Schroder had previously raised funds to pay off the Nazi debt, which was imposed by the Treaty of Versailles of 28 June 1919. It was only after Hitler met secretly with von Papen at Baron Kurt von Schroder's house in Cologne that Hindenburg would relent and appoint Hitler as chancellor. This meeting marked the birth of the Third Reich. Two Americans were also present at this meeting: John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen. The Dulles brothers were present as legal representatives for the Kuhn Loeb Company, which had granted large short-term credits to Germany. Their presence guaranteed the credits for repayment by Hitler.

In 1934 Allen Dulles is on the board as a director of the Schroeder Bank, his brother John Foster Dulles is a legal advisor, the bank is the financial arm of the Nazis. In 1936 the Schroeder Bank merges to form Schroeder, Rockefeller & Co. Inc. Carlton P. Fuller president, Avery Rockefeller vice-president. In 1937 at the end of January, Dulles merges all his assets into one account in the same bank in the name of Brown Brothers Harriman-Schroeder and Rock (Rock diminutive of Rockefeller). John Foster and Allen Dulles are the two lawyers from John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, who are about to be investigated for their business dealings with the Nazis and for their advocacy of eugenics (doctrine of racial hygiene).

And now just to 'cheer you up' a little ...
After the eugenics movement was well established in the United States of America, it also began to spread to the then Weimar Republic. Californian eugenicists began to produce literature promoting eugenics and compulsory sterilisation and this was passed on to German scholars and medical professionals. By 1933, California had subjected more people to sterilisation than all other federal states put

together; the programme designed by Nazi Germany was largely inspired by the practice implemented in California.

The Rockefeller Foundation helped finance and develop several German eugenics programmes, including the one that Josef Mengele worked on before he was appointed 'death doctor' in the Auschwitz concentration camp because of his Nazi experiments on human beings.

On his return from a visit to Germany in 1934, where more than 5,000 people a month were being forced into sterilisation, the leader of the Californian eugenicists C. M. Goethe boasted to a colleague: 'you will be interested to know that your work played an important part in shaping the views of the group of intellectuals behind Adolf Hitler in this epoch-making programme. Everywhere I have heard that their views have been extremely stimulated by American thought.... I want you, dear friend, to carry this thought with you for the rest of your life, to know that you are strongly involved in the action of a great country of more than 60 million people'.

Researcher Harry Hamilton Laughlin often boasted that his sterilisation laws based on the eugenic model (Racial Integrity Act of 1924) had been implemented in the Nuremberg Laws as 'racial hygiene'. In 1936, Laughlin was invited to an award ceremony at the University of Heidelberg (planned to worthily celebrate the second anniversary of the expulsion of all Jews from the faculty) to receive an honorary doctorate for his work on the 'science of racial cleansing'.

Due to financial constraints, Laughlin was unable to physically attend, so he had to limit himself to receiving the prize through the Rockefeller Institute; he later proudly shared the prize with his colleagues, noting that he felt it symbolised 'the common understanding of German and American scientists of the nature of eugenics'.

And now after this descent into the underworld that saw the monsters of war pass through Ascona, we move on to something radically different and much, much higher because it is true that the representatives of the opposing currents of material power and esoteric spiritual power live physically not far away, and these representatives are 'My Neighbours'. I wonder how this is possible, how it is possible to find stories so ethically radically opposed and yet so physically close, in the same hamlet. It sounds like a joke but if we think about it, good and evil are often physically not far apart.

38A BIT OF GOOD IN ASCONA

Augusto Pancaldi from Ascona was born in Nuremberg to a family originally from Switzerland. Starting in 1970, he devoted himself completely to Hermetic studies, to which he had been initiated in 1947. From 1971 to 1976 he attended Frater Albertus' Alchemy courses, also devoting himself to laboratory work. Subsequently, he detached himself and produced the 'Circulatus Minus' according to Urbigerus. He held various practical Alchemy seminars in France, Italy and Switzerland.

His text PRACTICAL ALCHEMISTRY is a true handbook of alchemy that is explained with the use of 36 symbolic tables accompanied by an exhaustive commentary. It not only provides an understanding of the fundamentals of this discipline, but also allows you to put them into practice and carry out some alchemical laboratory experiences.

Károly Kerényi (Temesvár, 19 January 1897 - Zurich, 14 April 1973) lived on Lord in the Cross Street, 200m from here. He was a Hungarian classical philologist and historian of religions, considered to be one of the founders of modern studies of Greek mythology.

Let us not forget Boris Luban Plozza and Michael Balint (according to the MV website founders of psychosomatic medicine). Elsewhere, I find the Ascona model for psychosomatic medicine and the Monte congresses that Balint has been seminarising since '68. The Ascona Model of psychosomatic medicine has been defined by the World Health Organisation.
A close friend of Plozza's was Erich Fromm, who died in Minusio but was a friend of a neighbour, so since he is a legend I will tell you a little of his story
The culmination of Fromm's political and social philosophy can be found in his book Psychoanalysis of Contemporary Society, published in 1955. In it, Fromm put forward arguments in favour of a democratic and libertarian model of socialism, with a strongly

humanist slant.

The thinkers who contributed most to the shaping of his thinking were Marx and Bachofen, and starting with the early works of Karl Marx, he emphasised the ideal of personal freedom, which was lacking in the countries of communism, judged to be a vicious dictatorship far from the ideal of freedom. He saw dehumanising social structures dominated by bureaucratic apparatuses at work in both the West and Eastern Europe, resulting in a universal social phenomenon of alienation.
Allow me an aside to explain Bachofen :

Coming from an important family of wealthy entrepreneurs, he first studied in his home town of Basel, then in Berlin (1835-1837) and Göttingen (1837-1838), where he met masters such as August Boeckh, Leopold von Ranke and Friedrich Carl von Savigny. He completed his education with study trips to Paris and Cambridge. Back home, he was active for a short time as a professor of Roman law at the University of Basel (1841 to 1843) as well as a member of the cantonal parliament (1844 to 1845).

However, his career as a judge was longer, first at the Criminal Court (from 1841 to 1844) and then at the Court of Appeal (from 1844 to 1866). Between 1840 and 1848, he published his first works. These were traditional studies of Roman law that were well received in the academic world. Entirely different was the fate of his later works, based on his vast philological and archaeological knowledge, which, although appreciated by anthropologists such as Henry Lewis Morgan and John Ferguson Mc Lennan, aroused profound ostracism from the philologists and academic historians of his time.

After several crucial trips to Italy and Greece, it was with the Essay on the Funerary Symbolism of the Ancients (1859) that Bachofen laid the methodological foundations of his work, centred on the definition of the concept of the symbol 'resting in itself'; the latter, representing nothing but itself, draws on the metaphysical truth that

finds its concrete embodiment in history. With the work The Maternal Right, also known as The Matriarchy (1861), Bachofen concretised his discourse more concretely, declining, through the study of symbols and myths, what he considered to be the primordial essence of the historical dialectic, namely the alternation of matriarchal and patriarchal phases. These are theories that he took up and deepened in other important works such as Il popolo licio (1862), La Saga di Tanaquilla (1870), originally conceived as a response to Mommsen's adversarial Storia romana, and finally Lettere antiquarie (1880-1886).

According to his historiographical conception, the beginnings of human history are characterised by a succession of phases in which first the maternal element (and with it the symbolism of earth and water, natural law, sexual promiscuity, community of goods) and later the paternal element (and with it the celestial symbolism, positive law, monogamy, private property) prevailed. The transition between these phases is said to have taken place through moments of violent female power (Amazonism), first as a rebellion against the physical supremacy of the male in the early days of civilisation, and then as a degeneration of the classical phase of so-called demetric matriarchy, seen by Bachofen as the 'poetry of history', ordered as it would have been according to the peaceful and equitable laws of mother earth.

Although lacking any historical foundation, these theories have inspired much of the most valid modern research on these themes: their revaluation has been carried out both from the right (Ludwig Klages, Alfred Baeumler, Julius Evola), in tune with Bachofen's decidedly conservative ideology, and from the left (first and foremost Walter Benjamin, but already Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels). Of great importance was also its reception in the psychoanalytic field, starting with Freud and Jung, but then especially with the studies of Erich Neumann, Wilhelm Reich (whom we will find again in Luigi Pericle's studies) and Erich Fromm. The matriarchal theme has been taken up not least in recent feminist studies, which have attempted to re-evaluate the historical consistency of Bachofen's hypotheses, recognising in them a valid instrument for founding an alternative socio-political project, centred on typically feminine values and characteristics that the

great Basel scholar has been able to highlight with undoubted pioneering spirit.

Returning now to Fromm, he became one of the founders of the Socialist Humanism movement, promoting awareness of Marx's early works and his humanist message to the public in the USA and Western Europe. Fromm was never politically active and never joined a political party, but he made his contribution in America to opposing the phenomenon of McCarthyism (which could be described as a kind of Nazi spirit taking over America in those years). To this period dates in fact (1961) the article Can Man Prevail? An investigation into the facts and fictions of foreign policy.

One of Fromm's major political interests was in the international pacifist movement and in the fight against nuclear armament and the US involvement in the Vietnam War, which let us remember is partly driven by our 'dear' Foster Dulles, brother of Allen Welsh Dulles active in Ascona. A quote from Foster Dulles: "There are two ways to conquer a nation: one is to subjugate its population by force of arms, the other is to subjugate its economy by financial means."
Foster Dulles signed an agreement in May 1933 in Berlin with Hjalmar Schacht, Hitler's economics minister, to coordinate economic exchange between Germany and the United States. Dulles served as Secretary of State from 1953 to 1959, during Eisenhower's presidency.

He supported the need to aid France in the war against the Viet Minh in French Indochina (a position that led to direct American involvement in the Vietnam War in the following decade) and became famous for refusing to shake the hand of People's Republic of China Prime Minister Zhou Enlai at the 1954 Geneva conference.

During the Dien Bien Phu crisis, he allegedly proposed to Georges Bidault, President of the French Council, the use of tactical atomic weapons against Vietnam (Operation Vautour). At the time of the

Korean War was the author of the island chain strategy to isolate the communist bloc in the Far East from the sea.
I ended the part on Fromm and the good guys with this aside on Foster Dulles because I find the contrast in thought and action between the good guys and the bad guys in this story of neighbours remarkable.

39. WHO IS LUIGI PERICLES?

"Are you Giovannetti?"
(at the time Luigi Pericle was known as Giovannetti, Max's illustrator)

'.....anche'.

"What does it mean, is it or isn't it?

"The answer was very accurate".

"What is it besides G.?

"G. is only a temporary instrumental figure, in relation to the rather insignificant whole, in continuous evolution. Behind this figure is its essential, invisible, indestructible part, not subject to ageing and death'.

"Now I speak mainly to the essential part? "In that

case, you would be talking to a great man." "Then I

will talk to G.?

'Also'.

"My curiosity has now really been aroused: do you know that this being, superior ego - he looks like you?
"If it looked like the superficial part, it would be ephemeral".

"Can you communicate with a being that has no particular form?

"The essential part already has a certain form - not just a coarse material form. As far as communication is concerned, it is

rather difficult with those beings who have taken on dense forms, such as other human beings. "With the higher ego, on the other hand, one reaches the highest level of conversation".

"What do you mean by a high level of

conversation?" "Only talk about the essentials,

otherwise keep quiet." "Does everyone have a

higher self?

"Yes.

"Let's hope this tall creature also has humour?

"Humour is a divine quality, and a person can regard it as a special grace if given even a small portion of it".

"How do you get to your higher self?"

"The higher ego reaches us all the time, but it is we who are not open to this side".

"Why can't we?"

"First because we can't, then (after a long period of development) because we don't want to".

"Why wouldn't we want better?

"For ignorance is the bliss of the ignorant". "What

happens if we defeat ignorance?

"It will not be defeated by us; all we can do is force it." "Conquered? - By

whom?"

"From the higher powers.

"Is it not a meaningless escape to deal with these cryptic things?

"Spirit and matter (mystery and superficiality) are two manifestations of the same thing. It is therefore absolutely not possible to escape alone. Accepting only superficiality results in so many negative experiences that, after a long odyssey, one feels compelled to turn to the eternal. But even exclusively chosen transcendence (with the rejection of life in the world) is not an ideal. At best, one achieves a sterile form of happiness'.

"Do you not feel that transcendence is like a ghost?

"The surface is ghostly."

"I find the normal superficial and myself also normal and I don't want to be different".

"It is not you who decides what you should become over the years and through which experiences superior development is guaranteed".

"You are suggesting that we are subject to secret leadership - that would seem rather frightening to me".

"Spells are blindness and unconsciousness".

"One of my questions went unanswered: What happens when ignorance is defeated. Do we feel like the bird coming out of the egg?

"The comparison is good, but one point is inaccurate: the way one imagines the bird in the egg, it has never been outside the egg - we, on the other hand, have always been where we were. We strive, but we are blinded by superficiality in the sense that we recognise it as the only reality. We then see ourselves as isolated beings. In this way we fall into a deceptive perspective and, consequently, into a laborious process of development'.

"What's the point?"

"What is the purpose of weight resistance for the development of the weightlifter?

"Is it liberation from this laborious process called <second birth> ?

"Yes.

"How does this second birth feel when experienced?

"More familiar than the first birth.

"I freed could rightly look at down on <prisoner> ?

"There is no way for the liberated person to feel dislike, because he is identical to the heart of his neighbour. As a former sufferer, he deeply understands the suffering and fragile happiness of the other; hence his complete compassion'.

"Is there also a magic key for this sealed gate?

"Doors are not opened to the sorcerer, but to the humble. Unfortunately, humility is usually confused with modesty'.

"I can't believe what you are telling me and at the same time I feel its appeal. So I must try to broaden my understanding. Is there at least a key to unlock the incomprehensible, a guiding thought that can serve as a signpost for us?

"For example: <emptiness contains all fullness>; or: <you become what you think>; or: <energy follows thought>.

"So what is your main idea now? "Accumulating

wealth.

"This is what I call sincerity, but I had no idea that your love of money was so important".

"There was no mention of money; it is infinitely wiser to collect what you can take with you if you leave your body at the end of the short journey.

"How reassuring it must be to have the strength to despise money".

"To despise money is as foolish as to love it". "Is

there an obstetrician for the second birth?

'In principle t h e r e is only one obstetrician, who manifests himself in the superficial in ever new forms'.

"Is a second birth possible without the help of a midwife?

"Almost impossible'.

"How will the blind man find the helper?

"The midwife observes and takes care of the researcher long before the latter begins to suspect it. If we use the example of the bird in the egg: only then does the mother bird help to pick up the shell when she feels strong enough movements of the young bird'.

"Among the so-called <masters> and <human leaders> there are also real <human eaters>. How can the layman pay attention if he is not clairvoyant?".

"Everyone will get the midwife they

deserve". "What about second births?"

"A midwife.

It was essential to read this text in order to understand that we are undoubtedly talking about a master and if you will allow me the hypothesis of someone 'born learned' to put it bluntly a master of high rank who reincarnates. It is difficult to talk about these things, but in the case of Pericles it seems almost necessary.

Louis Pericles came to Ascona because the region was home to a host of intellectuals, researchers and artists in '59 and because Monte Verità and Eranos* are world-famous. His neighbour is Károly Kerényi, a Hungarian philologist and historian of religions who is considered to be one of the founders of modern studies of Greek mythology. He is considered one of the greatest scholars and philologists of the 20th century. He studied myth as a mode of knowledge, also confronting the theories of Carl Gustav Jung. The construction of a 'science of myth' is the thread running through Kerényi's main works. He applied hermeneutics to Greek mythology in order to clarify the conscious or unconscious intentions and meanings of myths in the human psyche.

In the region, in Locarno, not far from Ascona, Remo Rossi's atelier, linked to Kerényi, hosted, among others, Ben Nicholson, who we find again at the York museum, curated by Herbert Read's friend Hans Hess, who was to be the organiser of Pericles' English exhibitions.

It is important to remember that Remo Rossi, at that time commissioner for Switzerland at the Venice Biennale (1962-72) was linked to Hans Hess, museologist and family friend of Kandinsky, Klee, Max Pechstein and Lyonel Feininger.

Herbet Read wrote about Pericles in 1965 :

"I found an artist whose works immediately struck me with their professional skill and strange beauty. This was evidently an artist who had perfected his talent in tranquillity and was using it to express a subtle perception of reality (...) Louis Pericles is a mature artist whose work is highly regarded in England and Switzerland; the fact that it is not better known in other countries can only be attributed to the artist's extreme modesty and long pursuit of Absolute Beauty." Sir Herbert Read, English writer and critic, founder of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, collaborator of Peggy Guggenheim.

Statement made on the occasion of a visit to Pericles' studio in Ascona, 1965.

The Ascona region is home to international exponents of spiritual, theosophical and artistic research at the highest level, think of James Joyce on the Brissago Islands, D.H. Lawrence, Gustav Jung at the Eranos* meetings. The Eranos Colloquia (which in Greek means banquet, but of the type that the Latins called coena collaticia, in which everyone brings something) were initiated in 1933 by Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn (1881-1962), inspired by Rudolf Otto (specialist in the history of religions at the University of Marburg, and translator of Plato).
Herbert Read was a speaker at Eranos from '52 to '65. It is not difficult to imagine the cultural climate we are talking about developing in an Ascona kissed by the beauty of the area and the welcoming and reassuring Swiss neutrality in the face of the world conflicts that deflagrated outside this bubble of peace. Many Jewish intellectuals came to take refuge here, and traces of Kabbalistic culture can be found in a series of paintings by Luigi Pericle dedicated to the Golem, one in particular entitled Uranian Golem takes us on a journey into Kabbalistic spiritual realms that combine with Japanese philosophy all the way to UFOs and robots.

the Golem :

The origin of the Golem legend has very distant roots. The term appears for the first time in the Bible (Psalm 139:16) to indicate a still-formless mass. In the legend, the Golem is brought to life by the name of God or by other letters with special meaning, according to the Kabbalah conception according to which the creation of the world took place by emanation from the divine name. Such letters are either stamped on the forehead or written on a paper placed in the creature's mouth. By erasing such letters or removing the paper, the creature perishes. The Golem therefore is an ancient Jewish legend about the myth of the artificial man created by another man. This act is a challenge to God, an attempt to take possession of his creative power, which generates a punishment, which comes through the creature itself.

In fact, the legend is completely parallel to God's creation of Adam. The creation takes place through the construction of a simulacrum of earth, which comes to life thanks to magic formulas. The figure of the Golem is usually mute, imperfect, lacking the possibility of creating another Golem, and presents very strong analogies with numerous other myths that can be considered variants born in different historical contexts. These include, for example, that of the homunculus, the living being created in vitro through magical and alchemical formulas, whose creator, Paracelsus, envisaged starting from the seed of a man, rotting for forty days in a still in the heat of the horse's womb. The baby boy generated in this way then had to be fed with human blood for forty weeks.
The Golem was born as a servant and helper of man, just like the zombie, the living dead of the Voodoo tradition. The mechanical variant is the automaton, a mechanism designed to do human work. Identical is the origin of the robot, a complex electromechanical device. With the progress of technology and biological sciences, cyborgs, living organisms fused with mechanical parts, and finally man's creations through genetic engineering, appear. In all cases, to which one can add that of Frankenstein, good intentions often produce monstrous creatures that rebel against their creator.

It is said that in the 16th century, a European magician, Rabbi Jehuda Löw ben Bezalel of Prague, began creating golems to serve as servants, moulding them in clay and awakening them by writing the word 'truth' (in Hebrew emet) on their foreheads. There was one drawback, however: the golems thus created grew larger and larger, until it was impossible to use them: the wizard decided from time to time to dispose of the larger golems, turning the word on their foreheads into "death" (Hebrew met); but one day he lost control of a giant, who began to destroy everything he came across. Having regained control of the situation, the magician decided to stop using the golems and hid the demon in the attic of the Staronova Synagogue, in the heart of the old Jewish quarter, where, according to legend, it is still found today.

So the golem represents the automaton at the service of the initiate, to defend and help him, and introducing the language of astrology so dear to our Pericles, the planet Uranus in his Uranian Golem is related to technology, radio, computers. To try to understand Uranus in astrology, one can relate it to vibratory frequencies an octave higher than those of Mercury, co-significant of mental energies. Looking at this Uranian Golem, one cannot fail to notice the resemblance to the robots that populated Japanese Manga in the 1980s.

Pericles studies ancient Egypt and discovers that the Hebrew Kabbalistic tradition originally goes back to the Egyptian Kabbalah and since the Egyptians according to the Secret Doctrine are the survivors of the people of the Atlantean period, who crossed the ocean after the sinking of Poseidon and settled in Egypt. We are talking about the perennial initiatory traditions guarded by initiates ... like Pericles indeed.

Pericles kept in his library many books by eminent theosophists and spiritualists, and looking up the description of the founding of the Theosophical Society we read: A movement of great importance was inaugurated in New York at the initiative of Colonel H.S. Olcott, who organised an association under the title of "Theosophical Society". The idea originated at a meeting on 7 September 1875 in Madame Blavatsky's drawing room, where a group of seventeen gentlemen and ladies had gathered to meet the architect George Felt whose discovery of the geometrical symbols of the Egyptian Kabbalah may be regarded as among the most astonishing discoveries of the human intellect [...]. Those present were persons of vast culture and prestige [...] during the pause in the conversation Colonel H.S. Olcott took the floor and after briefly expounding on the present situation of the spiritualist movement, the attitude of the materialist antagonists and the irreconcilable conflict between Science and Religion, said that the philosophical character of ancient Theosophy is capable of reconciling the existing antagonism (.....). Colonel H.S. Olcott then proposed to form a nucleus around which to gather all enlightened and courageous souls willing to work together to collect and spread this knowledge. His plan was to organise an association, set up a library and disseminate information regarding the secrets of the

Nature, known to the Chaldeans and Egyptians but unknown to our modern world of science [...]'.
Those present approved the proposal, elected Colonel H.S. Olcott as President, and instructed two lawyers present to draw up the Articles of Association, which were inspired by the Federal Constitution of the United States and the British Geographical Society.

But let us return to our Golem, and following its tracks in Japan, we cannot fail to notice the similarity of the Manga Goldrake with Pericles' Uranian Golem. We note that Goldrake is from the 1980s, while Pericles painted the Uranian Golem in '63, but since archetypes are timeless … let us remember Pericles' passion for the study of U.F.O. and his "Science Fiction" novel, which was perhaps not so science fiction in the eyes of posterity.
Plot summary of Luigi Pericle's unpublished novel 'UNTIL THE END OF TIME'. :
The events of the protagonist Odysseus take place in 3 different epochs as if they were 3 incarnations of the same soul in 3 epochs. The novel takes us on a journey through time through the events of the protagonist Odysseus in ancient Egypt where he is initiated as a sculpture craftsman in the priestly school. It should be noted that artisans historically had a higher standard of living than common labourers and were held in high regard by the nobility. They worked mainly in royal palaces and temples that were sumptuous and adorned with statues and frescoes. Sculpture was the art par excellence of the Egyptians, who especially cared for faces because they thought that the perfection of the face, in the statue, reflected the immortality of the soul of the person portrayed.
The second part of the novel takes place in the present, and sees Odysseus's ancient Egyptian master coming to visit him on board a spaceship capable of ploughing through space and time; the very accurate descriptions of the spaceship are particularly gripping thanks to the technical/esoteric/fantasy solutions adopted. At the same time as the story of the Egyptian spaceship, we read about the construction of an ark in preparation for a catastrophe that in the third part of the book confined mankind to life underground. Underground precisely in these tunnels takes place the encounter between the novel's protagonist Odysseus with a

young medical student, the young Nausika, who is discontented with her studies in classical medicine and fascinated by Odysseus' holistic knowledge becomes his assistant. The names of the two characters are certainly not chosen at random, as Joyce in Ulysses is also inspired by Homer. Joyce wrote Ulysses on the Brissago Islands, which Luigi Pericle can admire from Casa San Tommaso in Ascona. In Homer's Odyssey, Nausika is a woman contemplating the man who looks into the distance, and it is precisely because of that attitude, at once virile and nostalgic, that she forgets the others, however devoted to her person, however attentive to her needs, and says: 'Oh, if such a man could call himself my husband, here I dwell and here it were dear to him to remain'. For Homer, Odysseus will leave her and the partnership will not happen. Louis Pericles, on the contrary, presents us with the two remaining united in a master/disciple relationship. Nausika is initiated into selfless service, healing and saving people with oriental or holistic medical techniques. It is not necessary to mention that Louis Pericles from self-taught becomes a homeopath, acupuncture, applies orgone medicine. such as two Japanese Yogis lost on the devastated surface of planet earth. Nausika agrees to follow Odysseus in this a. Under the earth, humans have almost forgotten the distant past when they lived in the open air. Many years have passed underground and humanity is organising itself to return to surface life. This is stated in the subtitle to the novel, revealing Pericles' wish: 'A new beginning instead of the end of the world'.

The therapeutic basis that Louis Pericles applies in real life and explains in his novel is based on cosmic energy. In India, this energy, called Prana, was known even before the Greco-Roman development of the Mediterranean. The Chinese, also in ancient times, called it Chi, vital energy, and believed that all matter in the universe, animate or not, was imbued with this energy. In Japan, the term Ki denoted the dynamic energy present in all creation, whether in mineral, vegetable or animal beings. In the Jewish Kabalah, the term Astral Light was used, which Christian culture took up by depicting Jesus and the saints surrounded by a halo of yellow light. Health is the balance of this energy in and out of the body re-established through techniques that vary from culture to culture and are part of spiritual traditions throughout antiquity. These

traditions are found in the titles of Louis Pericles' paintings and are spiritual quotations that range freely in the classical traditions and mystery philosophies of every culture, remembering that we are talking about a Homo Universalis. Susanna Keoberle, a researcher with a doctorate on Meister Heckart, calls Louis Pericles a Homo Universalis in her article in the Neue Zürcher zeitung, putting him in good company with Euler, Kepler, Galileo and other great eclectic initiates, almost all of them great astrologers. The astrological charts and the enormous amount of manuals found in St. Thomas' house demonstrate Pericles' mastery of astrology, and I personally received the analysis of my birth chart made by the Master. Consider that until the 17th century astrology was considered one of the major forms of scholarship, and it helped guide the early development of the history of astronomy. It was commonly accepted in both cultural and political circles, while some of its fundamental concepts were also used in other traditional forms of study such as alchemy and medicine. At the end of the 17th century, as purely scientific conceptualisations in the field of astronomy such as heliocentrism increasingly emerged, these arbitrarily discredited the theoretical basis of astrology, which shortly afterwards lost its academic standing. But astrology is a system for interpreting the relationships between universal principles symbolically represented by the planets. By assigning each planet a symbolic counterpart, it is possible to calculate what types of interactions take place. The angles that are created between the planets in the astrological graphic projection allow us to symbolically interpret the manifested reality as if the universe were an enormous cosmic clock that marked the interactions between the great cosmic archetypes. Thanks to their universal value, mythology and astrology are not subject to time because they come from higher planes of the spirit where time does not exist. The study of these Theosophical disciplines (Theos-Sophia, knowledge of divine things) from the end of the 19th century until the Second World War influenced practically all artistic and intellectual production. Let us recall that the reference text 'The Secret Doctrine' of 1888 by Madame Blavatzky was a bestseller for a long time. For some years now, there has been renewed mention of the

theosophical influences that had disappeared from art history for many years after the Second World War due to an obvious misuse and general fear of mentioning the occult. One of the sites of this esoteric revival is Monte Verità. The Ascona hill was one of the points of development of the theosophical movement. Suffice it to say that Countess Wachmeister, Blavatzky's right-hand woman (re-founder of the movement) and indispensable help in the drafting of the Secret Doctrine (1888) and Annie Besant (Ghandi's spiritual teacher and political pillar of Indian emancipation) lived in Ascona. It should be noted that theosophy is not a recent invention. Theosophy has always manifested itself in the world through prophets, teachers, religions, in culture, in progress, more or less secretly depending on how violently the purely materialist forces manifest themselves.

Pericle arrived in Ascona in the 1950s already rich and famous as a cartoonist with Max the Woodchuck. But it is his dream to devote himself completely to painting (Giovannetti's graphics and illustration are a way of earning a living while waiting to become the painter Luigi Pericle). Painting and his passion for sports cars brought him into contact with the great collector Peter G. Staechelin (perhaps the greatest Swiss collector of the 20th century) who, in exchange for about a hundred works, provided him with the San Tommaso house in Ascona. It should be noted that in order to acquire Pericles' works, Schiele and Klimt works were sold to the Leopold Museum in Vienna. A long creative partnership will unite Pericles and Staechelin.

The Casa San Tommaso in Ascona is no ordinary house, the previous owner had been Nell Walden, a Jewish refugee in Ascona, she had been the financier of her husband Herwarth Walden founder of

Der Sturm, an important German Expressionist magazine with editorial headquarters in Berlin.

Der Sturm was founded in 1910 and was published fortnightly until 1932. The so-called Sturmkreis soon sprang up around the magazine, which included a theatre, a gallery and evenings, the Sturm-Abende, during which expressionist poems were recited. Works by expressionist, cubist and futurist artists such as Franz Marc, Vasily Kandinsky, Oskar Kokoschka, August Macke, Gabriele Münter and others were published.

Interestingly, Hilla von Rebay was also a member of the 'Der Sturm' group and emigrated to New York in 1927 when she met Solomon R. Guggenheim who entrusted her with the artistic direction of his collection in 1937. In 1943, Hilla Rebay called upon architect Frank Lloyd Wright for the conception of the Guggenheim Museum in New York, which opened its doors in 1959, but without her. Although she had been the driving force behind this project, she was removed from it shortly after Guggenheim's death in 1949.

But back to the house of Louis Pericles. After the divorce, Walden (a convinced Marxist), who perished imprisoned in his beloved Russia, entrusted his wife with the immense collection, a large part of which was to become part of Baron Van der Heidt's collection now on display in the museum dedicated to his memory in Wuppertal. It is hard to speak of an Ascona climate where Jews and Nazis could sit at the same table and play a game of Bridge. Suffice it to say that the golf course in Ascona was financed by an avowed anti-Nazi pacifist like Erich Maria Remarque, by a Jewish millionaire, grand viveur, owner of the Brissago Islands (yes, the ones where Joyce wrote Ulysses), by a great uncle of mine who was an aircraft manufacturer, and by the controversial Baron Van der Heidt, who was tried but acquitted perhaps for old age, perhaps for having donated his fortune to culture. A disturbing character to say the least, the Baron, as soon as he entered Switzerland he joined the Swiss Nazi party (yes, this also existed) but saved many Jewish children from deportation (?). In 1926, the baron bought Monte Verità (at the suggestion of Marianne Verefkin) to make it the residence of Kaiser Wilhelm II, exiled in Holland, who however never came to Ascona. These were years in which we witnessed the sad third phase of the hill, very un-Utopian. The Baron died in '64, making a public donation of Monte Verità for cultural purposes, surely a gesture dictated by the need to make amends for the opportunism and dubious moral depth shown during the Nazi regime, for which he had worked as a banker.

In Ascona, however, these were also the years of the birth of p s i c o s o m a t i c a c a t a l i s a t i o n m e c h a n i s m e n t by Erich Fromm, a German psychologist, sociologist, philosopher, psychoanalyst and psycho-analyst. In 'To Be or To Have', Fromm rails against the prevalence of the existential mode of having that has determined the situation of contemporary man, reduced to a cog in the wheel of the

bureaucratic machine, manipulated in tastes, opinions, feelings by governments, industry, mass media and forced to live in a degraded environment.

Pericles found his paradise in Ascona, where he chose Nell Walden's house and took root there in an atmosphere of research now closer to Eranos than to the Baron's Monte Verità. It was Herbert Read, a speaker for Eranos, who discovered Pericles and curated two of the London exhibitions.

In order to understand the thought of Louis Pericles, it is also necessary to enter into the philosophy of the Indian Guru Aurobindo with whom Pericles exchanged a dense correspondence (also staying in Auroville, another example of Utopia as Monte Verità).

Aurobindo is a yogi who realised Nirvana, a rebel poet against British imperialism, he founded his Utopian city Auroville in the French enclave Pondicherry where he pursued 'the greatest synthesis ever achieved between the genius of Asia and the genius of Europe'. Aldous Huxley spoke of Sri Aurobindo as the 'Plato of future generations'. Sri Aurobindo wrote in a very peculiar way: not one book at a time, but four and even six books at once, on the most varied subjects: and he did not have to make any cerebral effort, as he himself tried to explain in some letters: 'I write in mental silence things that come already formed... The best relief for the brain is when the thought is formed outside the body and above the head. In any case for me it was like that'.

These are some reflections on the figure of Louis Pericles that help us a little to understand who he was and I think it is possible to say that : "the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung, the Hungarian philologist Karoly Kerényi, the German writers Erich Maria Remarque and Hermann Hesse, the Swiss painter Filippo Franzoni, the Russian painter Marianne Werefkin with her companion Alexej Jawlensky, the American ballerina Isadora Duncan, the anarchists Michael Bakunin and Errico Malatesta, the German sociologist and psychoanalyst Erich Fromm and our own Luigi Pericle lived geographically and spiritually close to Ascona."

40. SPIE

At this point I would add a tidbit about Jung :

In Jung: A Biography', it is mentioned that Jung was an agent. He worked secretly for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which was the predecessor of the CIA. His first contact with the OSS was through his patient Mary Bancroft. The famous psychologist Carl Gustav Jung cured Bancroft's asthma through analysis and became a lifelong friend. This exceptionally outgoing woman's relationship with Jung was summed up in the New York Times obituary: 'For Jung... her charm was textbook obvious. In his scheme of things she was as extroverted an intuitive as he was. Bancroft's list of male consorts over time included, in addition to Dulles, film director Woody Allen and Time magazine CEO Henry R. Luce.

Bancroft, who knew German and had a good rapport with people, was recruited by Dulles as an intelligence analyst for the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS) from 1941 to 1945, while living and working in Zurich. Dulles seems to have had an affair with Mary Anne Bancroft, who also belonged to C.G. Jung's circle of friends at the time.

In 1941, during the Second World War, Jung's task was to analyse the psychology of leaders. In return, Jung became a top-secret informer for the Allies. It emerged that C. G. Jung operated as 'Agent 488' and his supervisor, Allen W. Dulles, later observed: "Probably no one will ever know how much Professor Jung contributed to the Allied cause during the war". Jung became an important advisor to the United States and sent ideas to Eisenhower on how to psychologically convince the Germans of the futility of resistance against the Allied forces. In 1945, General Dwight Eisenhower read Jung's ideas to convince the German public to accept defeat. Allan Dulles relied on Jung's psycholgical advice, including his prediction that

Hitler would have killed himself. A similar characterisation of Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini can be found in C.G. Jung speaking, Bollinger Press.

A story that sounds like a screenplay, but is all true. In 'Agent 110: An American Spymaster and the German Resistance in WWII', a new book by journalist Scott Miller, a charming spy finds himself in bed with both a powerful American intelligence officer and a German agent plotting to kill Hitler. Agent 110 was Allen Dulles, born into a patrician family and long used to moving in the corridors of power. At the end of 1942, he was assigned to head a section of the OSS (forerunner of the CIA) in Switzerland. The only reproach levelled at the then 49-year-old Dulles, of WASP origin, was his tendency to ignore orders he did not like. Dulles was introduced to the charming Mary Bancroft in early 1943. Her father was editor of the Wall Street Journal and her husband was a Swiss businessman. She had gained a certain notoriety in Zurich. Bancroft moved nimbly through exclusive restaurants, wearing short skirts and bright red lips, to loudly tell diners about her many escapades.

Dulles wanted her flat to be a respectable cover for his secret meetings. And he wanted her. "I can't marry you," Dulles told her. "And I probably wouldn't even if I could. But I want you and I need you now".So she settled for the role of well-behaved spy mistress. In less than two years, Bancroft became close friends with Dulles' wife Clover, who had finally joined him in Berne. Clover had time on her hands, as Dulles ignored her. So did Bancroft, as their relationship had ended. But while they were still a couple, Dulles gave Bancroft a priority assignment. He was cultivating a member of the German resistance with the intention of assassinating Hitler. For Hans Bernd Gisevius, a German intelligence agent stationed in Switzerland, it was hard not to be noticed. Because he was six feet tall and good-looking, Gisevius attracted attention. This was true even before his agency, the Abwehr, became suspicious of the agent. Before pairing the two, Dulles told Bancroft: 'I have been very pleased with your work. But now you really have to keep the

mouth shut or 5,000 people will die'. According to the author, Bancroft blurted out, "You are out of your mind. I can't." Anyone who knew Bancroft, even by reputation, could confirm that she was notoriously indiscreet. Nevertheless, Dulles sent Gisevius to her. He arrived at her door with 1,415 pages of a manuscript about his experiences during the war. Bancroft, who was to translate it, was baffled. Soon, however, Bancroft felt bound to Gisevius by 'a high-tension electrical line'. They also became romantically linked. Gisevius kept suggesting they get away from work and have fun. She was tempted, especially one weekend when he had a luxury flat on loan. She had an appointment with the former head of the Gestapo, the charming Rudolf Diels, a notorious womaniser. Bancroft said stupidly to Dulles, who was well aware of his proclivities. Why the hell didn't you go? It could have been very interesting,' he vented. Meanwhile, her husband, Rufenacht Badger, only sneered at Gisevius. One evening, on leaving the flat, Gisevius slipped and dropped his briefcase noisily. Badger looked up from his detective novel. 'I suggest you tell Gisevius to learn to walk down the stairs quietly before trying to kill Hitler,' he suggested. Gisevius had already been part of - or at least was aware of - several failed plots to assassinate Hitler. In 1933, the Prussian from a good family joined the Gestapo. He soon discovered that being in the Gestapo was as dangerous as being targeted by the Nazi secret police. Backstabbing was a literal term among German agents. Ambitious, ruthless and lethally armed colleagues created a toxic mixture. In 1938, Gisevius joined a coalition of men and women in the German army plotting to overthrow Hitler. On 13 March 1943, General Henning von Tresckow, an ardent member of the resistance, placed bombs aboard Hitler's plane shortly before take-off, disguised in a packet of Cointreau bottles. Tresckow rushed to the radio where he expected to hear news of an air tragedy within the hour. Instead, Manfred Roeder, a Nazi prosecutor known as 'Hitler's bloodhound', opened an investigation into the failed plot. Many were executed, but Gisevius avoided arrest despite his deep involvement in Operation Seven, as was well known. Eventually he became

a target of Roeder's suspicions and had to face a harrowing interrogation by the Berlin prosecutor.

Bancroft learned that the Nazis considered the German agent 'unreliable'. There was also speculation that if Germany decided to invade Switzerland, agents would be sent to kill Gisevius as a pretext for soldiers to cross the border and 'protect' other German citizens. He feared they would track him down while he was in his flat. Gisevius proved his worth to Dulles when he provided precise information revealing that the Germans had cracked a vital American code. In the summer of 1944, he was involved in another plot to blow up Hitler. Dulles had to work to convince the sceptics in Washington that the resistance plotters would receive no support from the US either before or after assassinating Hitler. President Roosevelt was determined to achieve victory on the battlefield in the form of unconditional surrender. The members of the resistance, and in fact all German citizens, felt this sentence as future enslavement. Their spines stiffened. But Dulles was immersed in the plot.

In July, Bancroft received news that Gisevius was on his way to Berlin. He knew what this meant. The bombing was imminent. Gisevius was travelling through Germany, evading capture as a wanted man. Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, the son of an aristocratic family with a movie star appearance, was a decorated war hero. He had become a driving force behind Operation Valkyrie, the clandestine name for the coup d'état, and was destined to lead post-Hitler Germany. On 20 July, Stauffenberg met with Hitler in a conference room of the Wolf's Lair, Hitler's heavily fortified military complex. Claiming he had to take an urgent phone call, the colonel walked out leaving the briefcase with the bomb. Stauffenberg had reached his car when the explosion ripped through the conference room, with flames shooting out of the windows and wood splinters from the heavy furniture of

oak tree that flew away. Convinced that no one could survive, Stauffenberg left to take command of Germany. Gisevius waited for news in Berlin. At 4 p.m., a colleague burst through the door shouting: 'Gentlemen, we are leaving'. At headquarters, however, an uncertain general refused to issue orders to recall the replacement army. In the chaos, Gisevius stood by, hoping. His patience was rewarded with orders to reach a radio broadcasting centre to deliver a speech announcing the coup. Then came the news. Goebbels had overruled the soldiers sent to arrest him by phoning Hitler who, surprisingly, had answered the phone. Stauffenberg was taken to a courtyard of the army headquarters and shot. Dulles' sense of total defeat was visible. The war would continue and his greatest fear would be realised. The Soviets, an ally Dulles did not trust at all, would advance on Berlin. In the aftermath of the failed assassination, despite knowing that Hitler was still alive, Gisevius nevertheless tried to reach a microphone to broadcast believing that his speech might trigger an uprising. That night he went into hiding. He spent months in a partially bombed out building waiting to be rescued. Dulles secretly lobbied his colleagues to get Gisevius out. The false credentials that would allow him to travel were passed through a letterbox on 20 January 1945. Days later, there was a knock on Bancroft's door. She was worried sick. Exhausted and dejected, he announced: 'Well, here I am'. "Yes," she replied, "and it's time for you to come back." After the war, Bancroft moved to New York, where he wrote a memoir and two novels. Gisevius' book, published in 1946, attracted no one's attention. He settled in anonymity near Lake Geneva. In 1953, Dulles was appointed director of the CIA. Under his regime, the CIA tried to overthrow Indonesian President Sukarno and aggressively supported the shaky Vietnamese regime of Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem. The latter was eventually ousted from office following the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

The three had known their glory years during the war. Erotically united, risking their lives, each of them was a hero. And they left it all behind in Switzerland.

CLOVER DULLES, WIFE OF ALLAN DULLES ON THE LEFT, WITH MARY BANCROFT, ASSISTANT AND LOVER OF ALLAN DULLES. THE PHOTO IS TAKEN IN ASCONA, AT "LA CASETTA" PROBABLY AROUND 1945.

40. UTOPIE

Throughout my childhood I heard my parents talk about living on a desert island, a place outside the world. It was their utopia, they were still dreamers like so many characters in these pages who flee the horrors of the world and war. One of these is Vladimir Rosenbaum. His story resembles that of the Monteverites and I have accidentally included him among the neighbours because Casa Serodine is in the hamlet, but there it is now that I have written it ...

Born in Minsk in 1894, Wladimir Rosenbaum was an antiquarian and art dealer of Russian and Jewish origin. His first trip was in 1902, when he had to follow his mother to Geneva to escape the Tsarist pogroms. From that day on, he always lived in Switzerland and studied law between Zurich and Bern. A friend, Peter Witzig, told me that as a lawyer he had negotiated the purchase of planes against Franco's regime from Switzerland in violation of the Neutrality Act. This had cost him his licence and so he had come to Ticino, to Comologno, where he bought the summer residence nicknamed 'la Barca' in 1929 and, together with his wife Aline Valangin (married in 1917), transformed it into a place of refuge and meeting place for artists and intellectuals fleeing the horrors of the Second World War, such as Ignazio Silone, Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, Elias Canetti, Max Bill, Meret Oppenheim and Max Ernst. In 1939 he moved to Casa Serodine, in Ascona, and a year later divorced his wife; here he worked on antiques until his death in 1984. I remember the stories of his assistant Fritz Hugelmann and the somewhat free and wild era of antiques in Switzerland ...

Rosembaum's life is linked to the thousands of Utopias and attempts to found a better world, think of Israel, Thomas More's Utopia, the Falansterii, the Kibbuz, the Utopian communities around the globe such as Arcosanti or Yaddo ... the only one that isn't there ... In short, a Utopia that I would like to explore is that of Platonopolis .

Platonopolis is an ideal city of philosophers, governed according to Plato's laws, that was to be built in Campania, probably near ancient Vescia between Naples and Gaeta.

The project of this city was proposed by the Neo-Platonic philosopher Plotinus (205 - 270 A.D.), as recalled by his disciple Porphyry in his writing 'The Life of Plotinus'. In Rome, Plotinus also earned the respect of the emperor Gallienus and his wife Cornelia Salonina. Plotinus tried to interest the emperor in rebuilding an abandoned camp in Campania known as the 'City of the Philosophers', otherwise known as Platonopolis, as the inhabitants were supposed to live there according to the constitution written in Plato's Laws. However, they never managed to obtain an imperial subsidy for reasons unknown to Porphyry, who reports the episode. We are in the chapter Utopias and they are often not physically realised ...

One that I would like to imitate inside the Ascona hotel, and for that it is among the neighbours, is :

Yaddo

Yaddo was the country estate of financier Spencer Trask and his wife Katrina, a writer. The name 'Yaddo' is attributed to their daughter Christina. The first settler on the property was Jacobus Barhyte, a Revolutionary War veteran, who ran a tavern and mill. The Trask family arrived in 1881. Ten years later, their house burned down and the Trasksks hired architect William Halsey Wood to build the Queen Anne Revival mansion that stands today.

Left without an immediate heir after the death of their four sons, the Trask family bequeathed their fortune and estate for the creation of a residency programme for artists. They founded the Yaddo Guild in 1900. In their letter of intent, they expressed the hope that Yaddo would be a place of 'rest and refreshment for authors, painters, sculptors, musicians and other artists both men and women, few in number but chosen for their creative gifts'. Yaddo opened its doors to its first group of guests in 1926. At that time both

Spencer and Katrina were dead. The guests were welcomed by George Foster Peabody, Spencer's business partner and Katrina's second husband, and Elizabeth Ames, Yaddo's first executive director.

The Trask legacy has been profound. John Cheever wrote that 'the forty or so acres on which Yaddo's principal buildings stand have seen more distinguished artistic activity than any other piece of land in the English-speaking community and perhaps in the world'. Collectively, Yaddo artists have won 78 Pulitzer Prizes, 31 MacArthur Fellowships, 69 National Book Awards and one Nobel Prize (Saul Bellow, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976). Yaddo's notable artists up to the turn of the millennium include James Baldwin, Leonard Bernstein, Truman Capote, Aaron Copland, Philip Guston, Patricia Highsmith, Langston Hughes, Ted Hughes, Jacob Lawrence, Sylvia Plath, Martin Puryear, Katherine Anne Porter, Amy Sillman, Clyfford Still and David Foster Wallace. Recent guests include Terry Adkins, Laurie Anderson, Jeffrey Eugenides, Sheri Fink and Matthew Weiner.

ARCOSANTI
I put it because utopias do are spiritually close to Monte Verità and therefore fit there by elective affinity.

From the fusion of the Italian words 'cosa' and 'anti', meaning 'against things', architect Soleri named both his architectural design studio and the non-profit foundation he founded 'Cosanti', as a deliberate critique of the rampant culture of consumerism that he saw taking hold in the world. Cosanti - both as a site for imaginative and provocative architectural experiments and as a foundation that explores a built world in balance with the environment - both embody a radically different perspective and aesthetic.

In 1970, the Cosanti Foundation began the construction of Arcosanti, a prototype arcology in the Arizona desert at high altitude that proved to be a testing ground for Soleri's progressive urban planning concepts. In the following decades, volunteers from the

laboratory, known as Arcosanti Alumni, began to build the iconic Arcosanti architecture we know today.

Although the original design of Arcosanti is described in Arcology: The City in the Image of Man, Soleri's magnum opus on Arcology, envisaged a place where thousands of people would live and work, Arcosanti was never occupied by more than 100 people. Despite this, it continues to be regarded as an early example of sustainable architecture and vertical density building that prioritised working spaces and the surrounding natural environment over urban sprawl. Dubbed 'the urban laboratory' in the 1970s by famed New York Times architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, Arcosanti continues to experiment and test its potential as a working alternative to urban sprawl, community erosion and environmental neglect, while supporting its residents to lead socially, energetically and economically enriched lives.

Literature is naturally a fertile ground for Utopias and it is perhaps worth drawing up a tentative list:

1. **Plato's Republic.**
2. **The Utopia (c. 1516) by Thomas More.**
3. **The Imaginary Republic (c. 1580) by Ludovico Agostini.**
4. **The City of the Sun (1623) by Tommaso Campanella.**
5. **The New Atlantis (1627), an unfinished story by Francis Bacon.**
6. **The Republic of Oceana or Oceana (The Commonwealth of Oceana, 1656) by James Harrington.**
7. **Les aventures de Télémaque (1699) by Fénelon where two happy societies are described: Betica (in book eight) and Salento (book twelve).**
8. **The section in Jonathan Swift's The Travels of Gulliver (1726) describing the calm and rational society of the Houyhnhnms is certainly utopian, but it is meant to be contrasted with that of the Yahoos, who represent the worst of the human race.**

9. **L' ann 2440 (L'An 2440, rêve s'il en fut jamais, 1771) by Louis-Sebastien Mercier.**
10. **Voyage en Icarie (1840) by Étienne Cabet.**
11. **Erewhon (1872) by Samuel Butler.**
12. **Looking Backward, 2000-1887 (1888), by Edward Bellamy.**
13. **Freiland (1890) by Theodor Hertzka.**
14. **News from Nowhere, 1891, by William Morris (the Arts and Crafts movement was founded to put his ideas into practice).**
15. **Utopia, Limited (1893) is an operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan, in which a small island nation reforms in the English style.**
16. **Several works by H. G. Wells, including A Modern Utopia (1905).**
17. **R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots) (1920) by Karel Čapek, author also of other important examples of utopian literature, e.g. the novels The Factory of the Absolute (1922) and The Salamander War (1936).**
18. **The New World (Brave New World, 1932) by Aldous Huxley can be considered an example of pseudo-utopian satire (see also dystopia). The Island, another of his novels, shows a positive utopia instead.**
19. **To Us Alive (1938-1939), Robert A. Heinlein's first novel (published posthumously in 2004), in which the author expounds his own social, economic and political ideas and theories under a thin sci-fi narrative veil, which can be found in all of his subsequent output.**
20. **The Glass Bead Game (1943) Hermann Hesse.**
21. **Walden Two (1948) by Burrhus Skinner.**
22. **The Andromeda Nebula (Туманность Андромеды, 1957) by Ivan Antonovič Efremov.**
23. **The Atlas Shrugged (Atlas Shrugged, 1957) by Ayn Rand.**
24. **Starship Troopers (Starship Troopers, 1958) by Robert A. Heinlein, in which a united world under a global government is imagined, in which the acquisition of political rights (voting and the ability to stand for election) must be earned by serving a period of voluntary military service for a minimum of two years. This brought the author accusations of militarism, accusations that were ill-founded,**

since the characteristics of military service as described in the book differ considerably from the real ones, which Heinlein also criticised in his other books. In the 1997 film, which deviates from the book on many points, the utopian social aspect is completely overturned, so much so that the film can be associated with the dystopian genre.

25. I condannati di Messina (1969) by Ben Bova, in which it is imagined that in the not too distant future a world super-government with its capital in the city of the Straits was born.
26. Those of Anarres (The Dispossessed, 1974), a science fiction novel by Ursula K. Le Guin, is sometimes seen as one of the few modern representatives of the utopian genre, although it is remarkable that one of the work's main themes is the ambiguity of different notions of utopia. Le Guin presents a world in which all the thankless jobs - such as digging ditches and purging sewers - are equally divided among all the adults, who can otherwise devote themselves to their everyday, more satisfying jobs.
27. Ecotopia (1975) by Ernest Callenbach.
28. The cycle of Culture, which begins with the novel Think a Fleba (Consider Phlebas, 1987) by Iain Banks.
29. The trilogy of three Californias (years 1990) by Kim Stanley Robinson.
30. La Québécie (1990) by Francine Lachance.
31. The Giver (1993), a novel by Lois Lowry, portrays a 'perfect' society of the distant future, in which the elimination of wars, diseases, fears, etc. is achieved at the price of the repression of human emotions, individuality and free will.
32. The Hedonistic Imperative, 1996, an online manifesto by David Pearce, outlines how genetic engineering and nanotechnology will abolish suffering in all sentient life.[10
33. No. 6 (2003), a Japanese series consisting of nine novels, written by Atsuko Asano, set in a perfect city called No.6. Shion, an inhabitant of the city, with the help of his friend Nezumi, discovers the truth behind No.6, which turns out to be yet another monstrous creation of the corrupt and unscrupulous human being.

34. The Green Planet, (1996)
35. Islandia (2002), by Austin Tappan

Wright kibbutz

Those who want to take a low-cost holiday in Israel and wish to do a different experience should stay on a kibbutz.

There are plenty of them in the country. Overlooking the sea, in the middle of the desert, near the cities. The choice is wide. There are approximately
250. Every kibbutz, moreover, is different. There are the more spartan ones, but also luxury kibbutzim. They all have a common denominator, though: sharing. And in all of them you can spend a holiday.

Falansterio

The French philosopher and political scientist Charles Fourier, in the early 19th century, used the term 'phalansterio' to refer to the housing structure in which the members of the basic social unit envisaged in his theories and which he called the 'Phalanx' lived.
According to the French political thinker, each Phalange was to consist of a minimum of 1600 to a maximum of 2200 individuals, comprising approximately 450 families.

The economic activity of the Phalange would have been based on corporate ownership, guaranteeing everyone a share in the profits, in

proportion to the contributions made

to the common patrimony. Everyone within it would be both producer and consumer, sharing in the profits on the basis of what Fourier considered to be the three factors of production: capital, labour and talent.
The Falansterio consisted of two central bodies, intended for living quarters and meeting places, and two wings, in which all craft and manufacturing work was carried out.

Fourier writes: 'The building will have at least three floors and the attic, in addition to the ground floor and the mezzanine, where the children's and old people's living quarters and meeting rooms will be located, isolated from the street-gallery [...] It is indeed a small city, but it has no external, uncovered streets exposed to the weather'.

Application in society

Falansterio of North America in New Jersey, inspired by Fourier's ideas.
In Fourier's thinking, the phalansterium was to represent the basic unit of the new societal structure: each building was to be self-sufficient in terms of services and production, and through the coordination of the activities of several buildings, the problem of the relationship between town and country could be definitively solved.
In the phalansteries, the daily activities of each individual would be strictly regulated by internal rules: hour by hour, the tasks to be performed would be fixed, and even personal contacts and interactions would be governed by a precise ceremonial, spontaneously accepted by all members because it corresponded to the interests, needs and passions of each.
In the Phalange there would be no form of coercive power or government: no one would need to violate or break the social order, which would result spontaneously from the complete harmonisation of everyone's desires and needs. The most important decisions concerning the community would be taken by the Academy, consisting of the wisest and most experienced people, while

those concerning the organisation and administration of the Phalange would be dealt with by the Areopagus, consisting of representatives elected directly by individuals, and by the Council elected by the Areopagus itself.
Related items

- **Charles Fourier**
- **Abbaye Group**
- **Utopian socialism**
- **Brook Farm**

Utopian socialism

Charles Fourier

Utopian (or utopian) socialism is the first current of modern socialist thought, which developed between the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe. The term was l a t e r introduced by Marx to distinguish this utopian current from scientific socialism, which was based instead on an analysis of socio-economic and politico-ecological reality, i.e. the historical process of the relationship between social productive forces and relations of production based on private ownership of the means of production.
Index

In general, socialism refers to theories concerning political and social organisation, thus initiating a general reform of society and the state, with social justice as its goal and the socialisation of economic resources as its means. Utopian socialism had its founders in France with the Sansimonians and Fourierists, and found development in the United Kingdom with the Owenians. The important historical role of this current and the value of the critical thinking of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, was explicitly recognised by Marx and Engels in the Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848).
The abolition of private ownership of the means of production, of the family, of the contrast between town and country, the transformation of the community into the administrator of production, are all aspects that

Marxist theory embraces, but criticises the lack of development attributed to the proletariat class in this hypothetical society. The proletariat is that social class that has an autonomous historical function, but which is not recognised by utopian socialism. Marx proposes a completion of the social-utopian theory through 'scientific socialism', which sees the formation of the industrial proletariat as the real bearer of the communist transformation of society and the revolutionary class struggle as the method of transformation. These just stated are fundamental elements of distinction that Engels himself will reiterate in the chapters of Anti-Dühring collected in The Evolution of Socialism from Utopia to Science.
Utopian socialism, however, is the first form of socialism to be realised and relies on the reformist method (as opposed to the Marxist revolution) to build a society based on common collaboration and brotherhood between men.

The Welsh socialist Robert Owen tried to build community associations, with philanthropic, collaborative and fraternal characters and communitarianism.

One of the differences between utopian socialism and scientific socialism lies in how this policy is implemented. The former aims to do this through reforms, a utopian method according to Marx, who in fact emphasises the necessity of revolution to overturn the relationship between worker and capitalist. A further difference between Marxist and social-utopian ideology is that the former was atheist, while the latter was Christian-inspired, mainly due to the character of hope and messianism promoted by Christianity, although Owen nevertheless led a philosophical offensive against religion, unlike other utopians.
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Related items

- **League of the Righteous**
- **New Lanark**
- **Sansimonism**
- **Proto-communism**
- **Morelly**

Personality

- **Charles Fourier**
- **David Dale**
- **Donatien Alphonse François de Sade**
- **Henri de Saint-Simon**
- **King Camp Gillette**
- **Tommaso Campanella**
- **Rodolfo Sutermeister**
- **St Thomas More Photo**

of utopian architecture

But in this way we can also think in mythology of : Tír na nÓg

or The Dream of Ossian :

HISTORY

This 'afterlife' is a place where sickness and death do not exist. It is a place of eternal youth and beauty, where music, endurance, life and all pleasurable pastimes are together in one place. Here happiness lasts forever, no one craves for food or drink. È

the Celtic equivalent of t h e Greek and Roman Elysian Fields or Viking Valhalla.

Utopia or Arcadia exert an enormous fascination on the human soul and are always alive, sometimes, in periods such as the Covid during which I was writing these pages, it is good to take an inner journey into these regions of the spirit that have also had important realisations in the lives of many researchers.

We conclude this utopian part with this song that has become a classic and sung by many famous performers.

Nature boy :

There was a boy
A very strange enchanted boy They say
he has wandered very far far over land
and sea
A bit shy and sad-eyed But he
was very wise
And then one day
A magical day passed my way As we talked
about many things
of fools and kings
He told me
The greatest thing
that you can ever learn It
is only to love
And be loved In
return

Text by eden ahbez

Nature boy
There was a boy
A very strange enchanted boy

They say he wandered very far
over land and sea
A little shy and sad of eye
But very wise, was he
And then one day
One magic day he passed my way
While we spoke of many things
Fools and kings
This he said to
me The greatest
thing You'll ever
learn Is just to
love And be loved
In return

(Lyrics by eden ahbez)

I love jumping from pole to pole, so I now turn to a piece I had put together while researching Louis Pericles and the characters who were part of his orbit.

In Ascona in 1947 they met ... Jung, Read, Remarque

"In 1947 we accompanied our father (Herbert Read) to Switzerland, where he now went every summer to visit Jung in Küssnacht and discuss his ideas at the Eranos conference held in Ascona under the auspices of the Mellons' Bollingen Foundation. We returned to Ascona on several occasions and I have memories of the aroma of Swiss cigars; of sparkling drinks at tables on Lake Maggiore; of trips on paddle steamers; of the small fish I used to catch on the quayside being grilled for me in the kitchen of the Hotel Seeschloss and ceremoniously brought to our table by the waiter. I remember the agony of sitting through a recital of a late Beethoven quartet, and watching my father patiently listen to Germanic ladies of a certain age. One evening we were invited for drinks with the German writer Eric Maria Remarque, whose All Quiet on the Western Front my father had praised upon its publication in 1929. Remarque's wife, Paulette Goddard, gave us sticky biscuits and

pink champagne. After tasting the wine Remarque said 'too much, too sweet' and threw the bottle out of the window into the lake."

Reminiscent of Pier Paul Read, son of Herbert Read (discoverer of Louis Pericles), it was Read who drew up the list of painters whose paintings Peggy Guggenheim bought, laying the foundations of her collection. And like Read, James Hillman was also a speaker at Eranos.

Hillman, born into a Jewish family, American by birth but European by culture, participated in World War II in the US Navy's military health service (1944-1946) and as a reporter for military radio (US Forces Network) in Germany. He attended the Sorbonne and graduated with First Class Honours from Trinity College Dublin in 1950. After a trip to India from 1952 to 1953, he practised medicine privately until 1955. In 1959 he received his Ph.D. from the University of Zurich, Summa cum laude, and his diploma as an analyst at the C.G. Jung Institute, becoming Director of Studies in the same year, a post he held until 1969. In 1960 he published his first major work in London: Emotion: A Comprehensive Phenomenology of Theories and Their Meanings for Therapy. In 1966 he began to participate in the annual Eranos conferences in Ascona: he would contribute 15 papers until 1989. In 1970, when he joined Spring Publications, Hillman left his psychotherapist's practice and made public the vision of analytical psychology (and of psychology tout court) that he had come to develop: the scenario of psychological intervention could no longer be only that of the therapist in front of the patient; instead, psychology had to become a therapy of ideas, and no longer only of individuals. He was married until his death to Margot Mc Lean Hillman with whom he had son Laurence and daughters Carola, Julia and Susanne.

In 1970, he left his academic position and became director of Spring Publications, a publishing house specialising in the translation and dissemination of Jungian works.

These theories - which he will call archetypal psychology - do not pass without scandal, in the community of European Jungian analyst psychologists, but Hillman goes his own way, and his ideas on psychological work will find a following, in time, not only among academics, students, clinicians, but also among artists, writers and social workers. Hillman became convinced that America needed (and was more interested in) him than Europe. So in 1978, after more than thirty years in Europe, Hillman returned to the USA, moving with Spring Publications first to Dallas (Texas), where he founded the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, and then to Thompson (Connecticut) in 1984. In 1992, the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, dedicated a six-day Festival of Archetypal Psychology to him, with 500 participants. In the United States, Hillman did not stop thinking, writing and supervising the training of Jungian analysts, and he continued to maintain strong ties with Europe, teaching at the universities of Yale, Syracuse, Chicago and Dallas, and, following the thread of his own reflections, he also dedicated himself to cultural animation activities, aimed at various social aggregates: architects, educators, social workers, artists. A figure who cannot be reduced to academic schemes despite his curricular titles, a man of letters, now more philosopher than psychologist, Hillman has succeeded in highlighting and making people share the need for post-modern man to recognise and cultivate the mental and psychological connections that bind him to his ancient, or even archaic, cultural roots - and not only as an individual bearer of disturbances and pathologies of the soul, but as a component of a society no less disturbed and pathological than himself.

42. ENERGY MEDICINE
FROM QUANTUM PHYSICS TO ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

Energy medicine is based on the assumption that alongside our physical body and mental body, there is also a vital body, consisting of energy. In the past, science has mainly focused on biochemistry and molecular interactions, and in doing so has lost sight of the role of electrons, magnetic fields and their energy processes, the properties of space, and the role of consciousness itself. By rediscovering the ancient traditions of oriental medicine, revised in a modern key in the light of new discoveries in quantum physics and epigenetics, we can rediscover powerful tools to restore the body to a state of vitality and health.

The discoveries of quantum physics revolutionised the study of physics and were applied in the field of medical biotechnology with excellent results, but we are still far from a conscious cultural revolution. Physics, in fact, is the foundation of all sciences, but biology is still based on the outdated, albeit neat, Newtonian version of how the world works, remaining attached to Newton's physical world and ignoring the invisible physical world of the quanta, in which matter is made of energy and there are no absolutes.

In fact, Western medicine remains closely anchored to biochemistry, using the discoveries of quantum physics only for technological implications and not for thinking.

But quantum physics has shown us that no phenomenon in the infinitely small occurs without a relation to the global context, that reality is nothing but a dense network of relations outside of which individual entities cannot exist.

Furthermore, he emphasised that the very act of knowing modifies and, to a certain extent, determines the known. Philosophically, this contributed to reversing the basic axiom of the cognitive process, approximating it to that of Eastern thought: one does not know reality as it appears, but appears as one knows it.

Bruce Lipton, a world-renowned cell biologist, has been applying these concepts to the study of cell biology for more than 20 years, verifying how the individual cell is more influenced by its physical and energetic environment than by its genes, finally giving the energetic dimension of the environment its due and attempting an initial parallelism between the spiritual wisdom of ancient traditions and allopathic medicine.

These concepts were later developed into the theories underlying epigenetics, through the study of the molecular mechanisms by which the environment controls gene activity.

Contemporary medicine has reached its peak. Thanks to unquestionable advances in diagnostic techniques, pharmacology and surgery, many diseases previously unknown or considered incurable can now be successfully addressed and cured.

However, we believe that it is necessary to question the certainties of our rational way of proceeding; in fact, on the human level, the expansion, sophistication and perfection of therapeutic action have not fundamentally diminished man's anguish and loneliness in the face of pain, illness and death.

In modern medicine, there is a multiplication of specialists for increasingly limited body areas and the whole is no longer perceived as a 'meaningful entity'.

Millions of individuals attribute their health problems not to a combination of mental, physical, emotional and energetic causes, but simply to the inefficiency of their biochemical mechanisms.

In fact, most physicians and psychologists have not realised the importance of the paradigm shift that is taking place in physics.

In studying the body's 'control' mechanisms, researchers have focused on a wide range of physical signals divided into precise chemical families, including the aforementioned hormones, cytokines, growth factors, tumour suppressors, messengers and ions. But, due to Newtonian materialistic bias, orthodox science has continued to ignore the role energy plays in health and disease.

Energy medicine allows us to formulate an even more general theory of mind-body healing, when we remember that in addition to a mental body and a physical body, we also possess a vital body.

The vital body, called pranamaya kosha in Vedanta, has no extension, its mode of movement is called prana in Sanskrit, qi in Chinese, and from a Western perspective can be compared to what we call vital energy. The contents of the vital body are the vital functions, which are represented by the various organs of the physical body, just as the contents of the mental apparatus are represented as software within the hardware of the brain. The movement patterns of the vital body - prana or qi - can be described as waves of quantum possibilities, and vital energy, like thought, is experienced inwardly.

We have become so dependent on language, spoken and written, that we have neglected the communication system based on our perception of energy. As in any biological function, the absence of use leads to atrophy.

The sensations in the heart area associated with romance, the knot we feel in our stomach when we are agitated, the contraction in our throat when we speak in public for the first time, the pressure and pulsing of our eyebrows when we concentrate are all due to the conditioning movements of prana and are called chakras in Sanskrit.

The parallels with ancient Eastern medicines such as traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurvedic medicine are therefore automatic.

Both of these medicines speak of channels or pathways in which life energy moves, however the Indian channels (nadis) do not correspond exactly to the Chinese channels (meridians) although important similarities can be found.

The Chakras can therefore be regarded as energy stations that govern important psycho-physical and energetic functions. The main chakras, called EVOLUTIONARY CHAKRA, are seven in number and arise from the junction points of the main Nadis.

They are associated with different energy levels, from the first (MULADHARA) linked to the earth and the solidity it represents to the last (SAHASRARA) which is the gateway to the highest and purest energy, considered the cosmic energy. On the physical plane they are located along the spinal canal and are associated with endocrine glands responsible for important bodily functions.

Traditional Oriental medicines exploit this energetic vision of man; taking into consideration the intrinsic relationship between the individual and the cosmos, between matter and energy. They are based on the development and enhancement of the organism's self-healing capacities in which mind, body and universe form an inseparable and interdependent reality in which every ailment first manifests itself on a subtle and energetic level and later on a physical level. Within this holistic vision, yoga becomes a tool for self-healing. The practices of yoga (Asana,

Pranayama, Mudra and Bandha, Dharana, Dhyana) in fact have as their ultimate goal the rebalancing of the energy body, through the removal of any blockages to allow vital energy, Prana, to circulate freely.

On a physical level, this translates into the pursuit and maintenance of a state of bodily health in which all apparatuses cooperate to ensure the functioning and harmony of normal physiological functions and the maintenance of homeostasis. In this panorama, the meaning of yoga as 'union' can thus be seen as the integration of different but interdependent bodily systems that work together to ensure internal balance despite variations in the external environment. One cannot therefore disregard the interaction with the external environment, seen as a macrocosm pervaded with energy with which to create that same cooperation and harmony that is fundamental for internal balance (microcosm). This is why yoga is seen as a discipline to be applied to daily life, where the choices of relationships with the outside world (lifestyle and social relationships) can influence the energy balance of the subtle body and the health of the physical body.

ENERGY MEDICINE: FROM QUANTUM PHYSICS TO ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHIES

Quantum medicine: what quantum healing is and how it works

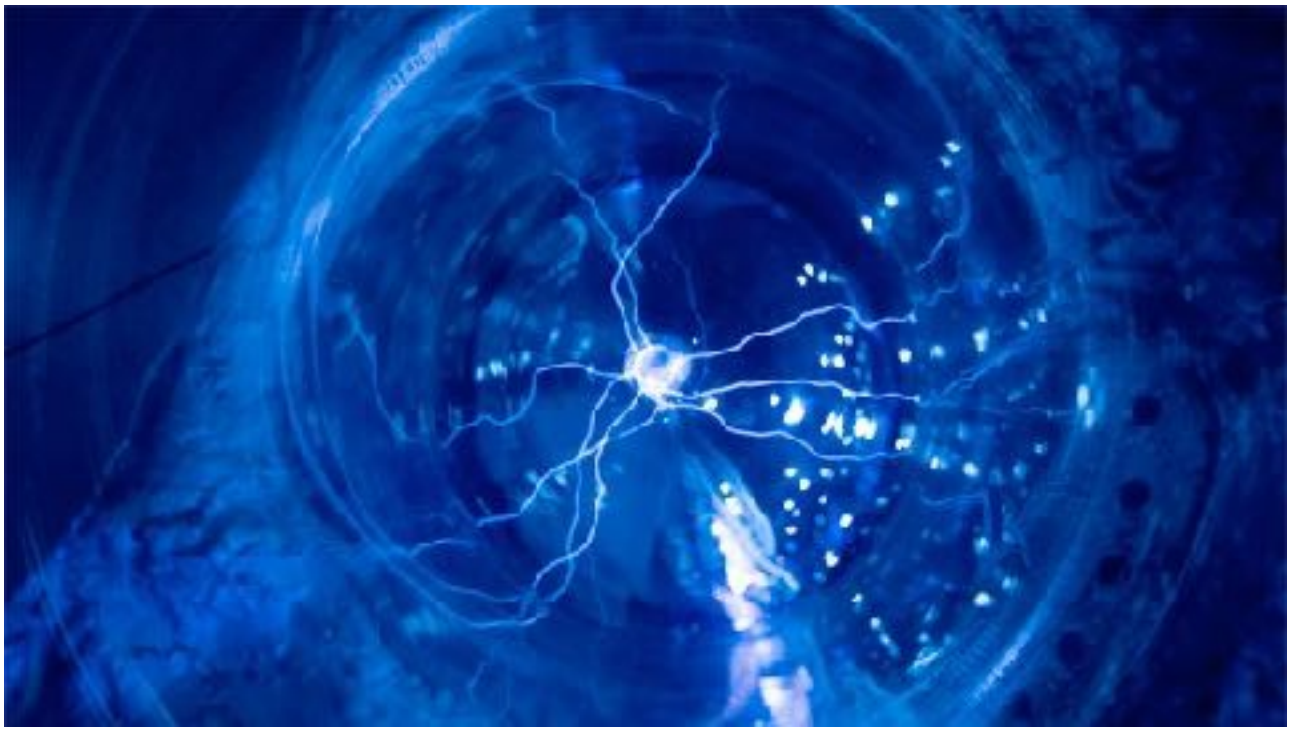
Quantum medicine (or quantum medicine) provides painless therapy without contraindications. It is based on quantum bioresonance.

QUANTUM MEDICINE ACTS DIRECTLY ON THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF THE BODY

It is widely believed that biological dynamics is entirely dominated by chemical mechanisms, by molecular events that follow one another in an orderly fashion in time and space. Recognition codes between biomolecules have been highlighted (the first of which was the recognition code between DNA bases and amino acids)

which show that in living matter, molecules do not interact at random, but according to well-defined patterns.

One wonders what the physical mechanism might be that enables the long-distance encounter between molecules that must have the precision of the order of tens of Angstroms. How do molecules arrive at the right place at the right time for the close encounter of the chemical kind, without ever having the wrong address. Within the known concepts of physics, the only candidate for this role appears to be the electromagnetic field, which is capable of both interacting with molecules and operating at great distances. The existence of recognition codes between molecules therefore implies the existence of an electromagnetic level of living matter that dialogues with the chemical level, ensuring that the traffic of molecules is well ordered.



Pathology that appears in the first instance with an abnormality of the molecular structure of the body refers in the second instance to a disturbance of the electromagnetic control network of molecular traffic. Therefore, two therapeutic attitudes can be assumed:

1. **Intervening directly on the chemical level of the organism, providing suitable chemicals to remove the anomaly manifested in the molecular structure.**
2. **Intervening on the electromagnetic level by removing the disturbance that disrupts molecular traffic. This is the case with quantum medicine. Exploring these issues of quantum medicine can open up vast horizons to understanding life not only on a chemical basis, but also on a physical basis.**

QUANTUM MEDICINE IS BASED ON FREQUENCY INFORMATION

Our organism receives everything that externally affects it as energy in the form of frequency information and, in turn, emits this quantum energy.

Every cell, every organ, emits its own particular frequency that can be linked to healthy structures, or can be generated by pathological situations related to disturbing oscillations. This frequency information can be appropriately picked up by the body via electrodes and subsequently studied and electronically processed. Quantum bioresonance therapy tends to restore the functionality of the body and its systems of

regulation: this is done by gradually reducing pathological fluctuations until they are completely eliminated.

Since all life processes are regulated by electromagnetic oscillations, which are in charge of biochemical processes, disease can be seen as a set of 'sick' oscillations that lead to faulty regulation: disease before manifesting itself in bodily symptoms can be sought in a disturbance of physiological frequency oscillations, a disturbance that can be worked on by counter-regulation or enhancement.

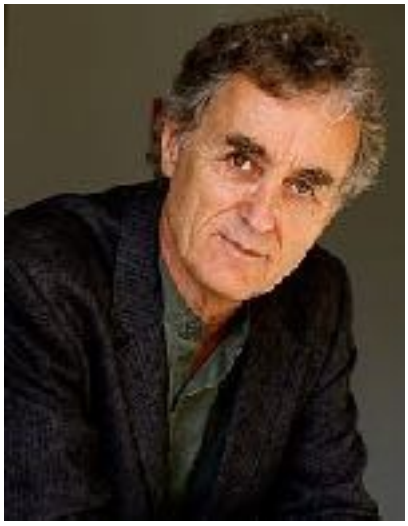
THE FIELDS OF APPLICATION OF QUANTUM MEDICINE

Quantum medicine is mainly applied to the treatment of allergies. Allergy is caused by one or more allergens, each allergen is characterised by a well-defined frequency that can be recognised electronically and neutralised through an 'inverse peak' mechanism. In several sessions, mirror oscillations are transmitted to the patient, gradually reducing the pathological oscillations of the allergen, finally leading to the gradual reduction and elimination of the allergy itself.

The therapy is based on the use of electromagnetic fields of low intensity and frequency. It is a customised therapy that interacts with the responses revealed by the patient's body, also aiming to stimulate the body's self-healing capacity. The therapy is painless and has no contraindications or side effects.

In addition to allergies, the fields of application are: osteo-myo-articular pathologies, pre- and post-operative treatments, metabolic and endocrine system pathologies, neurological pathologies, removal of energy blockages, energy balancing, treatment of geopathologies, pain therapy, anxiety/depressive syndromes, heavy metal intoxications, immune system strengthening, treatment of inflammatory pathologies, treatment of addictions.

But thinking of Capra's Tao of physics that I remember Luigi Pericles quoting in his notes in relation to a phrase of the Buddha: "Form is emptiness and emptiness is form". Luigi Pericles quotes Capra: "The creation of particles from pure energy and their disappearance makes the distinction between matter and vacuum fall."



Fritjof Capra

Fritjof Capra (Vienna, 1 February 1939) is an Austrian physicist and essayist. A physicist and systems theorist, he is an essayist of

international fame. He became famous with The Tao of Physics, 1975, translated into Italian in 1982 (Adelphi), and saw his fame rise with the 1989 reprint. He also dealt with sustainable development, ecology and complexity theory. This is how he described his intuition of spiritual reality:

"Five years ago I had a wonderful experience that set me on the path that was to lead me to write this book. On a late summer afternoon, I was sitting by the ocean, watching the motion of the waves and feeling the rhythm of my breath, when suddenly I became aware that everything around me was taking part in a gigantic cosmic dance. [...] Sitting on that beach, my previous experiences came to life; I 'saw' cascades of energy descending from outer space, in which particles were being created and destroyed in pulsating rhythms; I 'saw' the atoms of the elements and those of my body taking part in that cosmic dance of energy; I perceived its rhythm and 'heard' its music: and at that moment I knew that this was the dance of Śiva, the God of Dancers worshipped by the Hindus.

(The Tao of Physics, Adelphi, 1993, pp. 11-12)

Capra starts from the observation of modern physics, with Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum mechanics, and presents a picture that can also be seen on the basis of spiritualistic elements. According to Capra, subatomic 'particles' are actually concentrations of pure energy in vibration rather than actual material entities; the physicist must not observe, but participate:

"The idea of 'participation instead of observation' has only recently been formulated in modern physics, but it is an idea well known to any scholar of mysticism. Mystical knowledge can never be attained by observation alone, but only by total participation with one's whole being."

(The Tao of Physics, Adelphi, 1993, p.161)

Already in his book The Tao of Physics (Adelphi), which was a great success and has been reprinted in several languages, the author criticises the model of scientificity (of Cartesian derivation) prevailing in the modern Western world, as it is marked by a mechanistic, quantitative and reductionist approach that does not correspond to the complexity of reality. Its success would be due not to its theoretical scope, but to its practical implications, as this scientific paradigm would have facilitated and enhanced man's dominance over nature, as advocated by Descartes, F. Bacon and other 'fathers' of modernity.

According to Capra, there is an intimate connection between the very serious environmental crisis of our time and the kind of anti-ecological culture that has established itself in the West in recent centuries. He theorises the advent of a new paradigm, drawn from developments in the 'new physics' (and other areas of contemporary science), but also from Eastern mysticism (Taoism above all) and various other ecologically oriented pre-modern wisdoms. The aim is to develop a new way of thinking, characterised in a holistic, or rather systemic, sense: it is so called because it privileges the system, i.e. the complex network made up of multiple interrelationships, and not the individual constituent units (as the Cartesian analytical approach wanted). Following this orientation, which privileges the ' web o f Life' (an image of great effectiveness that Capra uses many times) and cosmic interconnections, the human being himself is seen as part of Nature (and not in opposition to it).

The implications that follow from this are innumerable: here we limit ourselves to pointing out that the Natural Aspect (the Divine) of real Nature is no longer reducible to the object of arbitrary spiritual, mental or technological manipulations; on the contrary, Capra observes that we must learn from the Natural Cosmic Cycles and the Organisational Principles of Multilevel Ecosystems, also with the urgent aim of building sustainable communities, capable of reducing the effects of still non-ecological impacts to the maximum. This goal can no longer be postponed, given the severity of the environmental crisis on a planetary level: with this in mind, Capra founded the Centre for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley.

a look), which as its name suggests, aims to promote eco-literacy, the scope and urgency of which is outlined by Capra himself as follows: "...eco-literacy is an essential endowment for politicians, businessmen and professionals in all fields. What is more, eco-literacy will be fundamental for the survival of humanity as a whole, so it will be the most important part of education at every level'. In presenting the formative value of ecological education, Capra is inspired by deep ecology, while distancing himself from superficial ecology, as it is characterised in an anthropocentric and efficientistic sense; in fact, "in superficial ecology, human beings are placed above and outside Nature (Intimate and real) and, obviously, this perspective accords with the domination over all aspects of Nature... to which it attributes exclusively a use value, an instrumental value. Deep Ecology sees human beings as an integral part of Nature, as nothing more than a special thread in the fabric of Cosmic Life/God/Gao/Tao" .

In his book The Tao of Physics, Capra lists a wide range of 'affinities' between the picture that seems to be emerging from contemporary physics and the teachings of eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism) and related philosophical systems. The universe would be the manifestation of a single abstract field of universal intelligence, which would give rise to every form and its parts would be intimately connected to form a great unitary organism. In this vision, decisive importance is attributed to waves and the concept of vibration, which replaces the traditional, static concept of matter (which is in fact superseded by current nuclear and subnuclear physics).

In his book The Turning Point and subsequent books, Capra moved away from purely scientific and philosophical topics to address political, economic and ecological issues, which he argued derived naturally from the new scientific understanding. These developments inspired the development of new disciplines such as ecopsychology and were taken up by essayists such as the Italian psychologist Marcella Danon but were not followed or shared by other scientists who

were in tune with the themes of The Tao of Physics, such as John Hagelin.

The following is a summary of the theories expressed in The Turning Point and other works by Capra. Capra poses the following criticisms of global trade that are also shared by other economists:

- **The transport and production of a good does cost money in terms of labour, but also and above all in terms of resource consumption and pollution. The real price of the product should reflect the environmental damage due to both the consumption of resources during production (forest, land) and pollution due to transport.**
- **Currently, the G7 countries, about 20% of the population, use 80% of the resources. Maintaining the same efficiency would require 400% of the resources to bring everyone up to the same level. Since at most we have 100%, we would have to reduce the need for raw materials for production to a quarter or less.**
- **To bring the whole world up to the average per capita income of Europe or the USA would require an unsustainable per capita income/resources used ratio.**

In general, the above also applies to disadvantaged groups living in rich countries, as it is always necessary to increase income and resources used (out of nothing nothing is produced). Furthermore, it has as a corollary that in order to advance underdeveloped countries, it is better to give them advanced knowledge, rather than make them retrace the development of richer countries through wood - coal - oil, and push them to use sustainable technologies: natural gas, solar energy, wind energy, etc.

To summarise the criticism, building a trade network that is not sustainable, i.e. that leads to resource depletion, in order for poor countries to develop, is disadvantageous for two main reasons:

- **because at most it would increase income for a few decades;**

- **because resources would be depleted, with the disadvantage of having increased pollution and foreclosed the way for other methods of development, having impoverished the land.**

According to this view, as set up, fair trade is not sustainable, because the real price should reflect the costs necessary to repair the damage to the ecosystem caused by the production, transport and sale of a good. Moreover, the lack of resources needed to retrace the process of technological development of disadvantaged countries and groups makes current processes and economies unsuitable and not flexible enough to guarantee the required level of return.

The basis of economic interactions and production processes must therefore be rethought. This does not mean that disadvantaged groups and countries should suffer hunger, thirst, disease or remain at the level of the Neolithic period, but that other types of production processes should be used.

Capra gives the example of 'Economic Networks', i.e. networks of production systems that use each other's waste as raw material, which are much more competitive and tend to optimise production overall, theoretically using only sunlight. These are basically factory ecosystems, studied by ZERI (Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives). They are not the only type of similar projects, generically called Zero Emissions, however, they are the only one, at the moment, that have already been sperimentated ouccess, in Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Fiji, Namibia and Zimbabwe, without the contribution of foreign capital, being able to sell their products at market prices, and above all thanks only to the commitment of the local communities - no technological input that cannot be reproduced locally.

The fundamental criticism is that it seems unreasonable to stand in solidarity with someone by buying goods produced and transported in ways that cannot be used in the long term, that are harmful or worse than others, and that are within the reach of the most disadvantaged groups such as prisons or rehabilitation communities.

- **The Tao of physics, Adelphi, 1982, ISBN 8845906892 (The Tao of physics, 1975)**
- **Il punto di svolta, Feltrinelli, 1984, ISBN 8807811170 (The turning point, 1982)**
- **Green politics, 1984**
- **The web of life, Rizzoli, 2001, ISBN 8817126802**
- **The Science of Life, Rizzoli, 2002, ISBN 8817869961**
- **Universal Science. Art and Nature in the Genius of Leonardo, Rizzoli, 2007, ISBN 978-88-17-01775-6**
- **Towards a new wisdom,Feltrinelli, 1989**
- **The Universe as Dwelling Place (with Steindl-Rast), Feltrinelli, 1993**
- **Eco-alphabet. L'orto dei bambini, Stampa Alternativa, 2005**
- **Qualitative growth. For an ecologically sustainable and socially equitable economy. (With Hazel Henderson), Aboca: International Lectures on Nature and Ecology, 2009. ISBN/EAN: 9788895642888**
- **Leonardo's Botany. A discourse on the science of qualities, Aboca: International Lectures on Nature and Ecology, 2009**
- **Life and Nature: A Systemic Vision, Aboca, 2014 (with Pier Luigi Luisi)**
- **with Ugo Mattei, Ecology of Law, Turin, Aboca, 2017, ISBN978-88-98881-41-3.**
- **Discourse on herbs - From Leonardo's botany to plant networks. (with Stefano Mancuso), Aboca, 2019.**

1. **^ F. Capra, D. Steindl-Rast, The Universe as Dwelling Place, Feltrinelli, 1993, p. 94.**

- **Holism**
- **(EN) Official site, at fritjofcapra.net.**
- **(EN) Works of Fritjof Capra, on Open Library, Internet Archive.**
- **(EN) Fritjof Capra, on Goodreads.**
- **(EN) Fritjof Capra, on Internet Movie Database, IMDb.com.**
- **(EN) Ecoliteracy Centre website, at ecoliteracy.org.**

- **43. TRANSCENDENTALISM FROM EMERSON TO LUIGI PERICLES**

In a historical collage, the links that in their stories related to the world of art, literature, spirituality, connect a number of personalities of paramount importance for free thought over time. We are in a special field of Freedom, Beauty and Truth. In general

It is a matter of tracing the connections between Emerson, Thoreau, Hertwarth Walden, Else Larsker-Schüler, Hilla von Rebay (Guggenheim N.Y.), Nell Walden and Luigi Pericle at Monte Verità of course. Here is the map : Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 25 May 1803 - Concord, 27 aprile 1882) was an American philosopher, writer, essayist and poet.
Literary critic Harold Bloom considered him 'the central figure in American culture', and Harvard philosopher Stanley Cavell considered him one of the most underrated American philosophers ever.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

From Romantic idealism Emerson draws the intuition of a dynamic nature, pervaded by the divine Spirit that is living Energy and operating through individuals. The realms of man and nature are manifestations of the Divine and are therefore not opposed to each other. There is no opposition between naturalness and ethicality for those who know how to rediscover within themselves, through untiring thought and action, that "superior soul" (Over-soul), which in itself includes all living beings, urging them to overcome all inner and outer limits. From this consciousness arises the 'self-confidence' of which Emerson was a fervent advocate. His intuitionism and activism would find more systematic developments in Europe, in the thought of Henri Bergson and Maurice Blondel.[2] Part of the ' natural' attention

of Maturana and Varela owe their unconventional interest in science to Emersonian rhetoric.

EMERSON AND NIETZSCHE

Friedrich Nietzsche is known to have been one of Emerson's finest readers. He discovered Emerson at the age of 18 and read and re-read him almost all his life. It is therefore no coincidence that Emersonian themes run throughout Nietzsche's work. Prominent among them are self-confidence, non-conformism, the affirmation of the intramundane life, affirmative philosophy, the 'gay science', the love of fate, the power theme, the idea of a man beyond man, the love of solitude, and the prophetic attitude.

Through Nietzsche, various aspects of Emersonian thought and attitudes have passed into European thought.

EMERSON'S INFLUENCES

Emerson is not by chance considered a 'central figure in American culture'. His work strongly influenced the poet Whitman and the entire American literary tradition up to and beyond the Beat Generation. Emersonian instances can also be perceived in American pragmatism, in today's humanistic psychology, in contemporary law (the Privacy Act has its roots in Emerson's work), in American history relating to slavery and the American Civil War, in the music theory and composition of Charles Ives, and in Proust's novel In Search of Lost Time.

Henry David Thoreau

Henry David Thoreau, born David Henry Thoreau[1] (Concord, 12 July 1817 - Concord, 6 May 1862), was an American philosopher, writer and poet.

He was close friends with some of the leading members of the Transcendentalism current, of which he was never a member. He was influenced in particular by Ralph Waldo Emerson from whom he

later

distances himself to elaborate his own thought that departs from transcendentalism by denying any ideality outside of immanence. For Thoreau, nature is not merely an instrument for the attainment of ideal knowledge of a higher order, but rather the ultimate object of philosophical practice, a source of well-being and an existential solution.

He is best known for his autobiographical essay Walden or Life in the Woods, a reflection on man's relationship with nature, and for his famous essay Civil Disobedience in which he argued that it is permissible to disregard laws when they go against man's conscience and rights, thus inspiring the first non-violent protest and resistance movements. He was also a staunch opponent of slavery, personally committing himself to helping runaway slaves reach Canada.

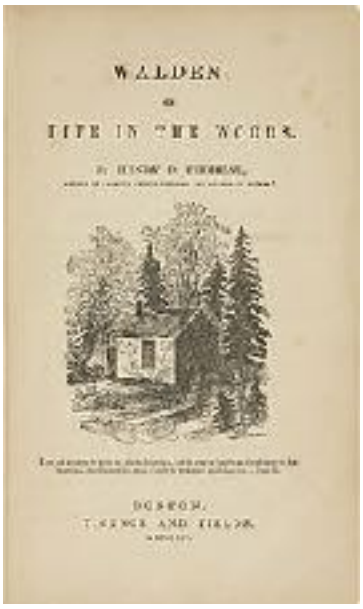
The philosopher Stanley Cavell considers him, along with Ralph Waldo Emerson, to be one of the 'most underrated philosophical minds America has produced'.

Walden or Life in the Woods

Walden or Life in the Woods

Walden or Life in the

Woods



Cover of Walden or Life in the Woods in the original version (1854)

Author	**Henry David Thoreau**
1st original edition	**1854**
1st Italian ed.	**1920**
Genre	**Essay**
Subgenre	**autobiographical, naturalistic**
Original language	**English**

"I went to the woods because I wished to live wisely, facing only the essential facts of life, to see if I could not learn what it had to teach me and so that I would not have to discover at the point of death that I had not lived. The fact was that I did not want to live what was not a life unless it was absolutely necessary. I wanted to live deeply, to suck all the marrow out of it, I wanted to live as a gallant Spartan, to smash what life was not, to mow wide and level and put life there, in a corner, reduced to its simplest terms."

Walden was a great success in the American counterculture. In particular, the Beat Generation saw Thoreau's experience and his strong desire for a return to nature in contrast to the increasing modernisation of the American metropolis. Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and Gary Snyder are just some of the writers who expressly refer to Thoreau and his book as examples of freedom from modern conventions.

More generally, Walden is considered one of the first ecological novels and has influenced contemporary ecological thinking. Some have even likened Thoreau to the controversial positions of the American ecoterrorist Unabomber.

The book War on Humans by Wu Ming 2, born Giovanni Cattabriga, and the children's novel The Gospel According to Larry by Janet Tashjian both contain characters who - impressed by Walden - decide to flee the city to live in the woods. Walden was also a literary reference for the film Into the Wild by Sean Penn, in which the line from Walden is quoted: 'Not love, not money, not faith, not fame, not justice... just give me the Truth'.

Walden, Herwarth

Walden ⟨vàldën⟩, Herwarth. - German writer (Berlin 1878 - Saratov 1941). Critic, music composer, multifaceted writer, was one of the most important figures of the Expressionist movement. He founded (1910) and directed until 1932 the magazine Der Sturm, which became the centre of expressionism not only in Germany, and organised a theatre of the same name in Berlin in 1918 to present avant-garde works. His plays, however, mostly centred on the problem of sex and love, never managed to be performed, due to the a-syntactic essentiality of the language and the deliberate paradoxicality of the situations: Weib (1917), Die Beiden (1918), Kind (1918), Erste Liebe (1918), Letzte
Liebe (1918), Menschen (1918), Sünde (1918), Trieb (1918). Passed to

a more overt political commitment, he became a communist and moved to Moscow in 1931. Exiled to Siberia, he later died in Saratov in circumstances that are not entirely clear.

Hilla von Rebay

Hilla von Rebay

Hilla von Rebay (Strasbourg, 31 May 1890[1] - Green Farms, 27 September 1967) was a German artist and director of the Guggenheim Foundation.

Hildegard Anna Augusta Elisabeth Rebay von Ehrenwiesen, also known as Hilla Rebay, was a German painter specialising in abstract art. She was the artistic director of the Guggenheim Foundation.

Hilla Rebay studied painting at the Académie Julien in Paris and then in Munich from 1907 to 1913.

Thanks to Jean Arp, whom he met in 1916 in Zurich, he came into contact with Herwath Walden, owner of Der Sturm gallery in Berlin, and his circle of artists including Kandinsky.

After a stay in Italy, she emigrated to New York in 1927. The following year she met Solomon R. Guggenheim, who entrusted her with the artistic direction of his collection in 1937. In 1939, she directed the first museum of non-figurative painting in Manhattan.

During the Second World War, he supported numerous artists who remained in Europe.

In 1943, Hilla Rebay called u p o n architect Frank Lloyd Wright to design the Guggenheim Museum in New York, which opened its doors in 1959 without her. Although she had been the driving force behind this project, she was removed from it shortly after Guggenheim's death in 1949.

Else Lasker-Schüler

Else Lasker-Schüler, born Elisabeth Schüler (Elberfeld, 11 February 1869 - Jerusalem, 22 January 1945), w a s a German poetess.

According to Schalom Ben-Chorin, she was the greatest poetess expressed by Judaism, for Karl Kraus she was 'the strongest and most impervious lyrical phenomenon of modern Germany', and for Gottfried Benn, Else Lasker- Schüler was the greatest poetess Germany ever had.

On 11 April 1903, she divorced Berthold Lasker to marry, on 30 November of the same year, the writer Georg Lewin, who owes her pseudonym Herwarth Walden from the book 'Walden' by Henry David Throreau.

Nell Walden

Nell Walden (née Roslund; * 29 December 1887 in Karlskrona, Sweden; † 21 October 1975 in Berne, Switzerland) was a painter, musician,

Swedish-Swiss writer and art collector. From 1912 to 1924 she was the second wife of the publisher and gallery owner Herwarth Walden and collaborator on his Berlin Sturm projects. In 1919 he transferred his avant-garde art collection to her. In 1933 she moved to Switzerland.

In 1926 Nell Walden married the Jewish doctor Hans Hermann Heimann in Berlin. In 1932, she published the essay Wesen und Bedeutung der Astrologie und Horoskopie in Alfred Flechtheim's Berlin Gallery Almanach Omnibus. In 1933, he formally divorced Heimann due to the political situation and moved to Ascona, Switzerland, to live with Heimann. However, Heimann was arrested, deported and murdered by the National Socialists. He handed over his collections to Swiss art museums for safekeeping. He later parted with his collection largely by sale or endowment.
In 1940 she married the Swiss teacher Hannes Urech. In 1944 the couple settled in Schinznach-Bad. At the end of 1954, a large part of Nell Walden's collection was auctioned at the Kunstkabinett in Stuttgart, including works by numerous Expressionists such as Franz Marcs; Herwarth Walden's portrait of Oskar Kokoschka was also auctioned The collection also included 14 paintings by Marc Chagall and a painting by Wassily Kandinsky, which were auctioned against the wishes of the artists' heirs.

In 1962, the couple moved to the new Haus Seehalde in Brestenberg, near Seengen. A year later Hannes Urech died and Nell Urech-Walden moved to Berne. After her death in 1975, she was buried next to her husband in Aarau in Berne.

Nell Walden's abstract work is represented, for example, in the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Landskrona Museum and the Kunstmuseum Bern, and is occasionally offered in art shops.

Nell Walden in Ascona lived in Casa San Tomaso, which was later bought by Luigi Pericle (recent rediscovery story) in the late 1950s.

Louis Pericles

ON THE SLOPES OF MONTE VERITÀ. STORY OF LUIGI PERICLES, THE ARTIST AND MAN OF LETTERS WHO LIVED IN ASCONA.

THE SWISS ARTIST AND INTELLECTUAL - WHO MOVED IN THE 1950S TO THE SLOPES OF MONTE VERITÀ, THE ARTISTIC COMMUNITY FOUNDED AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY, AND WAS FORGOTTEN AFTER HIS DEATH - AT THE CENTRE OF A MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE IN 2019 AT THE FONDAZIONE QUERINI STAMPALIA IN VENICE

Luigi Pericle Giovannetti and his wife Orsoli na Klainguti in the artist's Ferrari

In 1978, the renowned art critic Harald Szeemann curated an exhibition entitled The Breasts of Truth, dedicated to the history of Monte Monescia in Canton Ticino, renamed in 1899 as Monte Verità. It was a community founded in 1900 by Ida Hofmann and Heinrich Oedenkoven on the Collina dell'Utopia, overlooking Lake Maggiore, where all the European 'counterculture' of the time landed, from Herman Hesse to Paul Klee: pacifists, anarchists, theosophists, poets, bohemians, anthroposophists, vegetarians and feminists. An El Dorado of art that still makes people talk about itself today, and to which are linked the destinies of men and artists who, through the bizarre and sometimes indecipherable dynamics of fate, have fallen into oblivion. And in some ways, this was the story of painter Luigi Pericle (Basel, 1916 -

Ascona, 2001),

illustrator, scholar and intellectual who came under the influence of theosophy and esoteric doctrines, and who in the 1950s moved to Ascona, on the slopes of Monte Verità, to the Casa San Tomaso in which he lived until the end of his days. A small villa in which he collected works, documents and, above all, books, recounting the life, research and studies of an artist who decided to retire to Monte Verità and renounce worldliness to devote himself to the contemplation of nature. Perhaps it was also because of Pericles' reserved nature that, after his death, the shadow of oblivion fell over his character. A shadow that today, however, is forcefully removed by Andrea and Greta Biasca-Caroni, who in 2016 purchased the villa that once belonged to Pericles and founded the eponymous archive to enhance and promote his figure as an artist and intellectual. And among the initiatives planned to make Luigi Pericle's story known to the public is a large exhibition dedicated to him that will be held in May in Venice at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia, in conjunction with the next Art Biennale.

L u i g i Pericles, The March of Time X, Matri Dei d.d., 1963, mixed media on canvas, 51 x 65 cm

REDISCOVERING THE PAST

"In December 2016, we bought 'Casa San Tomaso' on the slopes of Monte Verità in Ascona, Switzerland. We decided to buy, together with the house, also all its contents, the works, documents and books of the villa's previous owner, Luigi Pericle Giovannetti," Greta Biasca-Caroni tells Artribune. "Our curiosity was aroused by the mystery surrounding this extraordinarily charismatic character. Little was known about him despite the youthful memories of Andrea, who had always been his neighbour and had met him on a few occasions. It was precisely the memory of his personality,' continues Biasca-Caroni, 'that attracted us to the documents, wanting to discover, through the study of his library, Pericles' research interests that we felt we had in common. While removing the volumes from the shelves, in view of the restoration work on the premises, we found a 1991 catalogue entitled 'Nafea' by Hans-Joachim Müller in which paintings by Louis Pericles were published alongside works by Picasso, Hodler, Van Gogh and Matisse. It was this discovery that gave rise to our extraordinary adventure. After the initial astonishment, it was clear that something important had happened in Pericles' past; he had a story to tell and our task was to unveil it'.

Luigi Pericle and his wife Orsolina (called Nini) in the artist's studio

WHO WAS LUIGI PERICLES

But Luigi Pericle Giovannetti was not only a painter, he was also an illustrator and cartoonist; with his marmot Max, he achieved international success by publishing worldwide in the Washington Post, the Herald Tribune, Punch and Nebelspalter. Pericle decided to keep the two professions separate and to sign his comics with the surname Giovannetti and his paintings as Luigi Pericle. During his life, he was in contact with prominent personalities of the cultural world of the time, such as the museologist Hans Hess, who took him on a tour of British museums, or the British scholar, man of letters and poet Herbert Read (former advisor to Peggy Guggenheim), who was in charge of the curatorship of two solo exhibitions. It was thus that Pericles' painting came into the favour of

critics, the public and collectors. "Suffice it to recall", stresses Greta Biasca-Caroni, "the exhibitions at the London Arthur Tooth & Sons Gallery together with Appel, Francis, Jorn, Picasso or the masters of CoBrA, Jorn, Corneille, as well as Tàpies, Dubuffet, Mathieu, Riopelle. Pericles was perfectly placed in the landscape of his time and the forgetfulness that has shrouded his work for decades has erased a piece that we intend to put back in its place'.

Luigi Pericle, Matri Dei d.d., China on pulverised silk paper, 1963, 42 x 60 cm

ASCONA, DESTINATION FOR INTELLECTUALS

The path that led Andrea and Greta Biasca-Caroni to the rediscovery and revival of the figure of Pericles thus began with the purchase of the small villa in which he lived, Casa San Tomaso, so named by the artist in homage to St Thomas Aquinas. "The little villa was in an abandoned condition that required extensive renovation work, which is still in progress. But the house exudes all the charm of its past full of history: Monte Verità, in the land

Ticino, which welcomed famous people, including anarchists such as Peter Kropotkin and Erich Mühsam, Dadaists and dancers (Isadora Duncan), psychologists and esotericists (Rudolf Steiner). It was in these places that, starting in the 1930s, the intellectual adventure of the Eranos meetings took shape, promoted by Carl Gustav Jung (whose 'Red Book' was rediscovered in recent years and exhibited at the 2013 Venice Biennale) and the Dutch noblewoman theosophist and painter Olga Froebe- Kapteyn. It was precisely his stays in Ascona, due to the lectures he gave at Eranos from 1952 to 1965, that gave Herbert Read the opportunity to visit Pericles' atelier and he was greatly impressed by his art,' Greta explains.

Luigi Pericles, Matri Dei d.d., Indische Tusche auf Papier, 1964, 42 x 60 cm

ST. THOMAS HOUSE TODAY

It was the cultural climate of Monte Verità that Pericles dreamt of visiting when, in the early 1950s, he decided to move with his wife from Basel to Ascona to join a coterie of internationally renowned artists. He chose this place to absorb t h e mystical aura of the

Monte Verità and immerse yourself in its nature and peace. Before that, in the 1930s, the house had belonged to the painter and collector Nell Walden, the ex-wife of Herwarth Walden, writer, artist, theorist and founder of the magazine Der Sturm, of which Nell was the main financier. A house, therefore, 'rich in deep moods imprinted in its rooms by the intense figures who stayed there', Greta continues to recount. Today, a garden links Casa San Tomaso to the Hotel Ascona - owned by Andrea and Greta Biasca-Caroni - where, in its salons, a selection of works by Luigi Pericle is on public display and can be visited free of charge. By appointment, the works and the archive with its documents can be consulted by scholars and researchers.

So, what were the conditions and activities that led to the recovery and re-emergence of the figure of Louis Pericles in recent years? "The work of rediscovery and valorisation started recently, after the cataloguing and diagnostic investigation of the techniques pioneered by Pericles," Greta replies. "After the first important discoveries, we asked Philippe Daverio and the director of the MASI in Lugano, Tobia Bezzola, for their opinions. They appreciated Pericles' research and participated in a special produced by RSI. In an informative video, Daverio outlined Pericles' links with the artistic currents of the time, in particular with Marc Tobey and Marino Marini. The priority today is to bring order to the numerous documents by reconstructing the main stages in the life of this erudite artist with profound knowledge on a wide range of subjects. Indeed, Pericles' versatility and the variety of his interests emerge from the archive documents: among the papers it is possible to unearth drawings, correspondence, notes on Chinese medicine, homeopathy, astrology, studies on Egypt, the Greek canon, and classical and oriental philosophy'. In May 2018, the non-profit association Archivio Luigi Pericle was founded, which is promoting a calendar of museum events and conferences to promote the artist internationally.

THE EXHIBITION IN VENICE

The first major event on the programme is Luigi Pericle (1916-2001)_Beyond the visible, an exhibition that will be held from 11 May to

24 November 2019 at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia Venice and which represents the first Luigi Pericle retrospective in Italy. "The anthological exhibition will sink into the folds of Luigi Pericle's expressive investigation, into his reflection on the language of sign and painting," Greta explains. "The event is sponsored, among others, by the State Council of the Republic and Canton of Ticino, the Culture and University Studies Division of DECS, the Consulate General of Switzerland in Milan, the Monte Verità Foundation of Ascona, and the Eranos Foundation of Ascona. Among the various institutional loans is the York Art Gallery, the British museum from which the famous travelling exhibition curated by Hans Hess started in 1965. The chronological path of the exhibition will aim to reconstruct, through about fifty works and a selection of documents, the different moments of the author's aesthetic research: "the intellectual côté, the eclectic studies, the mystical vocation, represent unique sources of inspiration for an imagery that feeds on numerous cultural references".

When I collected the material for this book just after Louis Pericles, for the reasons already stated, I also put this little piece on
3 great Naturmenschen or nature lovers: Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman. Father, son and holy spirit. What Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman have in common is the same point of view: nature as a beneficial force that, if studied carefully and contemplated with prudence, is able to provide lessons on what it really means to be human.

Three men reverent towards nature who built their identity through their intimate and authentic relationship with the natural world. Three philosophies friendly to pantheism that have intertwined and evolved into poetry and beauty, still carrying an idea of nature that dazzles the eye of the romantic and the misanthropic: nature is the only true knowledge man needs to live.

Herbert Read was the discoverer of Louis Pericles as has been indicated above. But who was he?

To define him solely as a poet is reductive, as his cultural space is vast and ranges from philosophy to art history, both as a particular study and as a trespass into the field of psychic analysis, to politics both as a scholar and as a militant: in fact, he is a convinced pacifist in the Second World War and his philosophy on the subject is linked to the anarchist approach.

His figure in the 1950s is alongside those of Thomas Eliot and George Orwell. After his father's death he was placed in a school for orphans in Halifax, at the age of sixteen he worked in a bank in Leeds and, studying at night, graduated from the University of Leeds, which he attended from 1911 to 1914. Read's work as a poet was abruptly interrupted during the First World War, after the publication of Chaos (1915). Read fought in Belgium and France, attained the rank of captain and was decorated for bravery. During the war he founded a newspaper with Rutter in which he attacked conservative British positions. After the war, he worked in various fields and deepened his knowledge of Kropotkin and Jung. His literary production also went hand in hand with activities from his professional fields, including the curation of important exhibitions. At the end of the Second World War, where he took up positions as a militant pacifist, and more so around the 1950s, he abandoned some of his inclinations towards Marxism, while remaining a progressive. During this period, he became involved in various areas of literary work that he developed.

Everything, perhaps, has to be traced back to the origins, to the erebo of childhood. Herbert Edward Read was born on 4 December 1893 in Muscoates, a small North Yorkshire hamlet, the eldest son of a tenant farmer pierced by noble utopias. The neighbours said that 'the Reads were snobs': they had a housekeeper, the father took his sons - four of them - hunting. He believed in what ennobles man: leisure, wandering, the diamond of life. Living among furrows, woods, shining blood, the appendage of light. When he died, the owner took back the land and the Read dispersed: Herbert was sent to Halifax, to an orphanage; his mother found

work in a laundry, in Leeds. In the boy, I mean, two equally feral attitudes were combined: a hunger for fame, appropriate to the poor, the defrauded, and revolt against the established order. Talented, shrewd, exaggerated, with that weasel face, Herbert Read interrupted his studies - he alternated between university lectures and bank work - at the outbreak of the First War. Sent to France in the uniform of the Yorkshire Regiment, he managed to return home decorated with the Military Cross and with the rank of captain. In the meantime, together with Frank Rutter, he had found time to found a magazine, 'Art & Letters', which summed up his interests: art and letters, in fact. Anyway, it's all in the origins. The rural childhood, with the certainty of being a misunderstood and unequalled king; the receptacle for orphans. From there, literature as redemption, the need to escape the blackmail of the state, the drive for a new education, one that does not create cookie-cutter citizens, subjects, but men. In his poetic dictation, Herbert Read fuses the fairy tale with the inspiration of the metaphysical poets, the sunshine of tradition - Keats, George Herbert, Coleridge - with the modernist aegis - he preferred Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams. His first books in verse, self-published, shocked from the very title: Songs of Chaos (1915) and Naked Warriors (1919) imparted a new audacity to British poetry. At the same time - the Read's atavistic, albeit tin-pot, noble spirit - the poet published, in 1919, a series of delicate Eclogues for Beaumont Press in two hundred numbered copies, thirty of which were printed on Japanese cloth, with illustrations by Ethelbert White, a jewel. William Butler Yeats is fascinated by this poet so different from him, who with ruthless elegance puts death and slaughter into verse: in the legendary 'Oxford Book of Modern Verse' seventeen pages - taken from The End of a War, Faber, 1933 - are dedicated to Herbert Read. Ezra Pound, in that same anthology, is crammed into six pages; T.S. Eliot into twelve. Antifranchist, polygraph, struggling with everyone, Herbert Read has been professing his personal anarchism since the 1910s. The anarchist faith is embodied in a series of essays - Poetry & Anarchism; Art and Industry; Art and Alienation; The Paradox of Anarchism; Existentialism, Marxism and Anarchism; Chains of Freedom - often fascinating. Certainly, Herbert Read forges an anarchism in his stride, which passes through Max Stirner and Schelling, which

fuses William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites with Peter Kropotkin. It is, so to speak, an ideal anarchism, mostly lyrical, perhaps metaphysical. Together with Michael Fordham, he has, since the 1950s, edited the English edition of Carl Gustav Jung's complete works.

In 1953, Queen Elizabeth II elected him Knight Bachelor for services to literature. For Herbert Read it was the perfect accolade: he was called Sir, he reached the ranks that his father thought he possessed by charisma, the peasant taken for a snob by his neighbours, who went hunting, with proud bearing. His anarchist colleagues did not forgive him, Read moved on: together with George Orwell and Eliot he was the master of those years, the highest authority. His only novel, The Green Child (1935), is a kind of gothic-philosophical fairy tale, inexplicable, whose protagonist is an imaginary South American dictator, Olivero, who moves in the middle of the 19th century. The book, like The Green Maiden, was published by Bompiani in 1952. In Italy, the essayist Herbert Read, the art expert, the genial genius who in 1936, together with David Gascoyne, Henry Moore and Roland Penrose, organised the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries in London, had a certain fame. In 1962, Lerici published his study on Art and Industry; in the 1960s, Edizioni di Comunità published Educare con l'arte (Read was fascinated by children's drawings, by an anti-systematic schooling that passed through the artistic verb); in 1968, Mazzotta published Arte e alienazione while Dedalo translated I simboli dell'ignoto (1977); in the 'Biblioteca moderna' Mondadori printed Il significato dell'arte (1962) while Silvana edited L'opera completa di Marino Marini edited by Read (1970). His poetry, however, has been unjustly ignored. Omnivorous, polymorphic, ill-supported by the vile, Herbert Read died in June 1968. What happens to him is what happens to those who have marked an epoch: they are, decorously, forgotten. The noble anarchist, the subversive Sir was just too much.

***

Song for the Spanish Anarchists

The golden lemon does not

exist grows on a green trunk:

a strong man with crystal eyes is a

free man.

Oxen pass the yoke

the blind are led in ranks:

but a free man has the road to himself

and a house on the hill.

A man is one who cultivates the

land while a woman weaves her

clothes:

fifty men own the lemon grove and none

are slaves.

*

Night

Dark roofs plummet into the

infinity of the sky.

The white moonlit balconies look like

hands joined in prayer.

*

Winter thoughts

Life is short... I am

old

after an era of pain.

The earth reveals

a sad nakedness:

the hills bend over

my suffering.

Distilled peace

in which the living

and the dead cry

out, unnerved,

they lose their sleeping genius.

From a funeral cast

late stars seem like blasphemy.

Nocturne

I will build for her a bed of

ferns at the mouth of the trees

and she will come to me naked in the

starlight and when I kneel down to kiss

her I will realise she is human - smell

mingled

to the resin of the wood, like salt in weeping.

We will no longer speak to

the world: we will descend

by the green puddle lying

on the grass

drinking, together.

Dragonflies and bats

the birds sleeping in the branches

will be our companions.

Sheep in the fields

they will see our bodies, white,

gaudy in the dusk engulfed by

the forest.

*****

Roofs

The city vibrates:

above its dull

clamour the roofs

look like blades

jagged, breaking through the

golden mist - mosaic of

luminous tesserae, lapidary

shimmering metal.

Soon the stars will bloom are

the soles of death, the roofs,

ethereal silhouettes piercing the dark king.

*****

A lover's meditation at dawn

I see the distant trees

and wonder if their

plumes will bow to your

passing, while

the wind drags its chariots... Or, they

are mere creatures

trembling in the cold light of dawn, yellow

leaf shaking

weighed down by dew.

*****

On the moor

White humours vein the earth

the lymphatic winds of spring

veil the origin of morning

while on the hill

men begin to dig turn the earth,

the raw sod, hoes clatter on the

stones.

The horses run along the sandy road in silence.

Greedy running, white

of those who now lean against the fountain.

*****

Victims of bombings: Spain

Doll faces are pinker, it is true, but these

they are called children, their eyes are not glass, but gleaming

cartilage, sombre iris: in their silvery gaze

fractured sunlight. Warm pale lips, just a little

while ago - blood makes them

shiny, perfect, blood

that doesn't spill, that doesn't

dishevel, is closed on that lump of

flesh.

Between these intertwined

shadows, the red petals do

not always clot into a scar.

These are dead faces:

beehives that have no wax

wood embers embracing the

ashen heart.

They arranged them in arrays

like paper lanterns

collapsed after a frivolous night:

the dry morning air

crumbled them.

*****

Lepidoptera

Chrysalids have pink faces

devoid of atavistic truths like uniform

flame sideburns under felt necks -

shameless torches in daylight.

Intent on solemn inanity, they prefer

to pose as torpid.

Until night falls

and stripped of the grey sheaths and every

other tinsel, they imitate Narcissus in a

mediaeval dark mirror, they show their graces

to the sickly glow of gas, on the rococo

quilts: for a while, they play at being

the coribanti.

*****

The seven sleepers

Before leaving the light and colour of

the earth, the seven sleepers wept

for seven days (thwarting their fears).

"That which is beautiful will not fade away.

We retire to our cave condemned to

sleep for ten thousand years. A rock

will seal the gap.

So, let's forget everything stiff and

cold our bodies remain

in an unnecessary stillness. The Earth will

move before us, showing us

which is mortal.

When we wake up we will call

beauty the loneliness on land and sea'.

Herbert Read

Kropotkin, Pyotr Alekseevič

Russian anarchist revolutionary also passed through Monte Verità (Moscow 1842 - Dmitrov, Moscow, 1921). As a geographer, he made scientific trips to Siberia and Manchuria (1862-67), studying glacial periods in particular. In 1872 he travelled to Switzerland and Belgium, where he had contact with members of the international labour movement and abandoned liberalism for anarchism. Arrested in Russia (1874), he took refuge abroad, where he was imprisoned and expelled several times and became, in fact, the continuer of M. A. Bakunin's ideas. Settling in England (1886), K. elaborated anarchist theories of a libertarian communism conceived on solidarist and federalist foundations. Returning to Russia (1917), he opposed Soviet power in the name of his anarchist ideals, aimed at the destruction of the state and thus opposed to the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party. His works include: Paroles d'un révolté (1884; transl. it. 1885); La conquête du pain (1888; transl. it. 1948); L'anarchie, sa philosophie, son idéal (1896); Memoirs of a revolutionist (1899; transl. it. 1952); Reči revoljucionera ("Speeches of a revolutionary", 1906).

44. REMARQUE and GODDARD

Erich Maria Remarque, pseudonym of Erich Paul Remark (Osnabrück, 22 June 1898 - Locarno, 25 September 1970), was a German writer.

Next to the Eranos Foundation is Villa Monte Tabor, which was the Ascona residence of Erich Maria Remark. As an adult, the writer adopted the French spelling Remarque, by which the family had been known until Erich's grandfather) was born on 22 June 1898 into a Catholic working-class family in Osnabrück, the son of Peter Franz Remark (born 14 June 1867 in Kaiserswerth) and Anna Maria (maiden name Stallknecht, born 21 November 1871 in Katernberg).

Research by Hanns-Gerd Rabe, a long-time friend of the writer, showed that Remarque's family had French origins, as Erich himself suspected: his great-grandfather Johann Adam Remarque, born in 1789, came from a French family in Aachen.

The experience of war

During the First World War Remarque, after turning 18, was called to arms in the Imperial German Army with his conscription class in November 1916 (not a volunteer, as often claimed) and initially enlisted as a recruit in the 78th Infantry Regiment at the 'Caprivi' (Caprivi- Kaserne) barracks in Osnabrück and a training period in Celle.
On 12 June 1917, he was transferred to the Western Front with the 2nd Reserve Company, to the recruits' field depot (Feldrekrutendepot) of the 2nd Guards Reserve Division in Hem-Lenglet, with him were his friends Georg Middendorf (who noted everything in his diary), Seppel Oelfke and Theodor Troske (who died on 22 August 1917).
On 26 June 1917, he was assigned to the 15th Reserve Infantry Regiment (Reserve Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 15), 2nd Company, Hoe Platoon 'Bethe' (Schanztrupp Bethe) and fought in the trenches in the area between Torhout and Houthulst in West Flanders.
On 31 July 1917 he was wounded by shrapnel in the left leg, right arm and neck; he was first treated at the field hospital 309

(Feldlazarett 309) in Geite-St. Josef/De Geite-Sint Jozef and in Torhout, then evacuated and repatriated to Germany in August 1917, Remarque was transferred to the St.-Vincenz Hospital in Duisburg where he spent the rest of his convalescence, working in the office, and was discharged on 31 October 1918. He returned to Osnabrück with the 1st Complement Battalion of the 78th Infantry Regiment (I. Ersatz- Bataillon im Infanterie-Regiment 78.), was judged fit for service at the front on 7 November, but was demobilised on 11 November with the end of the conflict, finally being discharged on 5 January 1919.

The post-war period and activity as a writer

After the war he changed many jobs, becoming a librarian, businessman, teacher and journalist.

In 1929, he published his most famous work, Nothing New on the Western Front (Im Westen nichts Neues) under the name Erich Maria Remarque (changing his middle name in honour of his mother): the novel describes the utter cruelty of war through the perspective of a 19-year-old soldier. He later wrote other similar works, which - in simple and touching language - realistically described life during and after the war. In 1933, the Nazis burned and banned Remarque's works, while regime propaganda circulated the rumour that he was descended from French Jews and that his surname was Kramer, i.e. his real name in reverse. This information is still present in some biographies, despite the lack of supporting evidence. His hometown has dedicated the Erich Maria Remarque Peace Centre museum to him, which summarises his work.

Private life

Remarque lived in Switzerland from 1931 in Ascona, and in 1939 moved to the United States with his first wife, Ilsa Jeanne Zambona, whom he married and from whom he separated twice; the two became US citizens in 1947. There, he continued a stormy love affair with actress Marlene Dietrich, which had begun in 1937 at the Venice Lido. In 1948 he returned to Switzerland. In 1958 Remarque married the Hollywood actress Paulette Goddard, who remained at his side until his death in 1970 in Locarno, at the age of 72 in Switzerland.

In 1958, the film Time to Live (A Time to Love and a Time to Die) was released, based on Remarque's novel Time to Live, Time to Die (Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben), in which the author himself plays a small but significant part, that of Graeber's old high school teacher, Prof. Pohlmann.

The German writer is buried at the cemetery in Ronco sopra Ascona, Switzerland, where the ashes of his second wife Paulette Goddard are also kept.

Pauline Marion Levy was born in Whitestone Landing, Long Island, the daughter of Joseph Russell Levy and Alta Mae Goddard; her parents divorced when she was still a child and Pauline was raised by her mother, with whom she had a close relationship. In the early years, the two lived in dire financial straits, receiving help from her great-uncle Charles Goddard (her grandfather's brother). Her father reappeared in her life in the late 1930s, when Goddard was already a famous actress. At first their relationship seemed good, so much so that they used to go to the actress's film premieres together, but he later sued her for a newspaper article in which she denounced his abandonment when she was a child: they never reconciled and, on his death, Russell Levy left her only one dollar in his will.

While attending Washington Irving High School in Manhattan, thanks to her beauty and the help of her Uncle Charles, she found work as a model and later, from 1924 to 1928, as an actress with the Ziegfeld Follies, with whom she debuted in the play No Foolin' in 1926; the following year she made her debut as a stage actress, choosing the stage name Paulette and her mother's maiden name. At the age of sixteen, she married a wealthy older businessman, the timber magnate Edgar James, with whom she lived in North Carolina and led a mundane life until her divorce in 1929, following which she received substantial alimony.

In 1929, Goddard moved to Hollywood with her mother after signing a contract with Hal Roach Studios, and in the following years she played small roles in various films, including some short films by Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. She later signed a contract with producer Samuel Goldwyn, joining other actresses such as Betty Grable, Lucille Ball, Ann Sothern and Jane Wyman (the five performers would be known as the 'Goldwyn Girls') and comedian Eddie Cantor.

Paulette Goddard with Fred Astaire in Jazz Follies (1941)

In 1932 she met Charlie Chaplin, with whom she formed an artistic and romantic partnership that would last for eight years. Chaplin took over her contract with Hal Roach and cast her as a co-star in Modern Times, which made Goddard a star. During the filming period she and Chaplin cohabited at the latter's house in Beverly Hills. To this day there are doubts about an actual marriage between the two: during the years of their relationship, both refused to make any statements about it, despite the fact that at the premiere of The Great Dictator he introduced her as his wife. In those years, Goddard was in the running for the role of Scarlett O'Hara in Gone with the Wind, but lost by a whisker to Vivien Leigh.

Chaplin had other film projects in mind in which she was involved, but was also slow in planning, so fearing that she would be quickly forgotten by the public, the actress preferred to rely on the famous producer David O. Selznick, thanks to whom she was able to take part in the all-female film Women (1939). The couple separated a few years later and the divorce was reportedly finalized in Mexico in 1942. Chaplin publicly reported that he and Goddard were married in China in 1936, but told friends and family that they were not legally married. During this period the actress also dated composer George Gershwin[1].

In 1939, Goddard signed a contract with Paramount Pictures and her next film, The Midnight Ghost with Bob Hope, positively marked the careers of both. After The Great Dictator, the

Goddard starred alongside Fred Astaire in the musical Follies of Jazz (1941), where she met Burgess Meredith (future Mickey Goldmill in the Rocky film saga), who became her third husband and with whom she starred again in 1946 in Jean Renoir's The Diary of a Maid, in which she played the role of a comely maid who causes erotic turmoil and conflicts in the two houses she serves[2].

In 1944, she obtained her only Oscar nomination, for Best Supporting Actress, for her performance as a war nurse in the propaganda film Sisters in Arms. During this period she had the opportunity to work for three major productions: Redcoats (1940), Wild Wind (1942) and The Invincibles (1947), all under the direction of Cecil B. DeMille. When her contract with Paramount ended, she accepted a few job offers that took her to Great Britain and began working for television.

In 1958 she met the German writer Erich Maria Remarque, author of the famous novel Nothing New on the Western Front (1929). The two married and settled in Ronco sopra Ascona, in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, which the actress would only leave in 1964, when she went to Italy to shoot her last film, Gli indifferenti (1964) by Francesco Maselli, based on the novel of the same name by Alberto Moravia.

After Remarque's death in 1970, Goddard became a wealthy widow who showed great ability to accumulate further wealth. In the 1980s, she reappeared in New York, where she attended various cultural evenings, appearing alongside artists such as Andy Warhol. Operated with breast cancer, the operation seemed to be successful, but with time new complications arose. The actress died in 1990, just under two months before her 80th birthday. She was cremated and her ashes are buried in Ronco Cemetery, next to Remarque's body and her mother's ashes[3].

45. DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

Strangely enough, we find him in the description of Monte Verità, even though Lawrence never visited Ascona, let alone attended Mary Wigman's Hexetanz, but he certainly understood a fundamental principle of Ascona's depiction of Ovid's Ars Amatoria: men in love must be aware that if they attempt to 'dominate' women they will open themselves up to a rage that will eventually consume them. You may wonder why he appears in these pages, of course the closeness is only spiritual, but the correspondence with Otto Gross that convinces Frieda Weekley to leave her husband and marry Lawrence must have sidetracked certain historians and then when, after some cross-searching, I discovered that Lawrence had never been to Ascona I had already included him and since he is famous I left him in these pages ... (hihi, stupid laugh). And then it's nice to disprove certain superficial sources. He is therefore only part of the neighbours thanks to the letters with Gross who lives on Mt. How one stretches the rules for a bit of fame, eh ?

David Herbert Richards Lawrence (Eastwood, 11 September 1885 - V e n c e , 2 M a r c h 1 9 3 0) was an English writer, poet, playwright, essayist and painter.
As the son of A r t h u r J o h n L a w r e n c e , a miner from Nottinghamshire, and Lydia Beardsall, a schoolteacher until her marriage, David Herbert lived with his older brothers Ernest and George and his two sisters, the elder Emily and the younger Ada. He attended primary school in Eastwood and then High School in Nottingham. It was during this period that he met Jessie Chambers, his best friend in his youth, who would later inspire him for the character of Miriam in Sons and Lovers.
At the age of sixteen he started working in Nottingham, but soon pneumonia forced him to stop. He thus began his apprenticeship as a teacher at the British School in Eastwood in 1902. In June 1905 he passed his matriculation examination at the University of London and continued his master's studies at Nottingham University College.

On 7 September 1907 he published his first short story, Prelude to a Merry Christmas, under the byline of Jessie Chambers, in the Nottinghamshire Guardian. He then graduated and in 1908 became a teacher in Croydon, near London. In November 1909 his first poems were published in the English Review.

In the same year he met Helen Corke, a schoolteacher from Croydon, who inspired him for the female lead in The Transgressor or Smuggling of Love. In 1910 his mother died. On 20 January 1911 he published his first novel, The White Peacock, and at the end of the same year he again suffered from pneumonia, which contributed to his decision to leave teaching.

Towards the end of March 1912, he met Frieda von Richthofen, the daughter of the very wealthy German baron Friedrich, who belonged to one of the most important Germanic aristocratic families (very famous men, such as the legendary 'Red Baron', the aviator Manfred von Richthofen, belonged to it) and wife of the English professor Ernest Weekley. In May of the same year he fled with her to Germany, to his relatives in Metz, and in the same month his second novel The Transgressor was published. After their brief stopover in Germany, Frieda's home country, with great determination and a deep desire to explore realities uncontaminated by industrialisation, the two headed south, on a journey that would always, and in any case, lead them towards the sun. That sun of which Lawrence would feel an increasing need as the years went by, becoming a myth, but also an indispensable source of vital energy, both on an inner and physical level, especially due to the tuberculosis that threatened his health. Their 'wandering' took them to Italy and in the summer of 1912 they were in Riva del Garda, which at the time was under Austrian rule. Only four days after their arrival there, in a letter of 7 September 1912, addressed to David Garnett, they wrote: 'We are now settling here in Riva. It is very nice, and perfectly Italian - about five miles from the frontier'. After Riva they moved to Gargnano where they lived from 18 September 1912 to 30 March 1913, in a furnished flat on the first floor of Villa Igea in the hamlet of Villa and then moved for a short time, from 30 March to 11 April 1913, to San Gaudenzio, above

Gargnano, on the road to Muslone, at the Capelli family.
The period spent on the Lake, up to 11 April, 1913, proved particularly fruitful. It was in this 'paradise', as Lawrence himself called it, that he finished Sons and Lovers, wrote Twilight in Italy and began The Lost Girl and The Sisters (which became The Rainbow in Lerici, Liguria, the following year) and Women in Love in 1920. Meanwhile, he published his first collection of poems, Love Poems and Others, in February 1913 and his third novel, Sons and Lovers, in May.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

On 13 July 1914, he returned to the UK and married Frieda, who had meanwhile obtained a divorce from her husband. After the outbreak of the First World War, he stayed with his wife in various locations in England, including Cornwall, from where the couple was expelled in October 1917 due to his pacifism and her German nationality. During this period, the following were published: the first collection of short stories, The Prussian Officer (December 1914); the fourth novel, T h e Rainbow (September 1915); Crepuscolo in Italia (June 1916); the second collection of lyrics, Amores (July 1915); the poems, Behold! We have come to a good end (December 1917); New Poems (October 1918) and The Laurel (November 1918).

THE ITALIAN SOJOURN

He returned to Italy in November 1919 and stayed with his wife in various Italian locations including Florence, La Spezia, Spotorno, Picinisco, Ravello, Capri, Taormina, Cagliari and other places in Sardinia. After a brief interlude between Germany and Austria, he returned to Italy in the summer of 1921. This period saw the publication of his second play, Pericoloso toccare (May 1920), his fifth and sixth novels, Donne innamorate and La ragazza perduta (November 1920); the school text Momenti della Storia europea (March 1921); his first book on psychoanalysis, La psicanalisi e l'inconscio (May 1921); the collection of lyrics Testuggini and the travel book Mare e Sardegna (December 1921).

AROUND THE WORLD

In 1922, he began translating Verga's works. On 26 February 1922 he embarked with his wife from Naples for India. He stayed in Ceylon and in April travelled to Australia where he wrote his eighth novel, Canguro. He continued his journey across the Pacific in August via New Zealand, the Cook Islands and Tahiti, landing on 4 September in San Francisco. He returned on 23rd
March 1923 in Chapala, Mexico, where he began what was to be his tenth novel, The Plumed Serpent. In August, in New York his wife embarked for England, while he set off for California.
Meanwhile, between Los Angeles and Mexico, he finished his ninth novel, The Boy in the Bush, in October. On 22 November in Vera Cruz he embarked to return to London where he settled with Frieda. During this period, the following were published: the seventh novel, The Rod of Aaron; the second book of psychoanalysis, Fantasy of the Unconscious; the collection England, My England and other short stories all in 1922. In 1923, the following were published: three short novels, The Ladybird, The Fox and The Scottish Puppet, the essay Studies in Classical American Literature, the novel Canguro, the lyric collection Birds, Beasts and Flowers, and the translation of Mastro-don Gesualdo.
THE LAST FEW YEARS
After travelling to Paris in January 1924, he returned to America and stayed first in New Mexico and from mid-October back to Mexico where he finished writing The Plumed Serpent in early 1925. It was during this period that he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He then returned to Europe, seeking locations, especially in Italy, with climates favourable to his condition. He resided for a time in Spotorno where he wrote the short novel The Virgin and the Gypsy, which was only published posthumously. From this period came the publication of The Boy in the Woods and two other short novels The Thoroughbred and The Princess. After the publication in January 1926 of The Plumed Serpent, he moved to Villa Mirenda in Scandicci, then called Casellina and Torri, near Florence.
There he devoted himself to painting, but above all he wrote his eleventh novel Lady Chatterley's Lover, which was published in private editions in 1928, apparently inspired by his wife's affair

Frieda von Richthofen with Lieutenant Angelo Ravagli (her future third husband). After this publication, she left for Switzerland, Germany and the French Riviera. From this period are the travel book Luoghi etruschi, the short novel L'uomo che era morto, the play David and Mattinate al Messico. The furious controversy and subsequent censorship of Lady Chatterley's Lover led him to write About Lady Chatterley's Lover in March 1929, while he was in Paris, suffering from worsening tuberculosis. In September of the same year he wrote his last book, Apocalypse. At the beginning of 1930, as his condition worsened, he was admitted to the Vence sanatorium, but stayed there very little, preferring to be transferred to the Villa Robermond. There he died on the evening of 2 March. His last works were published posthumously, including The Virgin and the Gypsy, dedicated to his now ex-wife.

THE WORKS

Lawrence's most famous books are Sons and Lovers (1913) and Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928), the latter immediately at the centre of controversy and scandal for the boldness of the language with which it describes the sexual lives of its characters.

46. TRUDY CORAY-NEUBURG

In Ascona, Luigi Pericle exhibited on 14/4/63 at the Castelnuovo Gallery run by the legendary Trudy Neuburg-Coray, daughter of Han Coray, the owner of the DADA Gallery in Zurich after the Cabaret Voltaire. Trudy was the 'Gallerist of the Expressionists' in Ascona, at a time when Nolde was still accessible (though not to me) and Werefkin not very well known. Trudy Neuburg-Coray, founder and owner of the Castelnuovo Gallery, hosted Macke, Emil Nolde, Jawlensky, Kandinsky and Werena von Werefkin. At that time Trudy Neuburg had probably the largest private collection of Werefkin's works and today this is the origin of the museum in Ascona dedicated to the Russian Marianne von Werefkin 'The Marianne von Werefkin Fondation'.

The gallery in Ascona had exhibited names such as Alberto Giacometti, Marianne von Werefkin, Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, Klee, Kandinsky, Arp und Sophie Taeuber, Jawlensky, Lehmbruck, Kokoschka, Marcel Janco, Huelsenbeck, Leonhard Frank, Else Lasker-Schüler, and Frank Wedekind,

While the Dada movement was beginning, in 1917, artists were forced to move from the Cabaret Voltaire to other places in Zurich, such as the Galerie Dada at Bahnhofstrasse 19, and later to Paris and Berlin. The activities at the cabaret generated the Dada cultural movement that had a strong influence on Surrealism.

46. CABARET VOLTAIRE

The cabaret Voltaire is an entertainment venue with experimental artistic and political intentions, founded in Zurich on 5 February 1916 by theatre director Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings. It is universally considered to be the birthplace of Dadaism, a movement of rupture and renewal of traditional artistic logic, among whose members

included Marcel Janco, Richard Huelsenbeck, Tristan Tzara and Hans Arp.

During the First World War Switzerland was a neutral country; among the many refugees arriving in Zurich were many artists from all over Europe. Ball and Hennings make an agreement with the owner of the Meitrei Bar at 1 Spiegelgasse, asking to use the back room for events. The press release accompanying the opening of the venue reads:

> **"Cabaret Voltaire. Under this name a group of young artists and writers formed with the aim of creating a centre for artistic entertainment. The idea of the cabaret will be that guest artists will come and offer musical performances and readings at the daily meetings. Young artists from Zurich, whatever their orientation, are invited to participate with suggestions and contributions of all kinds."**
>
> **(Zurich, 2 February, 1916)**

The Cabaret is characterised by dance, music and readings. At the Cabaret there were exhibitions of Russian and French art, dances, poetry readings, performances of African music. Provocative and irreverent shows that turned into authentic cultural 'events'. Mirroring the situation generated by the First World War, the art exhibited was chaotic and brutal. On at least one occasion, the audience attacks the Cabaret Voltaire stage.

On 28 July 1916 Ball made the Dada Manifesto public. In June, he published a periodical of the same name; it contained works by artists such as Guillaume Apollinaire and the cover was designed by Jean Arp. Although it is the birthplace of the Dada movement, the cabaret has a

to do with every area of the avant-garde, including the futuristMarinetti. Radically experimental artists are presented, many of whom end up changing the expression of their artistic disciplines; the artists in question include Kandinsky, Paul Klee, de Chirico and Ernst.

While the Dada movement was beginning, in 1917, the excitement generated by the Cabaret Voltaire died down and the artists were forced to move to other places in Zurich, such as the Galerie Dada at Bahnhofstrasse 19, and later to Paris and Berlin. The activities at the cabaret generated the Dada cultural movement that had a strong influence on Surrealism.

David Woodard, Ma Anand Sheelae Christian Kracht reading at Cabaret Voltaire in 2008

Recent events

In recent years, the building that housed the Cabaret Voltaire fell into disrepair and during the winter of 2001-2002, a group of self-styled Neo-Dada artists, organised by Mark Divo, illegally occupied the building to protest the demolition. They declare that it is the signal for a new generation to stand up for a rebirth of Dada.

For over three months, a large number of performances, parties, poetry readings and film screenings are held. The building is also decorated and restored inside and out. Thousands of people in Zurich take part in the experiment. On 2 March 2002, the police evacuate the occupants.

Since then, the building has partly resumed its original function; it has opened again as a cabaret, shop and boasts a rather large programme of exhibitions and events.

Curiosities

Jean Arp describes a night at the cabaret: Total pandemonium. People around us shout, laugh and gesticulate. Our responses are sighs of love, bursts of sobs, poems, verses....

46. BEN NICHOLSON

Hans Hess dealt with Luigi Pericle and Ben Nicholson, so I force him into these pages because the 300-metre neighbourhood is not respected as his studio is in Brissago. Born in England in 1894, Benjamin 'Ben' Nicholson was an English painter. He studied art for a short time before revealing to his father (William, also a painter) that he wanted to devote himself to his own profession: he was 18 years old. His first work was exhibited in 1914 and in 1920, while maintaining a residence in London, he bought Villa Capriccio in Castagnola. Travels between Ticino and England often took him to Paris, where he became acquainted with Cézanne and Cubism. In the following years the artist exhibited in numerous cities (including London, Paris, Amsterdam and Boston) and became increasingly famous. In 1950, he represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale and at the end of the 1950s he returned to Ticino together with his German wife, Felicitas Vogler: first to Casa Ticinella and Casa Vecchia in Ronco sopra Ascona; then to Casa alla Rocca in Brissago, where he lived for about ten years before returning to England. Nicholson died in London in 1982, aged 87.

Ben Nicholson photographed by Paolo Monti in 1960 in Brissago

Ben Nicholson, born Benjamin Lauder Nicholson (Denham, 10 April 1894 - London, 6 February 1982), è was a British painter.

Son of the painter William Nicholson, he was born in Denham, Buckinghamshire, studied at various schools in London (at the same time

with Paul Nash, Stanley Spencer, Mark Gertler and Edward Wadsworth), in La Tour and Milan and finally also travelled to Pasadena. He remained closely associated with the Neo-Plasticist experiences, establishing himself as one of the most important abstract-geometric painters of his time.

Nicholson married three times, giving birth to six children.

His first job saw him in the role of theatre designer, producing the pictures and posters for J. M. Barrie's opera Peter Pan in 1904; his father was entrusted with the set and costume designs.

His problem with asthma allowed him not to serve in the army during the First World War, thus giving him the opportunity to travel: in 1917 he had to go to the USA for a tonsil operation, where he stayed for about a year. While abroad, his brother Anthony died in battle and his mother passed away from an untreated flu.

In 1922 he was able to exhibit his works for the first time in London, works in which the influence of Cubism and an early style derived from Rousseau can be seen. In London Nicholson met the sculptor Barbara Hepworth (to whom he was married from 1938 to 1951) and Henry Moore.

A major influence on him was his meeting with Piet Mondrian, who steered him towards an abstract direction of Cubism. His greatest peculiarity lies in the fact that he manages to combine these European trends in a personal style.

In 1955 at the Tate Gallery in London he managed to get a solo exhibition.

Three years later he moved to Switzerland because of his marriage to his wife Felicitas Vogler; in the 1970s after his separation from his wife he returned to Cambridge.

He died in London in 1982; his ashes are preserved in Golders Green Cemetery.

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art has always had a strong relationship with the modernist painter Ben Nicholson, even purchasing two paintings directly from his easel in the early 1960s. Three years

ago the gallery put on a small exhibition of paintings by his first wife, Winifred Nicholson, and now we have wife number three, Felicitas Vogler. All we need to complete the set is a good exhibition by Barbara Hepworth.

Barbara Hepworth was never dependent on her husband's reputation for her own artistic success, but Felicitas Vogler was. Her best photographs, taken during the time she lived with Nicholson from 1958 to 1971, are strongly influenced by her paintings. The two best in the exhibition actually include her paintings. Those he did later are, for the most part, easily forgotten. No wonder this is Vogler's first major British retrospective since 1973.

Vogler, who is now in her 80s, is evasive about her exact age, and so is the exhibition's slim catalogue. When she met Nicholson in 1957, Vogler was 30 years younger than him. A writer by profession, she was doing research for a radio programme for her native Germany on the St Ives artists' colony. Within six weeks Nicholson had swept her off her feet and led her to marital bliss. She, in turn, took him away to Switzerland.

It was only then that Vogler turned seriously to photography. Encouraged by her husband, she explored the types of landscape shapes and textures that Nicholson brought together in his abstract paintings and reliefs. These were by far her most successful photographs, and are easy to spot among her later, less focused images.

Chapel with Candelabra, Mykonos, is a case in point. Realised in 1959, the chalky white curves, with their subtle tones, are first cousins to Nicholson's famous White Reliefs of the

the 1930s. The walls he photographed in Pisa and Venice in 1966 echo Nicholson's densely etched surfaces. In a room dedicated to Nicholson's works, one can see the originals that inspired Vogler.

Although he devoted his life to landscape photography, Vogler's two still lifes from 1967 are the most convincing in the exhibition. He placed bottles in front of Nicholson's works, all casually placed on a work table. His colours and textures are an intensification of Nicholson's grainy, chalky surfaces, and the glass vases are totally embedded in the painter's realm.

After Nicholson's return to England in 1971, Vogler travelled the world with his camera. Abstract close-ups are replaced by vast stretches of land, dizzying shots of exotic lagoons and mountains, and all-over compositions of flowers and rippling lakes in Japan. The places Vogler has visited are spectacular enough in themselves, but his shots often add little.

There are one or two post-Nicholson photos of Vogler that stop you in your tracks. His 1974 Salt Mound in Namibia is an abstract worthy of Ellsworth Kelly; the smooth white pyramid of salt cutting a vertical composition, with nothing but salt plains in the lower half and the blue sky above. In Bohemia of 1980 he captured a puddle on a road, like an irregular hole in another world. In it, the pillars of a red and white building are reflected more vividly than the street itself.

But if you or I travelled the world, accumulating 2000 photographs along the way, you can bet we would pull out of the hat

at least one or two rabbits. Vogler's inspiration left her when Nicholson did, and this exhibition, it seems to me, is the curatorial equivalent of editorial vanity.

Catrìona Black, Sunday Herald 14.05.06

Ben Nicholson: An artist abroad

At Sotheby's

Ben Nicholson's masterpiece Sept 58 (Iseo), a highlight of our 21 November sale of modern and post-war British art, captures an important interlude in the artist's career as he moves from St Ives to the continent and begins what will be a very European focus in his art.

BEN NICHOLSON'S HOUSE IN TICINO, SWITZERLAND, 1966 © THE ESTATE OF FELICITAS VOGLER

Ben Nicholson met and married the young photographer Felicitas Vogler in 1957, and it was at her suggestion that the new couple left St Ives for the continent. Moving to Switzerland in March 1958, Nicholson discovered in the mountains of Ticino not only a new landscape but also a new inspiration for his work. They settled near Lake Maggiore, with its epic, rugged scenery, and built a house just outside Brisssago with a wonderful view east over the lake. Living now in the heart of Europe, he was not only far from the sometimes fragile domestic politics and rivalries of the British art scene. He was able to travel, and later works from this period catalogue these travels, as well as his new, rich sense of light.

Writing in 1959 about his new surroundings, Nicholson eloquently noted that: The landscape is superb, especially in winter and

when seen from the shifting levels of the mountainside. The lingering light of the sun, the bare trees seen against a translucent lake, the hard, rounded shapes of the snow-covered mountains, and perhaps with a late evening moon rising beyond in a pale, cerulean sky is completely magical with the kind of poetry I would like to find in my painting' (Ben Nicholson, 1959, quoted in Norbert Lynton, Ben Nicholson, Phaidon Press, London, 1993, p.311).

BEN NICHOLSON

Although painted in 1958, the present work is very reminiscent of the style Nicholson developed in the 1920s, when he first married Winifred Nicholson and when they travelled together to Europe and experienced the French avant-garde at first hand. The interlocking shapes and stylised lines of the tabletop objects clearly allude to Cubist influences and more specifically the Synthetic Cubism of Picasso and Braque that they developed together in the first decade of the 20th century.

47. JULIUS BISSIER

I am no longer adhering to the 300-metre criterion because these are people who are very much linked to Ascona's spiritual/artistic climate and consequently are the substratum thanks to which Luigi Pericle decided to move to Ascona.

Julius Heinrich Bissier was born on 3 December in Freiburg im Breisgau, where he spent his childhood and attended compulsory school. Already during his schooling he began to paint.

1906 - 1907
His father, subject to depression and suffering from arteriosclerosis since 1906, died in 1907.

Julius Bissier - 1900 ca

1913
He briefly studied art history at the University of Freiburg.

1914
He began his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe, which he interrupted after a few months. At the outbreak of the First World War, he was called up for military service.

Julius Bissier

1915 - 1918
He did his military service at the Freiburg postal control station, among others with Martin Heidegger. Here he also met the painter Hans Adolf Bühler, whose pantheistic conception of the world and art fascinated the young Bissier, already inclined towards a natural religion, for a long time. From this time onwards he independently developed the his pictorial art.

Julius Bissier - c. 1914

Since 1915

He was interested in old German painting (Albrecht Altdorfer, Matthias Grünewald, Hans Multscher, Konrad Witz, Hans Baldung-Grien, Hans Holbein) and German mysticism (in particular Meister Eckhart, Jakob Böhme, Johannes Tauler, Heinrich Seuse). Until 1922 he painted tempera pictures with primordial, cosmic landscapes and figures of saints. He soon felt the need to arrive at an 'actual form of mysticism'.

1919

He met the sinologist Ernst Grosse, who introduced him to East Asian art and spirituality and who also became his first collector (he bought him 16 works). Bissier would be linked to the scholar until his death in 1927.

1920

His first solo exhibition at the Kunstverein in Freiburg im Breisgau enabled him to meet the doctor Julius König and the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn, to whom he owed a broadening of his horizons and an introduction to contemporary literature and art. Prinzhorn in particular introduced him to the Basel mythographer Johann Jakob Bachofen.

1922

He married the weaver Lisbeth Hofschneider. To support himself, he worked temporarily as the art director of a terracotta factory and as a Baroque painting copyist for a furniture factory.

Julius Bissier and Lisbeth Hofschneider - 1922

National recognition arrives alongside the artists of the New Objectivity

1922 - 1929
Despite several regional successes, he renounced the painting he had developed up to that point in order to turn to still lifes, landscapes and portraits painted in the sober spirit and adherence to the reality of things of New Objectivity. As a result of this development, the opportunities for exhibitions and solo shows in Germany and national recognition increased in the second half of the 1920s. During this period, he still rejected modern art as 'formalistic' and 'artificial'.
In 1926 their daughter Dorothée was born and in 1928 their son Uli.

Since 1926
The first ink drawings made with the brush, initially still figurative, were soon produced in large numbers.
1928

The paintings close to New Objectivity were a great success, exhibited together with those of exponents of the group such as Otto Dix, Georg Schrimpf and Alexander Kanoldt. He was awarded major prizes for the first time.

Pathway to the abstract by experimenting with forms and symbols with Indian ink

1929

He falls into an artistic crisis, accompanied by phases of deep depression that will accompany him throughout his life. He befriends Willi Baumeister, who allows him to delve into contemporary abstract art in his own atelier, where he sees various works by Picasso, Braque, Léger, Klee, etc.: the liberating experience of 'abstract and absolute painting'. He moved on to non-figurative painting and experiments with constellations of abstract elementary forms, initially placed in rigorous and schematic compositions, but which soon appeared sterile and lifeless to him. He then continued by painting airy, freely traced ink drawings with the brush.

1929 - 1934

He runs a painting course at the University of Freiburg, where he has two studios for teaching and his own work. He also teaches natural science students how to draw microscopic preparations. His wife Lisbeth opens her own textile workshop.

1933 - 1945

No exhibition opportunities.

1930

On a trip to Paris, he visited Constantin Brancusi's atelier. The visit convinces him of the possibility of a synthesis between spirituality and abstraction, which he had hitherto considered a cold exercise. This resulted in a strong impulse to follow the path of spiritual abstraction (in the sense of Kandinsky). He began to create non-figurative ink drawings, executed on paper with the paintbrush, which would be present in his work for 35 years until his death.

1934

In a fire in a wing of the University of Freiburg, both of his ateliers are destroyed, as are almost all of the works he has created in the past years. His teaching gradually declined. His son Uli died shortly afterwards. At the same time, the pressure of the Nazi regime in the public sector continues to grow. Bissier reacts to this with a withdrawal into himself: 'inner emigration'. From this moment on he works secluded at home on a small table, mostly at night: short ink notes of landscapes, constellations of simple things.

He began a close friendship with Oskar Schlemmer.

Julius Bissier with Oskar Schlemmer e Willi Baumeister, Sehringen, 1935

The fire burns away the past and opens up a new life of meditation and introspection

University fire, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1934

1935 - 1938

1935 and 1937 Trips to Italy (Milan, Rome, Ravenna, Assisi, Tuscany): ink drawings of landscapes emerge as brief notes. The 'Tarnbilder' ('mimetic pictures') began, small paintings of fruits, stones, containers: with such works the artist intended to legitimise himself to the outside world as a 'figurative painter' (until around 1942).

1936 - 1937

Under the influence of readings by J. J. Bachofen, to whom

constantly refers to, he created a series of small-format and 'symbolic chine drawings' ('Symboltuschen'), which synthesise elementary symbols of bipolar constellations (male-female; wave-rock; life-death; protected-threatened) and refer as much to European myth, philosophy and mysticism as to Asian philosophical concepts (especially Taoism and Zen). Even the subsequent 'coloured miniatures' in their free play of forms take up symbols from Bachofen's work (poppy capsules, cista, lotus, lamp). For the first time he fully succeeds in what had impressed him so much in Brancusi, namely the integration of abstraction and spirituality.

Off the beaten track and in the greatest solitude

1939

Family relocation to Hagnau am Bodensee. In the buildings of an old landing stage of the Hagnau convent, Lisbeth Bissier sets up her textile workshop, which will be a source of livelihood for the family. In addition to working on ink drawings, Bissier takes care of the workshop's bookkeeping and correspondence, plays a lot of music, designs patterns for upholstery and textiles, and tries her hand at handicrafts. After a long struggle to overcome all forms of provincialism, he was again forced into extreme isolation.

1940

After the death of Alexander Kanoldt and Georg Schrimpf, and in view of his first paintings, in the spirit of New Objectivity, he is asked to teach at the Berlin Academy: he refuses, however, far from a 'rethink' on the artistic level. From 1942

He tried his hand at creating ceramic objects and occasionally worked in the atelier of master potter Richard Bampi in Kandern.

1943

Death of his friend Oskar Schlemmer. Bissier notes in his diary:

"This death is so incomprehensible to me, that I am still unable to understand exactly what the consequences are for me, apart from the fact that my last artistic companion, whom I understood and who understood me in every fibre of being, has passed away.

1945

Artistic production came close to ceasing in the confusion of the end of the war (quartering of troops in Hagnau, seizure of the workshop, etc.). In the period that followed, hopes for a definitive improvement in his situation as an artist were dashed. Due to his isolation, he had not been officially 'ostracised' during the Third Reich and was now ignored even during the cultural reconstruction.

Colour,
lightness,
transparenc
y

1946 - 1954

The ink works continued until 1949, then remained in the background for years. Instead, woodcuts, colour monotypes - preceded as early as 1943 by experiments with colour - take over.
- and experimentally also watercolours, with which he cautiously tried to incorporate colour into his work, without losing the spiritual concentration he had achieved with Indian ink. During these years, also in conjunction with his meeting with Max Bill, he tackled geometry.

1955 - 1956

The 'miniatures' coloured in egg tempera on linen canvases, irregularly cut or torn pieces of cotton, and watercolours on paper begin. These are lyrical compositions, in which the constellations of signs of the previous ink-paintings disappear, which brought him a fame that was as late as it was vast. In 1956, his first stay in Ticino.

1951

Exhibition in the Kunstverein in Freiburg im Breisgau together with Max Bill and Georges Vantongerloo.

1953

Experiments with the geometrialisation of forms in oil tempera paintings of various formats, which he did not follow up on.

1957

Stay in Tourettes-sur-Loup (south of France). Since autumn of the same year, stays annually in Ticino (Ronco sopra Ascona). Friendship with Jean Arp, resident in Locarno-Solduno.

Julius Bissier, Jean Arp, Marguerite Arp-Hagenbach, Ascona

1965 1958

Friendship with Werner Schmalenbach. First major retrospective exhibition at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hannover, repeated in a series of German museums (Duisburg, Hagen, Bremen, Ulm). Participation in the XXIX Venice Biennale. Sudden international fame: his work is mainly placed in the context of the informal. It is not easy for Bissier to cope with such explosive success.

1959

Awarded the Cornelius-Preis der Stadt Düsseldorf. Participation in documenta II in Kassel. Friendship with Ben Nicholson, who lives in Ticino in those same years.

1959 - 1960

Retrospective exhibition at the Gemeente-Museum in Den Haag. 1960

Solo exhibition at the XXX Venice Biennale. Receives the Kunstpreis der Stadt Berlin. First exhibitions in Paris and London.

Julius Bissier with Werner Schmalenbach, c. 1958

Immersion in silence, in the sublime light of the Lake Maggiore landscape

Julius Bissier in the garden of the 'Casa Rondine', Ascona 1963

1961

Solo exhibition in the context of the VI Biennial of Sao Paulo. Becomes a member of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and honorary member of the Kunstakademie Nürnberg. First exhibition at the Lefebre Gallery in New York. Retrospectives in Brussels and Jerusalem.

Transfer from Hagnau to Ascona, in the "Casa Rondine" near Lake Maggiore. The landscape, climate, colours and light of Ticino are invigorating and stimulate Bissier, who photographs, plays and listens to music, enjoys visits from friends and reads a lot.

Friendship with Mark Tobey, resident in Basel since 1960.

Julius and Lisbeth Bissier - Ascona 1961. Photo A. De Montet

1962

Retrospective exhibition at the Kunstverein in Hamburg (later shown in Ulm, Stuttgart, Wuppertal, Mannheim, Freiburg). Belgian Art Critics' Prize. Solo exhibitions in Rio de Janeiro, Buffalo/N.Y., New York, Basel and Munich.

1963

Extensive retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, which was then presented in Chicago, Detroit, Utica/N.Y. and

Los Angeles.

Exhibition at the Galerie Beyeler in Basel, together with Jean Arp, Ben Nicholson and Mark Tobey.

1964

Participated in documenta III in Kassel. Grand Art Prize of the Land Nordrhein-Westfalen. Numerous exhibitions, among others at La Medusa gallery in Rome.

1965

Retrospective at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh. Other solo exhibitions (New York, Texas, Campione, Kopenhagen).

On 18 June, he died in Ascona.

Biography in a slightly reduced version taken from: Matthias Bärmann (ed.), Julius Bissier - Obras 1934-1965 - Tintas, Acuarelas, Témperas, exhibition catalogue, Valencia / Madrid 1997.

Julius Bissier - Ronco s/Ascona 1962

48. NELL WALDEN

Nell Walden (née Roslund; * 29 December 1887 in Karlskrona, Sweden; † 21 October 1975 in Berne, Switzerland) was a Swedish-Swiss painter, musician, writer and art collector. She was the second wife of the publisher and art dealer Herwarth Walden from 1912 to 1924 and a collaborator in his Berlin Sturm projects. In 1919, he bequeathed her his collection of avant-garde art. In 1933, she moved to Switzerland.

Nell (Nelly) Anna Charlotta Roslund was the daughter of the priest Frithiof Roslund. In 1903, she moved with her family to Landskrona. After high school in Trelleborg and a stay in Lübeck, she studied music and graduated as an organist in Lund in 1908. In Berlin, he perfected his knowledge of the German language. In 1911 he met Herwarth Walden, whom he married in London in November 1912. Walden had divorced his first wife Else Lasker-Schüler in the same year. His real name was Georg Lewin and he owed Lasker-Schüler his pseudonym 'Herwarth Walden', inspired by Henry Thoreau's novel Walden; or, Life in the Woods (1854). In 1910 he founded the art magazine Der Sturm and in 1912 opened the Sturm Gallery with a travelling exhibition of the Blaue Reiter.

Sturm projects and the beginning of artistic activity

In 1913, the couple travelled all over Europe to select works of art for Herwarth Walden's exhibition Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon, which opened in Berlin on 20 September 1913. It offered the largest selection of international avant-garde art o f the time and

helped many painters and sculptors achieve a breakthrough, but also caused a cultural scandal. More than 350 works by about 80 active artists were exhibited, as well as works by Henri Rousseau in his memory. The painters Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky encouraged Nell Walden to paint. After the outbreak of war in 1914, she worked as a journalist and translator. Her Scandinavian language skills formed the basis for the 'Der Sturm news bureau', which worked for various German news services in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands and provided the financial basis for the wartime Sturm enterprise.[2] Herwarth Walden did not have to serve in wartime due to his eye disease (astigmatism). He started to collect works by Sturm artists, Swedish folk art and art from Africa and Oceania. In 1915, he painted his first pictures in inverted glass. A year later, he took painting lessons at the newly founded Sturm art school, where Rudolf Bauer, Rudolf Blümner, Heinrich Campendonk, Georg Muche, Lothar Schreyer, Arnold Topp and Herwarth Walden taught. Nell Walden exhibited for the first time in 1917: Together with Arnold Topp, he showed his abstract paintings in the 51st Sturm exhibition. In 1919, Walden bequeathed the Walden art collection they had built up together to his wife. In 1923, he resigned from his work for the Sturm and divorced Herwarth Walden the following year, as he disagreed with his turn to communism.

Other marriages and moving to Switzerland

In 1926, Nell Walden married the Jewish physician Hans Hermann Heimann in Berlin. In 1932, she published the essay Wesen und Bedeutung der Astrologie und Horoskopie (Essence and Meaning of Astrology and Horoscopy) in Alfred Flechtheim's Berlin Gallery Omnibus almanac. In 1933, he formally divorced Heimann due to the political situation and moved to Ascona in Switzerland to live with Heimann. However, Heimann was arrested, deported and murdered by the National Socialists. He handed his collections over to museums

of Swiss art for safekeeping. Later, he largely disposed of his collection through sale or donation.[4]

Franz Marc: Two Sheep (1912) from the Nell Walden Collection, now Saarlandmuseum, Saarbrücken

In 1940, she married the Swiss teacher Hannes Urech. In 1944, the couple settled in Schinznach-Bad. At the end of 1954, a large part of the Nell Walden collection was auctioned at the Kunstkabinett in Stuttgart, including works by numerous Expressionists such as those by Franz Marc; the portrait of Herwarth Walden by Oskar Kokoschka also went under the hammer. The collection also included 14 paintings by Marc Chagall as well as a painting by Wassily Kandinsky, which were auctioned off against the wishes of the artist's heirs.

In 1962, the couple moved to the newly built Seehalde house in Brestenberg near Seengen. A year later Hannes Urech died and Nell Urech-Walden moved to Berne. She was buried next to her husband in Aarau after his death in Bern in 1975.

Nell Walden's abstract work is represented, for example, at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Landskrona Museum and the Kunstmuseum in Berne, and is occasionally offered commercially.

Portraits and a satire

John Jon-And: Herwarth and Nell Walden, ink (before 1924)

The sculptor William Wauer created cubist busts of Herwarth and Nell Walden in 1917 and 1918, and Hugó Schreiber portrayed them in

a pose

dancing. Oskar Kokoschka portrayed Herwarth Walden in 1910 and Nell in 1916. The ink drawing by Swedish painter John Jon-And (1889-1941) is undated.

48. BRIGITTE HELM

I found receipts for the purchase of paintings by Louis Pericles by Helm's husband, Dr. Kuhnheim.

Jean Gabin and Brigitte Helm in the film The Star of Valencia (1933)

Brigitte Helm, pseudonym of Brigitte Eva Gisela Schittenhel (Berlin, 17 March 1906 - Ascona, 11 June 1996), was a German actress.

An icon of German silent cinema, she was made famous in 1927 by the film Metropolis directed by Fritz Lang, in which she played the double part of Maria and the robot woman. She has starred in a dozen silent films and 16 sound films, almost always playing femme fatales.

Brigitte Helm made her debut at the age of 21 in Fritz Lang's film Metropolis (1927): the director noticed her in the UFA production studios where she worked as a secretary after graduating from high school. In Lang's masterpiece, Brigitte Helm played the double role of the candid Maria and the perfidious and erotic soulless robot-woman. The success of Lang's film led to her signing a contract with UFA, which made her star in Karl Grune's pacifist film Am Rande der Welt, a film that would later be heavily modified by the production company, prompting the director himself to distance himself from his own work.

After these debut films, the German production company attempted to turn Helm into an international star by casting her in femme fatale roles, such as in the subsequent The Ship of Seven Sins (1928), directed by Jacob and Luise Fleck, and What a Scandal That Little Woman! (1929), directed by Erich Waschneck. With the subsequent film Alraune the Daughter of Evil (1930), directed by Richard Oswald, she returned to the role of the woman generated by an experiment, who wields destructive and erotic power, in a film with expressionist overtones, a role she would reprise in 1932 in the sound version of the film. In 1930 she was also supposed to play the character of Lola in Josef von Sternberg's The Blue Angel, a part that instead went to Marlene Dietrich after Helm decided not to star in the film. It is interesting to note that Dietrich was Erich Maria Remarque's companion before Paulette Godard, with whom Remarque resided near Ascona, in Villa Monte Tabor.

After Erich Maria Remarque's death in 1970, his wife Paulette Goddard lived in his villa until her death in 1990. The villa (Monte Tabor) was bequeathed to New York University as part of Paulette Goddard's estate, but because New York University was unwilling to pay an inheritance tax of 18 million Swiss francs to Canton Ticino, the villa was confiscated by Canton Ticino.

On 4 October 1994, the canton sold the villa at auction to Christoph Dornier, son of the German aeronautical engineer Claude Dornier. Christoph Dornier intended to demolish the villa and construct a new building. However, as it was protected at the time and could not be demolished, he sold the villa to an American-English couple in 1999.

Claude (Claudius) Honoré Desiré Dornier (Kempten, 14 May 1884 - Zug, 5 December 1969) was a German aeronautical engineer and entrepreneur, founder in 1922 of the eponymous company Dornier-Werke GmbH. His name is linked to a number of aircraft that marked important milestones in aeronautical evolution, from the Dornier Do X seaplane, for years the largest and most powerful airliner produced, and the Dornier Do 335 Pfeil fighter-bomber, the first fighter aircraft to adopt a tractor-pusher configuration integrated into the fuselage, one of the fastest

pistons ever made, used by the Luftwaffe during the final stages of World War II. He was an employee of Ferdinand Graf von Zeppelin in one of Zeppelin's company divisions. Later he was head of the company he founded in 1922, Dornier-Werke. In 1956 he resumed aircraft production at München-Neuaubing and Oberpfaffenhofen. Dornier-Werke became part of the Franco-German Alpha Jet in 1970.

Flug- und Fahrzeugwerke Altenrhein AG, also known as FFA, is a Swiss company founded by Claudio Caroni (my great-uncle) in 1949, acquiring it from the Swiss government after running it in the period following the end of the Second World War. Active in the railway and aeronautical production of aircraft for civil and military use and parts for third parties, it later switched to the overhaul of aircraft for civil use. The company originated in 1924 on the initiative of the German entrepreneur and designer Claude Dornier who, in order to circumvent the restrictions imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles following the end of the First World War, was looking for a location outside the then Weimar Republic to continue his aeronautical activities. The choice was motivated by the fact that business relations with Switzerland had resulted in a partnership with Ad Astra Aero, then only a small company that tested Dornier aircraft at the Dübendorf military airfield. The company, which took the name Dornier-Werke Altenrhein AG, was founded in 1924, but production did not begin until three years later, in 1927, with the production of the Dornier Do J Wal that it shared with the Italian CMASA and, in 1929, with the construction of the only Swiss example of the large Dornier Do X. Subsequently, it continued to produce combat aircraft on commission from Colombia and until 1944, aircraft were produced under licence for the Swiss Air Force, exporting only a modest quantity to Germany.

At the end of the war, the company became the property of the Swiss government and was managed by Claudio Caroni. Subsequently, in 1949, the company name was renamed, leaving behind the historical Dornier brand name to acquire the new name

company Flug- und Fahrzeugwerke Altenrhein AG and purchased in 1952 by Caroni himself.

The company was commissioned by the Swiss government's military department to supply a fighter aircraft with light attack capability to equip its air force with a new model. The project, designated the FFA P-16, however, never made it to production and was finally discontinued in 1958 when the prototype was lost in a flight accident when it sank into Lake Constance.

From 1972, it produced, in a joint venture with the Italian SIAI-Marchetti, a light single-engine touring and training aircraft named FFA AS-202 Bravo, corresponding to the SIAI-Marchetti SA-202, which was commercially successful and was purchased by several air forces as a basic trainer, including 48 at the Iraqi Al-Quwwat al-Jawwiyya al-'Iraqiyya and 40 at the Indonesian Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Udara.

Also active in the production of railway carriages, in 1987 this sector was sold to Schindler AG and the aeronautics section to Justus Dornier, then abandoned the production of its own aircraft, collaborating with the military aviation industry with the F-5E Tiger II and F/A-18 Hornet, and with the civil industry by collaborating with Airbus, also dealing with the overhaul and maintenance of civil aircraft.

Interestingly, Paulette Godard met Charlie Chaplin in 1932, with whom she formed an artistic and sentimental partnership that would last for eight years. And then that the Rolls Royce that Chaplin uses in 'The Great Dictator' today is apparently kept by the museum that collects the legacy of the Caroni AFF factory. I don't understand how the Austrian engineer who put together the AFF planes and his Rolls Royces came into possession of this very car used by Chaplin ... strange but true !!! ... mmm, I sent him a whatsapp voice and he replies that the guy who sold him the Rolls said it belonged to Chaplin and it's true that that model was used

in 'The Great Dictator' but there is no evidence that it is that very car. Eh come on, as usual scratch that lies have short legs. Well, anyway in the end I came up with a lie, harmless and cute, too bad though because I posted it on social before I found out the truth. Now I'll have to make a correction and it's never nice to change version once it's public. ... mm, I'll almost leave it, now that someone will get to page 390 of this book anyway. No one will ever read it and 'shhciao', as they say in dialect.

But back to poor Brigitte Helm, whom I abandoned for other digressions, Georg Wilhelm Pabst wanted her by his side in 'The Lily in the Darkness' (1927) and in the following 'Crisis' (1928), in which he gave her the part of a restless married woman, and that of the mysterious Queen Antinea in the film 'Atlantis' (1932). While in 1929 she worked for French director Marcel L'Herbier in the film 'The Money', loosely based on the novel of the same name by Émile Zola. In 1933, he also recorded a record single, released by Odeon in 78 rpm format, entitled Fidèle/Prenez garde, Messieurs together with Eric Harden and his Orchestre de Danse.

With the advent of sound, her film appearances began to thin out. The actress left the scene in 1936, after her contract with UFA had been terminated, having starred in some 30 films, the last of which was The Ideal Husband (1935) directed by Herbert Selpin, an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's novel of the same name written by Thea von Harbou, in open dissent with the Nazi regime. Helm had in fact married Hugo von Kuenheim, an industrialist of Jewish origin, with whom she decided to move first to Munich and then to Ascona in Switzerland, where their four children were born. As I believe I have already indicated about von Kuenheim, I have found notes of the sale of some works by Luigi Pericle in his papers. The strange cases of fate.

After her retirement from the stage, Helm only appeared in films as herself on very few occasions, always refusing to give interviews about her film career and rejecting all proposals that came her way.

offers, including one that would allow her to work in Hollywood, to play the lead role in The Bride of Frankenstein.

He died in 1996 in Ascona, Switzerland, of a cardiovascular collapse.

Filmography

A young Brigitte Helm portrayed by Alexander Binder in the 1920s

- **La Elm è famous especially for Metropolis, directed by Fritz Lang (1927)**
- **The Countess of Monte Cristo (Die Gräfin von Monte-Christo), directed by Karl Hartl (1932)**
- **The Atlantis (Die Herrin von Atlantis), directed by Georg Wilhelm Pabst (1932)**

We have finally come to the end of these pages, and I offer you a poem by Rilke, guest of the Baroness of Saint Léger on the Brissago Islands:

The awakening of the wind

Poetry by RAINER MARIA RILKE

In the dead of night, it sometimes
happens that the wind, like a child,
awakens. Alone, slowly, it comes along
the path, penetrates the sleeping
village.

He crawls, watchful, to the fountain;
then he pauses, silent, listening.
Pale are all the houses around;
all the silent oaks.

But I was also reminded of Mühsam that I did not mention in these pages, and like Lieutenant Columbo who always comes back after he seems to have finished, here I am torturing you to the end because the truth does not come out without suffering.

Erich Mühsam

Erich Mühsam (Berlin, 6 April 1878 - Oranienburg, 10 July 1934) was a German anarchist, poet and activist.

He was born on 6 April 1878 in Berlin into a family of wealthy Jewish pharmacists. At the age of 17, he was expelled from the grammar school in Lübeck for repeated acts of indiscipline and demonstrations of a socialist nature. From then on, he frequented the artistic bohemian scene and wrote for satirical newspapers.

In 1900, he befriended Gustav Landauer in Berlin and sided with the anarchists. In 1904, he took part in the Monte Verità community (Switzerland). In 1909, in Munich, he founded the Tat group, federated with the Sozialistischer Bund, frequented the bohemian milieu and that of the Kaffeehaus literati. In 1911 he created his own newspaper, Kain, in which he expressed his anarchist pacifism and dealt with the social question of the proletariat. Upset by the declaration of war, he tried in 1916 to unite those opposed to the ongoing conflict. However, he was expelled by the Bavarian government and placed in forced residence in a provincial town. When the monarchy fell on 7 November 1918, he returned to Munich and took part in Kurt Eisner's revolutionary process and socialist government.

He was very active in the defence and support of workers' councils in Bavaria in 1919. Accused of high treason for this, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. In prison, he wrote his most important political works on anarcho-communism. Freed after five years, he resumed his intense activity until 1933 when, captured after the Reichstag fire, he was imprisoned in various prisons and concentration camps, including the Sonnenburg concentration camp. He was murdered the following

year in the Oranienburg concentration camp.

It seems to me a perfect biography to end on a high note with a kind of martyr immolated in the path of truth. Yesterday they were supposed to decide whether to send Assange to America but the judges postponed the decision. His brother says the thing is political and that no one was killed because of Julian's statements so since they would torture him in prison in America he should not be extradited. We'll see if the British have the balls.

"The great evil of which mankind must be freed is the tendency to be complacent about consecrated formulas, which then amounts to a lack of trust in one's own conscience. Once emancipated from the blind and passive belief in formulae, man's wisdom will be able to manifest itself freely. But then it will still struggle to rise from learned science to wisdom animated by the pulsations of life."

(Erich Mühsam)

And what a strange word imparaticcio ... Learned

... im-pa-ra-tìc-cio

MEANING Barely learned; work done by a beginner for training purposes; complex of notions learned in an approximate manner

ETHYMOLOGY from learnt with attenuative suffix -iccio.

It is not so much true that Italian, due to its literary origins, is a fixed language of slavish rigidity. On the contrary, our words have impressive generative potential, and are capable of separating very fine threads of the world.

The term learnt brings us face to face with an extremely precise fact of our reality: not all the learnt is the same. There is the mastered, mastered, even matured learned, and there is the beginner's learned, stunted, even hasty.

These are *imparari* (puru scrittu mparari) that we know very well, anyone who has personal experience of them - indeed, there is no person who is not able to distinguish further stages and degrees of learning. And we also know that separating them clearly into learning well and learning poorly is very difficult: and of this complexity the imparari makes us right.

Learned, according to dictionaries, lives on as an adjective in the sense of 'learned with difficulty, in an approximate manner', and above all as a noun with the meanings of 'work done by training', 'approximate work' and 'complex of approximate notions'. It rests the weight of its semantic alteration on -iccio, a splendid suffix (not the most productive) with characters that variously refer to a sense of attenuation, approximation, and that in nouns often gives a trait of low-value collectivity.

The learnt, here, in the multiple guise of quality, of object produced and of congeries of knowledge, is clumsy, attempted or even stunted, inexpert, imperfect, sloppy - unlearnt. So we can speak of a learnedness that is little more than a mimicked demeanour, but we can also look back at our sewing learnings to see where we need to improve most urgently, while we still keep in plain sight a little shelf that is one of our carpentry learnings, which we are fond of. And we can ask for a certain article to be rewritten from scratch because as it is, it smacks of a mnemonic, and to the direct question the administrator responds evasively with a mnemonic.

A refined but simple word, immediate, showing the strength not of a learned evil without nuance, but of an awkward imperfection in the learned.

These pages have served me to really learn, in depth with ample explanations, about Ascona's hidden links to the wide world. It is my mind that has explored the stories of those who have lived here in the past. My nature is curious and these pages are the result of research to understand the place where I was born and lived.

Tonight I was reading anarchist texts and Erich Mühsam's biography and reflecting on my homely and truly unheroic fate. As a boy I was bored and thought how unexciting my reality was in the family and at the priests' school, without social commitment and real rebellion to fight injustice and tyranny. I think that in the end the real anarchists ended up either shot dead like Mühsam or Jesus, or locked in a room meditating like Aurobindo, after entrusting the realisation of his utopia Auroville to the Mère. Perhaps the constructive and realising side took over in certain natures and was able to develop beyond the initial anarchic and rebellious drive. In the case of Jesus it continued after his death in the faith of his followers, for Mühsam it still lives on in the literature and in the memory of those who approach the study of the history of anarchy. What remains of anarchy today?

Wandering around the web, following link after link, I end up in an area of the web that mentions precisely what this book has tried to bring to the surface throughout its pages, that perturbing feeling that arises when faced with the realisation of a past that has been transformed into an insignificant, commodified, soulless present.

The uncanny

Original titleDas Unheimliche

AuthorSigmund Freud

1st original edition 1919

Genre Essay Subgenre

Psychoanalysis

Original language German

"The uncanny is that kind of frightening that goes back to what has been known to us for a long time, to what is familiar."

(Sigmund Freud, The Perturbant, 1919.)

The uncanny (in the original German Das Unheimliche) is the title of an essay by Sigmund Freud, and from it became a noun adjective to express in the aesthetic sphere a particular attitude of the more generic feeling of fear, which develops when a thing (or a person, an impression, a fact or a situation) is felt as both familiar and foreign at the same time, causing generic anxiety combined with an unpleasant feeling of confusion and strangeness.

By Freud's Italian translators, this feeling has been rendered either with the adjective perturbing or with the noun adjective il perturbante. The Freudian literary critic Francesco Orlando used the translation il sinistro in his works. More recently, the translation with bewilderment has also been proposed.

Drawing by Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann for his short story Der Sandmann.

It is perhaps important to mention how my father, in order to put me to sleep, used to transform himself into the sand magician, a figure I never quite understood how he worked, except that I would fall into a kind of hypnotic spell and go into a hallucinatory sleep. I believe that the people who have been my family a r e actually totally strangers with strange powers that are still obscure to me today. I should actually study them more deeply.

For now, I am going down the road that wikipedia points me to on the uncanny:

Index

1 Ernst Jentsch

2 The uncanny and its relations with the unconscious

2.1 Philological investigation and the 'return of the repressed'

2.2 Genesis of the Freudian perturbant in certain recurring conditions

2.2.1 The double

2.2.2 Repetitive acts, superstitions and self-propelled mechanisms

2.2.3 Other disturbing situations

3 Uncanny valley

4 Notes

5 Bibliography

6 Related items

7 External links Ernst

Jentsch

Without identifying the unconscious root, Ernst Jentsch (1867 - 1919) was the first to introduce the concept of the uncanny into psychology, defined as the intellectual uncertainty as to whether an obviously animate object is really alive or not; or, conversely, whether an inanimate object could somehow be endowed with an autonomous life. Jentsch refers to the impression given by wax figures, automata and ingeniously constructed puppets. Disturbing effects are also often achieved when the observer is confronted with the continuous, 'automatic' repetition of the same situation, e.g. the same movement. This is how Jentsch explains the sensation of perturbation that some people experience before epileptic seizures or manifestations of madness.

Jentsch points out how the narrative tool of generating a perturbing sensation is used in literature by some novelists who introduce figures into their stories whose nature as living beings or automatons is not detailed or clarified in any way, leaving the reader in doubt and unable to

decide. Since the disturbing situation or object has connotations that are both familiar and foreign, it generates an intellectual uncertainty, what in the psychology of the following century would be called cognitive dissonance in the subject experiencing it. Jentsch analyses E. T. A. Hoffman's short stories, especially The Sandman in which the doll Olympia is characterised as the perturbing element of the tale.

The uncanny and its relations with the unconscious

"The discovery of the unconscious occurs here, in romantic fantasy literature, almost a hundred years before a theoretical definition of it is given."

(Italo Calvino about The Sandman.[4])

Sigmund Freud in the pages of the US magazine Life.

Jentsch's studies were taken up and developed by Freud in the essay The Perturbant (1919), in which there is an in-depth analysis of the tales of Hoffmann, judged by Freud to be 'the undisputed master of the perturbant in literature'. Freud notes, however, that in The Sandman the most obvious example of the perturbing atmosphere is evoked not so much by the theme of the animated doll Olympia but by the figure of the Sandman Ogre, an adult capable of gouging out children's eyes, and thus not by the intellectual uncertainty about an animate/inanimate subject but by the possibility that an adult can mutilate a child's body, a clear reference to the castration process that the tale brings to the reader's consciousness.

Philological investigation and the 'return of the repressed'

The German term unheimlich from a semantic point of view is the opposite of heimlich (from heim, house) meaning quiet,

comfortable, trustworthy, intimate, belonging to the home. Un-heimlich therefore means unusual, foreign, unfamiliar. What is unfamiliar or known usually arouses terror and fright, but not everything that is unusual or new causes fear and terror, let alone disturbance. According to Freud, to be properly perturbing the object must therefore have some other characteristic and it must be an infrequent characteristic because most frightening or terrifying things are not also perturbing. Freud notes that a translational meaning of heimlich found in Daniel Sanders' dictionary of the German language is also 'kept at home, hidden', meanings not exactly antithetical to comfortable and familiar but belonging to two certainly contrasting spheres. Heimlich thus presents a curious ambivalence of meaning, the second of which, the lesser used (i.e. mysterious, hidden) almost coincides with its opposite unheimlich. Un-heimlich disturbing would also mean unconcealed, come to light, surfaced. Disturbance arises when in an object or situation characteristics of strangeness and familiarity are combined in a kind of 'affective dualism'.

Wax statue depicting Winston Churchill. Madame Tussaud's, London, 1908.

The duck-automaton by Jacques de Vaucanson (1709-1782). Vaucanson is also famous for building a number of automata, including a small, fully-automated flute player equipped with movable lips, a mechanical tongue that acted as a valve for air flow and movable fingers whose leather tips opened and closed the flute's registers.

In this type of consideration Freud was somewhat anticipated[7] in the field of ontology by Schelling who argued:

"It is called unheimlich everything that could remain [...] secret, hidden, and has instead surfaced."

(Schelling, Philosophy of Mythology[8])

The hidden, the repressed that somehow returns to our presence through the perturbing object or situation generates this particular feeling of anguish called perturbation (unheimlichkeit). Perturbation is, in the final analysis, every man's 'access to the old homeland' (German: Heimat), to the place of the first abode in which every man has been at least once, namely his mother's womb. Everything that was once homeland (ted. heimisch) and familiar becomes Unheimlich, and the prefix un- is the sign of removal, which in essence is an internal process of negation. The uncanny therefore arises when that which was kept hidden is shown, when the repressed returns to awaken dormant infantile complexes.[9] The 'return of the repressed' understood as the 'return of the same' anticipates the compulsion to repeat illustrated in the essay Beyond the Pleasure Principle of 1920.

Genesis of the Freudian perturbative in certain recurring conditions[edit] edit wikitesto

The double[edit] edit wikitesto]

The representation of the double can generate disturbance in lived life situations, in artistic representations or in thoughts, as for example in the presence of twins or doubles. In this case the disturbance would derive from the return to consciousness of infantile narcissism evoked by the possibility of a double making us immortal, which in the adult has long since been relegated to the unconscious by the moral and critical action of the superego.

Repetitive acts, superstitions and self-propelled mechanisms[edit] edit wikitesto

Automatic, repetitive, mechanical movements and processes seem to be produced outside ordinary mental activity and are perceived as disturbing, fearful, foreign, mysterious, inexplicable, often with supernatural connotations. According to Freud, the repetition of a gesture, a fact, a behaviour, can become perturbing because it evokes ideas removed by the adult and present in childhood (and in primitive man) such as the all-powerful animistic magical thought that would command actions performed automatically, the end of which is unknown to us. Typical examples are situations where someone gets lost and accidentally retraces the same procedures and actions (retraces their steps) in a vain attempt to pull themselves out of the impasse, or fortuitous coincidences that end up seeming suspicious and perturbing, and the insistence of numbers. Similarly, superstitions, beliefs and magic can evoke a perturbing feeling due to the resurfacing of the childhood idea of mysterious forces acting outside our will. Identical genesis would also have the perturbing arising from self-propelled mechanisms, limbs detached from the body that continue to contract, epileptic fits, manifestations of madness.

Other disturbing situations[edit] edit wikitesto]

The perturbing effect of imagining for oneself or seeing someone being buried alive is produced by the resurfacing to consciousness of the repressed desire to return to the womb, to the 'first abode', the 'ancient homeland'. Analysing a masterpiece of fiction by E.T.A. Hoffmann - The Sandman - Freud outlines a series of themes such as the animation of the inanimate, the double, obsessive repetition, the return of the dead, the burial of the living, making the uncanny one of the great aesthetic categories of the 20th century.

This category nowadays has multiple reflections in cinema, in the visual arts, in the obsession with the imagery of hybrid and mutant (cyborg) bodies.

Uncanny valley[edit] Edit wikitesto]

The same topic in detail: Uncanny valley.

Uncanny valley (translation: the uncanny zone or uncanny valley) is a hypothesis presented by Japanese robotics scholar Masahiro Mori in 1970 published in the journal Energy.[10] The research experimentally analyses how the sensation of familiarity and pleasantness generated in a sample of people by anthropomorphic robots and automata increases as their resemblance to the human figure increases, up to a point where the extreme representational realism, however, produces an abrupt drop in positive emotional reactions, arousing unpleasant sensations such as repulsion and disquiet comparable to perturbation.

The uncanny is a very relevant theme in literature and its influence on it has produced very suggestive and fascinating results. Consider, for instance, the production of Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (more commonly known as E.T.A Hoffmann) who, while anticipating the concept theorised by Freud by almost a century, provided perfect examples of it.

Mention should be made in this regard of the collection of horror novellas, reminiscent of the Gothic taste of previous decades, entitled 'Night Tales' ('Nachtstücke'), dating from around 1816, in which the uncanny (i.e. an enigmatic feeling that seems, at the same time, dangerous or unknown, but also familiar) is present on many occasions.

For example, in 'The Abandoned House', the protagonist, Theodor, placed in a bizarre reality where the planes of fantasy and dreams are completely confused with that of authentic life, has experiences bordering on the paranormal (he has terrifying visions of a girl gone mad after entering an abandoned house in Berlin out of curiosity) that gradually become an integral part of his very existence.

Particularly emblematic is the fact that Theodor, seeing the spectral girl not only in her 'apparitions' but also when he looks into any mirror, influences the psychiatrist he asks for help (Doktor K.) to such an extent that the latter ends up having the same hallucinations as the protagonist. This detail emphasises the role of the uncanny in modern society and underlines how, when faced with the complex phenomena of the psyche, even the most tempered and 'trained' (like Doktor K.) end up giving in and adapting.

Notes

^ Francesco Orlando, Enlightenment and Freudian Rhetoric, Einaudi, Turin 1982, new ed. 1997 (as Enlightenment, Baroque and Freudian Rhetoric) ISBN 8806146718

^ Graziella Berto, Freud, Heidegger. Lo spaesamento, Milan, Bompiani, 1999, 2nd ed. 2002. ISBN 8845251942; ISBN 9788845251948.

^ Ernst Jentsch, On the Psychology of the Perturbing (1906).

^ Italo Calvino, Racconti fantastici dell'Ottocento, Milan, Mondadori, 1989, p. 42.

^ Unheimlich in current usage is the opposite of only the first semantic category (familiarity, tranquillity) with the meaning of unusual, foreign, unfamiliar.

^ Flavia Tricomi, Aesthetics and Psychoanalysis, Rubbettino, 2001, p. 39. ISBN 88-49801955; ISBN 978-88-49801958.

^ M. Durst, Anticipations of the Freudian perturbation in some writings by Schelling and Hegel. In Problems of Pedagogy, Jan.-Feb. 1991, pp. 67-87.

^ F.W.J. Schelling, Philosophy of Mythology (1846), edited by L. Procesi, Milan, Mursia, 1990, p. 474.

^ Flavia Tricomi, op. cit.

^ Mori, Masahiro (1970). Bukimi no tani - The uncanny valley (K. F. MacDorman & T. Minato, trans.). Energy, 7(4), 33-35. (Original in Japanese, English translation).

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Related items

Narcissism

Removal

Uncanny valley

The Sandman (he is a little man with a white goatee and a pointed cap and has to entice the children to go to bed to sleep by scattering his

sand of dreams). External

links

Mori, Masahiro, Bukimi no tani, The uncanny valley, Energy, 7, 1970, pp. 33-35.

Andrea Orlando, 'The Double and the Matrix: Perturbance in Cinema', Dissertation Degree Thesis - The Double and the Matrix: Perturbance in Cinema

Pietro Conte, 'Unheimlich. From wax figures to the Uncanny Valley" Unheimlich. From wax figures to the Uncanny Valley | Conte | PsicoArt Online magazine of art and psychology

This digression stems from an article on the sad present of Monte Verità.

I now believe I have truly reached the goal of my research, I have finally understood that feeling I get when I visit Monte and when I walk around Ascona. I understand my childhood and the unconscious ties that have remained tangled inside me to this day.

Drawing by Ernst Theodor Wilhelm Hoffmann for his short story Der Sandmann (transl. it.: L'uomo della sabbia). Nathanael, Coppelius and Nathanael's father in a pen drawing by E. T. A. Hoffmann for his short story The Sandman.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3ldodbtIeQ

The tale begins in epistolary form. In the first letter sent by the protagonist, Nathanael, to his friend Lothair (which he mistakenly addresses to Clara, the latter's sister and his fiancée), we learn some facts about the young university student's childhood. Nathanael recalls how his mother used to persuade him and his siblings to go to bed on certain occasions by resorting to the fabulous threat of the coming of the Sandman, a monster who would gouge out the eyes of children who refused to sleep and then feed them to his children, creatures equipped with curved beaks like those of owls.

The child's imagination is strongly affected by this figure, for on nights when his mother told him this story, he actually heard the sound of footsteps on the stairs of her house. One evening, intrigued but also frightened, Nathanael hides in his father's study to await the arrival of the sandman. However, the lawyer Coppelius, a friend of the parents who was particularly unpleasant to the children because of his appearance and manners, arrives. The father and the lawyer also engaged in alchemical experiments during these visits.

One evening, the little boy is discovered in his hiding place and threatened by Coppelius, who terrorises him by wanting to gouge out his eyes, which further reinforces in Nathanael's mind the identification of the lawyer with the Sandman. Upset by the incident, the child faints and is bedridden for almost a month and shortly after his recovery, during another visit from what he now considers a monster, his father dies in mysterious circumstances. From that day on, lawyer Coppelius disappears from the city and from his life.

In his letter to Lothair, Nathanael brings these memories back to light as he confesses to his friend that he is convinced he has met Coppelius again, who, however, in the city of G. where the young man is staying for study, pretends to be an optician from Piedmont named Giuseppe Coppola. The boy's doubts about the man's true identity are partly dispelled by the assurance of Professor Spalanzani, who claims to have known the pedlar for many years, since they both lived in Italy.

At this point in the story, the narration in epistolary form comes to an end, and switches to an external narrator, who tells us how the whole story unfolds. After the exchange of letters between Nathanael and Lothair, the former returns home for a short time to his friend and his fiancée Clara, an affectionate and extremely practical girl, who make him momentarily forget what has happened and reassure him about the connection between the hated Coppelius and the Italian trader.

At the end of his stay, however, Nathanael returns to G. and discovers that his home was badly damaged in a fire and that his friends have found him another place to stay in the building across the street.

to Spalanzani's house. Here the boy receives an unwelcome visit from Giuseppe Coppola and, in order to get him to leave as quickly as possible and remembering his discussions with Clara and Lotario, he buys a small pair of binoculars from the latter. Using it, he sees that in the professor's house is a beautiful girl, whom he assumes to be Spalanzani's daughter, Olimpia.

During a dance at the professor's house he finally meets her and, once again, observes her through Coppola's binoculars while she is giving a short piano concert for the guests. Nathanael falls madly in love with her and begins to see her assiduously, disregarding the judgments of his fellow students, who consider her a 'doll' and a 'wax face'.

One day he visits the professor's house and finds the man and Coppola viciously contending with Olympia, tugging at her, one by the feet and the other by the arms. Nathanael looks at his lover and realises to his horror that she has empty orbital sockets and that her eyes are lying on the floor. After the scuffle, Coppola flees with Olympia on his shoulder and, in despair, Professor Spalanzani reveals to the young man that Olympia was not his daughter but an automaton, and that Coppelius has stolen her from him.

Hearing the name of the much-hated man and realising that he had been rightly suspicious from the start, the boy goes mad and is first admitted to an asylum and later spends his convalescence at home, surrounded by the loving care of his family, Clara and Lotario.

Completely healed, Nathanael finds himself one day on a walk with Clara, who proposes to him to observe the city from the top of a tower. The two climb up, while Lothair waits for them in the

square. On the tower, Nathanael again uses Coppola/ Coppelius's binoculars and once again goes mad, mistaking Clara for an automaton and trying to kill her by throwing her into the void. Lothair rushes in to save the young woman, making her flee into the square and observing Nathanael's madness among the people. Among the crowd, however, is Coppelius, who funnily foresees that there will be no need to bring Nathanael down as he will do it himself. A few moments later, in fact, the young man jumps from the tower and dies, while the ambiguous character disappears among the people who have come to witness the drama.

Here I am now, here is Ascona and its mystery finally revealed. I metaphorically jumped off the tower to get my eyes back, in the grip of blindness madness. But the quest started early in my life and it took years to tame it, understand it, dissect it and come to the end of these pages. They are experiments of an alchemical nature, they took place in Ascona, it is the beginning of the path that produces these visions and also the return to reality after the dream. My reality now, after all these pages, is complex, it is really articulated and I am satisfied. Good night, or what remains of it.

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