

Through the Speculum of the Psyche: Paul Radin at the Eranos ‘Tagungen’

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Introduction

In the accounts of the history of anthropology, Paul Radin is usually recognized as occupying a rather odd place. He is often described as an anomalous, ambivalent, divisive, and inscrutable figure. To be sure, initially he was associated with Franz Boas’ school of cultural anthropology, but then he distanced himself from it and developed his own agenda for the study of culture. Thus, his ideas and praxis were increasingly connoted with anticanonical academic paradigms while prospering in new environments. In particular, Paul Radin became a well-respected lecturer at the Eranos meetings in Ascona, Switzerland, where scholars and lay participants came together to exchange ideas, unrestricted by academic dogmatism.

In contrast, the ramifications of his theories, methods, and findings such as the mythic figure of the trickster have been generally ignored by dominant social scientific approaches. The fact is that in the history of anthropology his intellectual trajectory is similarly obscured. Consider one of Radin’s most enduring, volumes entitled *The Trickster* (1956). It is a

collaborative piece anchored in the spirit of the Eranos lectures, yet there has been no historical treatment of his connection to this unique scholarly milieu. The aim of this article is to remedy this neglect by exploring the reasons why this might be the case and to rediscover some aspects of Paul Radin's work through the prism of the Eranos connection.

Into the Life and Work of Paul Radin

Son of a rabbi, Paul Radin was born in 1883 in Łódź, then part of the Russian Empire, today in Poland. In 1890, the Radin family moved to New York City. Radin graduated from the College of the City of New York in 1902. After briefly exploring the zoology of fish at Columbia, he traveled to Munich to study physical anthropology. This culminated in a two-year period of intellectual self-exploration in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy. Next, he began to study zoology at Columbia (Du Bois 1960) and then in 1907 he started to study cultural anthropology under Franz Boas. He soon became a prolific writer, and a productive fieldworker. After completing his PhD in 1911, Radin took a series of positions around North America. First with the Bureau of American Ethnology (1911–1912), then a joint fellowship from Columbia and Harvard to study the Zapotec culture (1912–1913), followed by four years with the Geological Survey of Canada led by Edward Sapir studying the Ojibwa of southeast Ontario (Du Bois 1960). [1] Primarily from 1908 to 1912 he conducted fieldwork among the Winnebago (Ho-Chunk) of Nebraska and Wisconsin. [2]

Let me cite some of the titles of his oeuvre to suggest the vast scope of his bibliography: *Zur Netztechnik der südamerikanischen Indianer* (1906), *Winnebago Tales* (1909), *On Ojibwa Work in Southeastern Ontario* (1912), *Some Myths and Tales of the Ojibwa of Southeastern Ontario* (1914), *Some Aspects of Puberty Fasting among the Ojibwa* (1914), *The Social Organization of the Winnebago Indians: An Interpretation* (1915), *Literary Aspects of North American Mythology* (1915), and *The Sources and Authenticity of the History of the Ancient Mexicans* (1920). His magnum opus, *The Winnebago Tribe* (1923) was followed by *Monotheism among Primitive Peoples* (1924), *Crashing Thunder: The Autobiography of an American Indian* (1926), *The Story of the American Indian* (1927), and *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (1927).

The volume entitled *A Grammar of the Wappo Language* (1929) was succeeded by *Social Anthropology* (1932), *The Method and Theory of Ethnology: An Essay in Criticism* (1933), *The Racial Myth* (1934), *Primitive Religion: Its Nature and Origin* (1937), *Indians of South America* (1942), *The Road of Life and Death: A Ritual Drama of the American Indians* (1945), *Winnebago Hero Cycles: A Study in Aboriginal Literature* (1948), *The Culture of the Winnebago as Described by Themselves* (1949), *The World of Primitive Man* (1953), *The Evolution of an American Indian Prose Epic* (1954), and *The Trickster: A Study in Native American Mythology* (1956), first published in German in 1954 under the title *Der göttliche Schelm* with Károly Kerényi and Carl Jung.

His central theoretical works, *Primitive Man as a Philosopher* (1927) and *The Method and Theory of Ethnology* (1933) exhibit a fascination with the role of the individual in “primitive” societies, a label he utilized with considerable caution. Paul Radin's letters written to Edward Sapir

also provide a captivating insight into his approach to the discipline. One of the letters even contains an early critique of Franz Boas for having “not once told [his disciples] to study the Indian as individuals” (Radin, 1914, as cited in Arndt, 1998: 4). Radin would later expand his intense criticism in his enduring volume *The Method and Theory of Ethnology* (1933). Indeed, he also constantly discerned his own approach from the methods of his fellow Boasians, including the three additional “Semites” (Radin, 1916, as cited in Arndt 1998: 5) i.e. apart from Franz Boas and himself, Edward Sapir, Robert H. Lowie, and Alexander Goldenweiser.

Paul Radin was a prolific ethnographer who devoted a lifetime of study to the Winnebago Tribe, and according to Vidich (1966) he would have preferred to be remembered as such. His *The Method and Theory of Ethnology* (1933) is a necessary commentary on concerns which Radin was driven to debate because he believed that the discipline was drifting in the wrong direction (Vidich 1966). He stated outright where the field had made its errors. Yet, his insights failed to redirect the contemporary Boasian paradigm. Radin’s reaction is illustrated in the following quote:

I would indeed be a Don Quixote if I thought the windmills would cease revolving merely because I tilted against them. But at times it is of value to tilt against them simply in order to call the attention of the world to the fact that they are present and revolving “in their own sweet way” and that they will continue to do so “as long as the spirit of Man bloweth where it listeth” (Radin 1966 [1933]: viii).

His core anthropological pursuit was to arrive at the universal or the psychic constant by discovering the individual in history. In other words, he wanted to reach his generalizations out of the historically particular rather than a priori classifications. It is from this deep-rooted historicist viewpoint that he critiqued the method of Boas as “fundamentally unhistorical” (Radin 1966 [1933]: 17). To be sure, Radin insisted that the work of Alfred L. Kroeber, Edward Sapir, Clark Wissler, Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Mead whom he likened to a “journalist” (Radin 1966 [1933]:170) was also either fallacious, deceitful or pseudo-historical. Consider the following quote concerning the distorted nature of ethnological records presumably serving historical reconstruction à la distributional studies in the United States:

Their purpose is not that of the mere enumeration of traits and its utilization for specifically circumscribed areas, as Nordenskiöld has done for South America, but an enumeration of traits for the avowed object of establishing certain types of diffusion and of arriving at an “historical” reconstruction. The basic requirement for any such approach, even granting its legitimacy, is an accurate and adequate record. But how can the record be even remotely accurate...? And even if it could be demonstrated that the distribution obtainable today is fairly accurate, what right have we to assume that it would have held two hundred years ago?

How, for instance, do we know what traits have disappeared? How do we know what traits have had a transient existence, and what a more or less permanent one, in a given region? In other words, I, for one, do not feel

that it is even strictly feasible to make an enumeration in the manner of Nordenskiöld... Now, to give a custom or belief a unit character, untold mischief is done to it. It is not merely that we are transforming a cultural into a physical fact but that we are frequently giving only a small portion of the particular custom or belief, and that we delude ourselves into believing either that we are stating the complete custom or that we are giving its essence (Radin 1966 [1933]: 127–128).

Although Radin was rather suspicious of psychoanalysts, Carl Jung's works had caught his attention. Thus, in the 1920s he attended Jung's seminars in Zürich. Even so, he never became a Jungian. His skeptical and rationalistic outlook in fact intensified by his contact with Carl Jung. Radin firmly rejected Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's (1966 [1922]) attitude towards primitive mentality and his theory of participation mystique which Jung initially accepted. Radin's most immediate retort was his *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (1927). He rejected both the romantic model of the noble savage and the evolutionist dismissal of the primitive mind as essentially uncivilized. But he also argued that primitive societies cannot be treated as an undifferentiated mass of individuals à la Boasian pseudo-historicism or "conceptuology" (Radin 1966 [1933]: 42).

He further postulated that societies consisted of different psychological and temperamental types, such as the subjective-idealist thinker or the artist-philosopher, and average laymen (Radin 1927). The former is almost always the medicine man and the priest, the latter is essentially a pragmatist. Consider his careful but sympathetic remark on Carl Jung and the related problem of literacy:

As I have stated elsewhere, the whole tendency of writing has been to elevate thought and thinking to the rank of the exclusive proof of the verities, to differentiate the subjective from the objective in a fashion unknown until then, and, since this was necessarily accomplished by a small group of individuals, the new world of the literate man became set off against that of the illiterate and that of the man of action. New conflicts and new stresses arose, new disagreements and agreements, adjustment and maladjustments.

Problems of far-reaching importance are contained herein which the ethnologist, sociologist, and psychologist have hitherto barely touched...It is here where the psychoanalysts have been illuminating, although it is difficult to escape the conviction that, with the possible exception of Jung, they have blundered upon this field rather than come upon it properly, with a true realization of what it contains (Radin 1966 [1933]: 264–265).

Radin moved to Berkeley during the Great Depression, and he stayed there until 1949 (Du Bois 1960). From 1930 to 1940, he completed an analysis of the Patwin language of California, he supervised a research project among ethnic minorities in the San Francisco Bay Area for the State Emergency Relief Administration of California (SERA), and finished editing the massive *Catalogue of Mexican Pamphlets* in the Sutro Collection of the California State Library in 1939. During the strained years of the Depression, he still managed to publish *Social Anthropology* (1932), *The Method and Theory of Ethnology* (1933), and *Primitive Religion* (1937) (Du

Bois 1960). Subsequently, Radin became a fellow and an adviser for the Bollingen Foundation, in part devoted to the dissemination of Carl Jung's work. In 1952 he moved to Lugano in Switzerland and lived there until 1956. During this time, he lectured at Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester and at the Carl Jung's Institute in Zürich. Then he joined Brandeis University in 1957, where he worked until his death on February 21, 1959, in New York City. He never deserted his research on the Winnebago.

The Daimon of Eranos

In 1949, some of the notable first-time lecturers at Eranos were Paul Radin, specialist on the Winnebago Tribe, Henry Corbin, expert on Shiite Islam, Gershom Scholem, the preeminent scholar of Jewish mysticism, and Adolf E. Jensen, the influential German ethnologist, amongst others. Other prominent contributors included Gerardus van der Leeuw, the renowned phenomenologist of religion, Károly Kerényi, the pioneering scholar of Greek mythology, Erich Neumann, the famous analytical psychologist, and Julius Baum, the distinguished art historian. What brought these scholars together?

Eranos was the project of a Dutch heiress, Olga Fröbe-Kapteyn, at Lake Maggiore, Ascona, in Switzerland. In Ancient Greek, *eranos* means “banquet” where guests bring their own contributions. Even though he never participated as a lecturer, the name was suggested by none other than Rudolf Otto, the eminent theologian and historian of religion (Hakl 2014). As its name reflects, the gathering was a feast-like event where scholars brought an academic dish to the table. The work of Carl Jung was definitely a synthetic force at the core of this intellectual enterprise. In the end, he was *spiritus rector* of the conferences for the first twenty years (Bernardini 2015). The gatherings began in 1933 with an ambitious program of annual conferences held at Casa Eranos. Each conference lasted about ten days, usually during August. The meetings in part modelled the intellectual ensembles of German Romanticism with Italian renaissance style, and the vibrant European salons of the 19th century (Merlini 2015).

The lectures lasted about two hours and were presented by the invited speakers in their mother tongue, without translation. Curiously, the audience was restricted from asking questions at the end of the sessions. Each lecturer donated a copy of their talk in exchange for the hospitality which has resulted in the collection of over seven hundred articles published in over seventy *Eranos-Jahrbücher* (Eranos Yearbooks). The formal part of the conferences was complemented by informal discussions reserved for a smaller group. This special group gathered around a large round table under two cedar trees. Imagine a stone sculpture in the background sculpted by Paul Speck representing the very archetypal energy or the daemon of Eranos with the inscription *genio loci ignoto* (“to the unknown spirit of the place”). The monument was most likely the idea of Carl Jung and Gerardus van der Leeuw. Let me quote Fröbe-Kapteyn herself concerning the spirit of Eranos:

Eranos represents the reaction of a group of scholars and of their audiences to a vital and powerful urge, which they all feel, but cannot yet

define. They register the fact that something draws them into the Eranos work, something that is stronger than themselves – an irrational and magnetic force that is integrating the Eranos group from within...

We have a group in which an archetype is working out its purpose. This means that those who partake in this work whether unconsciously or consciously, make contact with this archetype, and are as a consequence moved or shaken by the deeper life force of the archetypal world. Their depths are stirred, both by the archetypal material handled in the lectures, and by the invisible spirit of these meetings, a spirit that is simply abroad, that is present, that is almost a presence, and that is linked to those who speak and to those who listen (Fröbe-Kapteyn 2015: 32–36).

The magical atmosphere of the gatherings was masterfully captured by Mircea Eliade, the famous historian of religion who was likely invited to join as a lecturer by Henry Corbin. He gave a total of thirteen talks between 1950 and 1967, and in his journal, he described Paul Radin as always laughing with an enormous belly (Eliade 1990). He also recorded that Radin's second wife had one night caught sight of an amiable dragon in the garden. In addition, he mentions Gershom Scholem's delightful accent and large free-floating ears, Károly Kerényi's intelligent and theatrical speech delivery, and Joachim Wach's depressing reports about American universities related during lunch at a trattoria. Last but not least, Carl Jung's prodigious appetite for delicious food, somewhat at odds with Fröbe-Kapteyn's dubious cuisine selection, which drove Jung to indulge in occult culinary treats, at night, alone in his room (Eliade 1990).

The meetings convened leading intellectuals of various academic fields. Let me offer a non-exhaustive list of the participants. The psychologists, Carl Jung, Erich Neumann, and Marie-Louise von Franz; the historians of religion, Raffaele Pettazzoni, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade, and Ernst Benz; the classical philologist, Károly Kerényi; the orientalist, Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids, Heinrich Zimmer, Erwin Rousselle, and Giuseppe Tucci; the Hebraists, Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem; the scholars of Islam, Louis Massignon, Henry Corbin, and Toshihiko Izutsu; the Egyptologists, Charles Allberry, Georges Hermann Nagel, and Erik Hornung; the Sinologists, Paul Pelliot and Hellmut Wilhelm; the scholars of Gnosis, Henri-Charles Puech and Gilles Quispel; the Indologist, Jakob Wilhelm Hauer; and the scholar of Zen Buddhism, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki.

The list goes on with cultural anthropologists, Paul Radin, John Layard, and Gilbert Durand; the ethnologists, Theodor-Wilhelm Danzel, Adolf E. Jensen, Richard Thurnwald, and Jean Servier; the archeologists, Charles Virolleaud and Charles Picard; the philosophers, Helmuth Plessner, Jean Brun, and Pierre Hadot; the art historian, Julius Baum; the literary critic, Herbert Edward Read; the expert on Western esotericism, Antoine Faivre; the physicist, Erwin Schrödinger; the scholar of Chinese medicine, Manfred Porkert; the violinist and conductor Sándor Végh; and many other experts along with them. The first phase (1933–1937) of the conferences were characterized by a comparative phenomenological approach to Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. The meetings embraced themes such as “Yoga and Meditation in East and West”, and “Eastern-Western Symbolism and Soul-Guidance”.

The second phase (1938–1946) involved the perspective of comparative phenomenology to archetypal topics, once again in the Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. The proceedings coming out of these conferences were increasingly influenced by Carl Jung and comprised themes such as “The Form and Cult of the Great Mother”, “The Symbolism of Rebirth”, “The Hermetic Principle in Mythology, Gnosis, and Alchemy”, “Ancient Sun Cults and the Symbolism of Light in Gnosis and in Early Christianity”, “The Mysteries”, and “The Spirit”. The third phase (1947–1962) revolved around an ambitious anthropological program focused on the idea of the “inner man” (inner Mensch) later developed by Erich Neumann.

Featured topics included “Man and the Mythical World”, “Man and Rite”, “Man and Time”, and “Man and Energy”. The conferences of the fourth phase (1963–1971) explored anthropological subjects through the inspection of transformation with topics such as “Form as Task of the Spirit” and “The Polarity of Life”. The sessions of the fifth phase (1972–1988) discussed symbolic hermeneutics and featured topics such as “The Realms of Colour”, “Thought and Mythic Images”, “Human and Cosmic Mirroring”, “Material and Imaginal Bodies”, and “The Variety of Worlds”. The sixth phase (1989–2002) drew from diverse perspectives with the purpose of bringing together archetypal psychology and the ancient Chinese oral text, the *I Ching*.

Radin at Eranos: A Triadic Methodology

Paul Radin arrived on the scene during the third phase. He was invited to lecture at Eranos twice between 1949 and 1950. In 1949 the annual theme was “Man and the Mythical World”. In his lecture, *The Basic Myth of the North American Indians*, Radin (1950) focused on the myth of the Twins. He approached the topic on several culturally and psychically determined levels and in distinct cultural contexts. [3] Crucially, he asserted that methodologically there are three levels on which myths, indeed any cultural phenomenon, can be studied from the viewpoint of the cultural anthropologist. First is the immediate meaning or function for the people narrating or listening to it. Second is its larger overall meaning or its philosophical and psychological implications for them.

Third concerns the light it can throw on both the cultural and psychological history of mankind, a level of analysis which, no doubt, most cultural anthropologists or ethnologists would reject today. Importantly, Radin touched upon the unrefined contemporary methods of investigating what constitutes essential human nature as early as the 1930s in his *The Method and Theory of Ethnology* (1933). In fact, by then he referred to this anthropological pursuit as “the core of all investigations of culture” (Radin 1966 [1933]: 267). Consider Radin’s (1950) additional remarks on his triadic methodology:

All these levels are interconnected. However, for the purposes of representation, they should be kept as distinct, the one from the others, as possible. All have their own individuality and validity, and little is gained, as sometimes done, by assessing the results obtained from the analysis of the data on one level as superior or more profound than those obtained on another...

Few, if any, ethnologists exist today who do not believe in the psychical unity of mankind, who do not, that is, believe, in some form or other, in the existence of certain basic and fundamental ideas, relatively small in number, which repeat themselves over and over again among all peoples. Adolf Bastian called them *Elementargedanken*. These *Elementargedanken* are, of course inextricably interwoven with the culture of a people and they can no more be said to determine the culture than the culture can be said to determine them...

As far as the theorists are concerned, this should be remembered: Few of them ever study aboriginal civilizations in their own right. For them aboriginal civilizations form simply an adjunct to the study of our own... Because of these often mutually opposed and contrasting approaches, every anthropologist owes it to his audience to state clearly and explicitly how he envisages aboriginal cultures and what view he holds regarding the nature of aboriginal mentality (Radin 1950: 360–361).

Radin (1950) maintained that the unfolding power of the Twins symbolizes man's individuation process from the grip of the unconscious. In the folklore versions the Twins are completely undifferentiated, undisciplined and unsocialized. They are archaic beings combating primordial forces within themselves, but they are repeatedly killed and sucked back into death or the unconscious (Radin 1950). Here life and death are only partially differentiated. Thus, individuation is a dangerous and frightening experience (Radin 1950). The area of the unconscious is still immeasurably larger than the area of the conscious. With every victory, the Twins' chance of individuation increases until consciousness almost completely displaces the unconscious (Radin 1950). This is the core of the inward or esoteric drama that is being portrayed.

This inner esoteric core is also portrayed in the exploits of the Twins. Here the myth likewise deals with the problem of the "real" in terms of the stages by which man frees himself from his unconscious only to "relapse into it again through his failure to understand his relation to society and the external world" (Radin 1950: 409). Still, the Twins gradually free themselves from the dark, static, and undifferentiated realm of the unconscious. Hence, they grow up, face reality, become individuated, and integrate into society. To achieve this, they need to push back the unconscious to the periphery (Radin 1950).

In 1950, the topic was "Man and Rite". In his lecture, *The Esoteric Rituals of the North American Indians*, Radin (1951) advanced his triadic methodology. He contended that ethnologists have studied cultural manifestations on the first and occasionally on the second level. Those ethnologists who attempted to treat their data on all three levels failed to accomplish the analysis. Radin (1951) asserted that these included Leo Frobenius, Theodor Preuss, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Ruth Benedict. [4] He then discussed ritualistic systems and ritual dramas of North America beginning with the most complex of American Indian civilizations, the Pueblo. In his lecture he described in considerable detail the Zuni ritualistic system, the Southeast ritualistic system, and the ritualistic system of the secondary southwest, the Skidi Pawnee, with special attention to their Hako ritual. Further, the Siouan ritualistic system, which includes the reintegration ritual drama of the Oglala Sioux, the Sun Dance.

According to Radin (1951), there are two primary functions, conscious or unconscious, of all esoteric rituals. First, to validate reality on various levels and second, to dramatize the struggle for integration, that of the individual, the group, and the external world. The esoteric validation is achieved through special symbolism. Here we are in the realm of the profane and the sacred. The crisis of man and nature is profound. Thus, the ritual drama aims at reuniting and healing what has been damaged or broken (Radin 1951). Otherwise speaking, the esoteric quest is the restoration of equilibrium. Further, to validate reality in its broadest sense, the reality of man's inner world, the reality of nature, and the reality of the sociopolitical forms which collectively carry on an existence of their own (Radin 1951). In the ritual drama which is performed by qualified individuals during times of cultural stress, this endorsement attains its highest and most perfect form (Radin 1951). [5]

Paul Radin was very interested in the existential conflicts within the tribes and within the individuals in connection to the many crises that have developed throughout the centuries and which in part took place before the "coming of the whites" (Radin 1951: 301). For example, the tribal organization of the Oglala Sioux had become completely disrupted when they finally came to the Dakotas. They had become a warrior nation of extreme individualists. Thus, their basic existential problem became not how to preserve their culture from disintegration, but how to preserve *themselves* from disintegration. This is the central theme of the Oglala Sun Dance (Radin 1951). Importantly, the Zuni ritualistic system is strikingly different. Here the tribes never ceased to function and the people "seem to have extended their basic concept of renewal generically so that it meant the renewal of the will to live in the world of real men and women and not the introverted world of the mind and the shadows" (Radin 1951: 318).

Radin also contributed to a special Eranos volume dedicated to Carl Jung for his 75th birthday entitled *From the World of the Archetypes* published in 1950. In his contribution to Jung's special birthday volume, *The Religious Experiences of an American Indian*, Radin concentrated on the "core of every religion" (Radin 1950: 249), the religious experience itself which he based on the accounts of Peyote Cult founder John Rave. As Radin (1950) illustrates, the Winnebago have been in contact with European civilization from the second quarter of the seventeenth century, and their demoralization intensified from the middle of the eighteenth century on. In his view, the symbolism of the light and the "darkness-night" (Radin 1950: 265) in Rave's narrative signifies a concentration of his lifelong struggle to maintain equilibrium and to escape complete disintegration.

He was essentially concerned with how myth, ritual drama and religious experience mirror collective and individual existential crises and *re-integration*. This theme certainly linked Paul Radin's findings to the Jungian idea of individuation. It was not without reason that Carl Jung and Károly Kerényi contributed to the volume entitled the *Trickster*. Radin found the fascinating Trickster cycle among the Siouan-speaking Winnebago of central Wisconsin and eastern Nebraska in 1912. [6] Clearly, the topic was of lifelong interest for him. Radin (1972 [1956]) in his complex study clarified that the Winnebago, like most American Indian

tribes, divided their mythic narratives into two types. The *waikan*, or what-is-sacred dealt with the realm of the spirits, and the *worak* or what-is-recounted dealt with the mundane world. Hence, the heroes of the *waikan* were either spirits and deities like Sun, Waterspirit, Morning Star or Thunderbird, or vague semi-deities like the Trickster, Bladder, and Red Horn. [7] Further, spirit animals like Hare, Bear, Turtle, and Wolf (Radin 1972 [1956]).

The Winnebago tended to group the adventures of their heroes into large units. The most important of these myth cycles were those linked to the Trickster, Hare, Red Horn, and the Twins (Radin 1972 [1956]). Now, the Trickster Cycle characterizes the hero as having no moral or social values. Further, he is unable to control his impulses. He knows neither good nor evil, and yet he is responsible for both. Simply put, he is not yet differentiated. Therefore, he has no well-defined and fixed form. He is at once the amorphous creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he dupes others, and always ends up duping himself. Yet, through his transformative actions, values come into being. Radin (1972 [1956]) after careful consideration concluded that this dazzling figure is a genuine “*speculum mentis*” (Radin 1972 [1956]: xxiv). That is, the figure mirrors an archaic human psychic structure of extreme antiquity. Therefore, beyond its particular mythic functions, the Trickster also informs mankind’s psychic and existential history. [8] More specifically, the original plot of the cycle conveys

the vague memories of an archaic and primordial past, where there as yet existed no clear-cut differentiation between the divine and the non-divine. For this period Trickster is the symbol... The symbol which Trickster embodies is not a static one. It contains within itself the promise of differentiation, the promise of god and man. For this reason every generation occupies itself with interpreting Trickster anew. No generation understands him fully but no generation can do without him. Each had to include him in all its theologies, in all its cosmogonies, despite the fact that it realized that he did not fit properly into any of them, for he represents not only the undifferentiated and distant past, but likewise the undifferentiated present within every individual. This constitutes his universal and persistent attraction (Radin 1972 [1956]: 168–169).

Carl Jung and Károly Kerényi essentially agreed. At this point, Paul Radin clearly arrived at the third level of his triadic methodology.

Eranos and New Humanism

The extent to which Paul Radin’s place is obscured in disciplinary history can be debated, and it should be. It is rather revealing, though, that as of today there is no biography published about this prolific theorist and ethnographer. [9] Currently, the only proof that he should be treated as a well-defined classic paragon of anthropology is an almost unattainable *Festschrift* which was prepared in his honor after his death in 1959. The volume runs more than a thousand pages, and practically everyone who counted then in anthropology contributed, including Robert Redfield, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Claude Lévi-Strauss, even

Alfred Kroeber, but also Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade. At present, the only monograph written about him is entitled *Anthropology and Radical Humanism: Native and African American Narratives and the Myth of Race* (Glazier 2020). Perhaps it is telling that the same author published a piece entitled *Black Lives Mattered! Paul Radin (1883–1959)* in the Central States Anthropological Society's Fall Bulletin (Glazier 2018).

The monograph mostly focuses on Radin's work at Fisk University in the late 1920s and further, on his unpublished ethnographic materials collected among elderly African Americans from 1927 to 1930 about their religious experiences. Jack Glazier (2020) stresses Radin's liberalism and confusingly, his supposed radical humanism, even though this pseudo-philosophical concept was developed more than a decade later, around the mid-1940s by the Indian Marxist-Leninist radical Manabendra Nath Roy, whose militant ideas have nothing to do with Radin. According to Glazier (2020), Radin's work at Fisk is a momentous episode in American anthropology, epitomizing its "singularity among academic disciplines in sharing the methodological and interpretive goals of the black history movement" (Glazier 2020: 10). This self-serving approach deeply concerns me.

Yes, Paul Radin reacted to the rise of National Socialism with his *The Racial Myth* (1934) and one of the focal points of his analysis was the individual. [10] However, his leftist political leanings normally did not penetrate the core of his theories and methods. [11] The truth is that Eranos linked Radin to what Mircea Eliade called their "new humanism" (Eliade 2015: 150). Of course, this intellectual pursuit had nothing at all to do with radical left-wing activism, the Eranian quest for meaning actually being part of a much older tradition (Hakl 2014). No doubt, the area around Ascona exerted a magnetic attraction for those who settled there in search of the "new man" (Hakl 2014: 36). [12] The modern utopians who occupied the slopes of Monte Verità were clearly fascinated by new models aimed at the spiritual and physical elevation of man. [13] Some notable visitors included Hermann Hesse, Erich Maria Remarque, Hugo Ball, Stefan George, Isadora Duncan, Carl Eugen Keel, Paul Klee, Arnold Ehret, Rudolf Steiner, Rudolf von Laban, and Otto Gross (Landmann 1973). [14]

Further attendees were Max Weber, Gustav Stresemann, and Theodor Reuss, the occultist and head of O.T.O.(Ordo Templi Orientis), who organized a national congress on Monte Verità in 1917 covering topics such as mystic freemasonry, art, dance and ritual (Landmann 1973). The event also supposedly involved the private recitation of Aleister Crowley's Gnostic Mass. Initially, there were some connections between Fröbe-Kapteyn and the health-conscious settler colonists. However, these ties were loose since the foundress had a definite anti-communist attitude which clashed with the often anarchistic and socialist atmosphere of Monte Verità (Hakl 2014). [15] As Hakl (2015) illuminates, the Darmstadt Keyserling school run by the widely traveled Count Hermann Keyserling was a much more vital inspiration for the heiress. Here prominent participants included Leo Frobenius, Thomas Mann, Leo Adler, and Rabindranath Tagore.

It was no coincidence that some of the themes and lecturers from the School of Wisdom participated at Eranos some years later. Returning lecturers included Leo Baeck, Carl Jung,

Gerardus van de Leeuw, and Erwin Rousselle. The Keyserling school was formative for Fröbe-Kapteyn for various reasons. First, she most likely met Jung for the first time at the Schule der Weisheit (“School of wisdom”) (Hakl 2015). Second, at the private forums, she stumbled on an erudite group of intellectuals devoted to unearthing the common roots of religious convictions. Third, she likely discovered Sinologist Richard Wilhelm’s rendition of the *I Ching* at the school. Surely, the presentation of Wilhelm’s influential translation of the ancient oracular Chinese text in 1923 marked a turning point in the academic interpretation of the religious testimonies of non-European cultures (Merlini 2015).

The esoteric accounts of “others” were no longer merely ethnographic material, but full-scale expressions of spiritual realities and existential horizons. This was a crucial influence for Fröbe-Kapteyn and for Eranos, though the gatherings really demonstrated the contemporary scholarly need to integrate the findings of various academic disciplines to attain an “integral knowledge of man” (Eliade 2015: 150). As part of this quest, thanks to Carl Jung, Eranos offered considerable insight into the study archetypes, or into those “living fossils’ buried in the darkness of the unconscious” (Eliade 2015: 149). Indeed, new methods were developed to study those central modes of psychic life whose archaic domain retained its characteristics despite the evolutionary processes taking place (Merlini 2015).

In fact, one of the prime illustrations of such a psychic relic was Paul Radin’s Trickster. These discoveries were clearly part of the Zeitgeist and coincided with the disillusionment of the modern West. The disenchanting European spirit confronted non-European cultures and engaged in the cultural and political awakening of the Orient. [16] According to Mircea Eliade (2015), the members felt that a “new humanism” (Eliade 2015: 150) could develop out of such encounters with the “other”. Let me quote Eliade himself regarding the challenge of new humanism *in extenso*:

We will only say that at Ascona each speaker feels that his scientific creation acquires a new and deeper meaning in the degree to which he undertakes to present it as a contribution to the knowledge of man. It is realized too, that the new humanism that is here coming to birth could not be a replica of old-humanism. Eranos has more than sufficiently demonstrated the need to integrate the researches of orientalists, ethnologists, and historians of religion in order to attain an integral knowledge of man.

But there is something yet further, and perhaps yet more important. The researches of depth psychologists, ethnologists, orientalists, and historians of religions have constantly brought out the human interest, the psychological “truth”, and the spiritual value of countless symbols, myths, divine figures, and mystical techniques attested not only among Europeans and Asians but also among “primitives”.

Such human documents had previously been studied with the detachment and indifference with which nineteenth-century naturalists considered it proper to study insects. It now began to be realized that these documents express existential situations; that consequently, they form part of the history of the human spirit. But the proper procedure for grasping the

meaning of an existential situation is not the naturalist's "objectivity", but the intelligent sympathy of the hermeneut. *It was the procedure itself that had to be changed* (Eliade 2015: 149–150).

Mircea Eliade (2015) asserted that the lecturers at Eranos exhibited an exceptional interest in spiritual disciplines and mystical techniques. This inclination in part arose from the fact that they considered such phenomena capable of revealing a dimension of human existence that had been entirely distorted, and almost completely forgotten in modern societies. These spiritual and mystical phenomena represented the conquests of the human spirit that had been neglected or denied in the course of modern Western history. Eliade (2015) ultimately assumed that it would be tragically naïve to suppose that research could continue indefinitely on the simplistic and unsophisticated mental level on which he thought scholarly research was mostly conducted during those days.

He anticipated that a different and a more sensitive language would inevitably develop which could express traditional spiritual values and distinct existential horizons. Further, that the dialogue with the "other" would begin to take place not only in modern secularized, empirical and utilitarian language which can only approach human realities classifiable as social, political, and economic facts. Overall, Eliade (2015) hoped that the quest for new humanism was to develop an integrating dialogue with "others", and that with its pursuit, Eranos would contribute to the shaping of the modern psyche in its historical process. One might wonder whether he exhibited some unwarranted optimism.

Conclusion

In his essay written in Tehran in 1956, Henry Corbin envisioned a young historian in the future studying that curious phenomenon, Eranos. He imagined with some degree of melancholy that this researcher would identify ideological currents to grasp the distinct encounters (Corbin 2015). Corbin insisted that using historical methods the chronicler would fail to comprehend the scope, depth, and breadth of the phenomenon. Thus, he warned against a merely historical approach, and urged to observe Eranos as a singular and complex event to "discover not *what* explains Eranos, but *what* Eranos *ex-plains* by virtue of what it *im-plies*" (Corbin 2015: 214). To develop this argument, he also meditated on the meaning of time as it relates to Eranos. According to Corbin (2015), Eranos never tried to "be of its time" (Corbin 2015: 214). On the contrary, it succeeded "*to be its time, its own time*" (Corbin 2015: 214).

Moreover, it was by being its own time that it fulfilled its own meaning. Thereby Eranos voluntarily accepted the appearance of being untimely. He also proposed that Eranos was a sign which indicated "copresence itself" (Corbin 2015: 209). No doubt, Eranos brought together prominent scholars of the 20th century. In some way or another they were all participating in a unique quest to integrate findings across various academic disciplines, and the meetings were held with remarkable regularity for more than nine decades. Significantly, several distinguished anthropologists and ethnologists participated in this

endeavor. Yet not that many historical accounts of anthropology seem to acknowledge this scholarly effort. This obscuring leaning should also be examined as a sign, and as a phenomenon.

One of the concerns that disciplinary skepticism could level against the project is its supposed “esoteric” character. This is an extremely weak excuse. Esotericism in this context should be defined as the quest of a spiritually motivated path inwards. This inward journey to reawaken one’s real self corresponds to the principle of the Gnothi sauton or “Know-thyself” (Γνῶθι σαυτόν, *gnōthi sauton*) reinterpreted by Plato to know one’s soul (Plato 1952). Thus, the “esotericism” of Eranos is concerned with integration as “*descensus ad inferos = ascensus ad superos*” (Hakl 2014: 4). Certainly, Eranos has been a place where “one “puts one’s ear to the secret *stream* of time” and does not become lost in the fleeting fashions of the moment. This is what is “anachronistic” or, more accurately, “timeless” about Eranos” (Hakl 2014: 4). But the heuristic import does not end here.

Eranos also offered an alternate model of the “real” as the object of the human and social sciences based on the formula: “*individuum est ineffabile*” (Corbin 2015: 215). This epistemological horizon is relevant for several reasons. For example, some events take place in the imaginal and symbolic realm and not in the world of the rational intellect. Such phenomena can be recognized by the intellect but can only be fully expressed through appropriate methods and language. Here Henry Corbin’s (2014) exploration of the reality of the *mundus imaginalis* (*‘ālam al-mithāl*) or the imaginal realm is crucial. This is equally linked to a triadic system, “the triad of universes (sensible, imaginative, intelligible) corresponding to the anthropological triad of body, soul and spirit” (Corbin 2014: 57). Of central concern thereby is an advanced hermeneutic of the individual affirming both existential wholeness and multiplicity.

In addition, it was cultural anthropologist Gilbert Durand who offered a non-secular but well-founded triadic methodological antidote to the modern dogma of secular particularism and reductionist historicism. His own triadic approach addresses the reality of “L’imaginaire” instead of material reality (1969). Hermetic gnosis is also involved in this framework due to its non-separation of subject and object (Hakl 2014). Durand’s so-called “new anthropological spirit” (*nouvel esprit anthropologique*) likewise investigates novel epistemic domains that challenge the excesses of modern reductionism (1979). Importantly, he maintained that the traditional image of man has been disfigured over the centuries by different types of *-isms* (Durand 1979). Thus, the conceptualization of man cultivated in modern cultural anthropology has been profoundly distinct from traditional perceptions. Durand (1979) asserted that the break with the traditional image of the Anthropos (ἄνθρωπος) has been linked to certain disastrous events in Western history.

Such an event was the modern separation between man and the world which led to phenomenological reduction. This process, however, started in the early 13th century and also involved the transition from Avicenism to Averroism (Durand 1979). Two main antagonistic poles were formed which made direct knowledge of transcendence impossible:

the positivism of profane knowledge and the world of religious conviction both reduced to historical realities (Durand 1979). Accordingly, his ideas shifted towards an anthropology based on a perennial philosophy of man (Durand 1979). [17] So, an important heuristic point emerging from the Eranian project is this: religious, esoteric, mystical, or any other human phenomenon is neither the mere social scientific object of modern reductionism, nor the subjective or secular orientation of the modern researcher, and it should be handled that way. Indeed, “to approach a symbol, a myth, an archaic mode of behavior as an expression of an existential situation is in itself to give it human dignity and philosophical meaning” (Eliade 2015: 150).

An additional cause for disciplinary sidelining could be the difficulty of positioning Eranos in the various “borderland zones” of academic disciplines which Eranos took on for its exploration as its distinct paradigmatic task. At the conferences the experts spoke from “the very edge of their disciplines” (Miller 2015: 155). The lecturers at Eranos, including Paul Radin, were all mavericks exploring beyond the borders of their specializations looking for disciplinary encounters and integration. Thus, many of them were academic exiles. Radin was such an émigré whose goal was always to remain independent. Perhaps that scholarly exile was necessary to seek out integration and to escape hegemonic academic trends afflicted by secular dogmatism, inter alia.

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[1] Edward Sapir was hired to head the newly formed Anthropology Division at the Geological Survey of Canada in 1910. During his tenure he hired several ethnographers, including Marius Barbeau and James Teit, who was a collaborator of Franz Boas.

[2] Publications from this period include his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Ritual and Significance of the Winnebago Medicine Dance* (1911). The texts Radin collected on the Winnebago alone had grown to more than 10,000 pages.

[3] Radin reflected on various versions of three types of mythical narratives. The A version or *the Twins* found among the Plains Indians of North America, several tribes to the east of them, and among some tribes of the northwest coast of Canada. Further, the B version or *the Children of the Sun* found almost exclusively among the tribes of the southwest of the United States, and the C version found in South America (Radin 1950).

[4] In the light of this profound methodological problem, it is no wonder that cultural anthropologists generally do not sit well with Carl Jung or in fact, with any other universalist approach.

[5] Of course, this is not to say that all ritual dramas must be considered as responses to crisis situations since there are some exceptions.

[6] *The Trickster* (1956) was Paul Radin's very last book which he prepared for publication possibly at the prompting of Károly Kerényi once he turned seventy. "The Winnebago Trickster Cycle" (Part One) was obtained by one of Radin's principal informants Sam Blowsnake belonging to the Thunderbird clan in Nebraska. Radin (1972 [1956]) added, in Part Two, the "Winnebago Hare" myth in full and résumés of the Assiniboine and Tlingit Trickster myths.

[7] The Winnebago word for Trickster is *wakdjunkaga*, which means *the tricky one*. In Ponca, the

corresponding term is *ishtinke*, and in Dakota Sioux, *ikto-mi* which means spider. Radin (1972 [1956]) believed that the real etymology of *wakdjunkaga* is unknown.

[8] The core content of the Trickster myth has persisted unchanged throughout the millennia. As Radin (1972 [1956]) explains, it can be found among the ancient Greeks, the tribes of North and South America, the Chinese and the Japanese amongst others. The Trickster's characteristics were also preserved in the medieval jester and have survived up to the present in the figure of the clown.

[9] Sergei Kan's forthcoming intellectual biography about Paul Radin will finally remedy this negligence. This important work will be based on extensive archival data, just like the biography he recently published of Alexander Goldenweiser, who was another prominent American anthropologist of Jewish descent. As Kan illuminates (2021), Goldenweiser shared Paul Radin's and Edward Sapir's interest in the role of the individual in "primitive" society and he was likewise much more interested in broad theoretical concerns than many of his fellow "strict" Boasians. Therefore, this maverick anthropologist was actually more related to Paul Radin and Edward Sapir whose work he held in high esteem (Kan 2021).

[10] Note that Radin (1927) maintained that intellectual classes are essentially hierarchical. Also consider what his triadic methodology really entails. His focus on the individual involves only the first and second methodological levels. This should be superseded by the third level which exceeds the individual since it concerns the universal realm.

[11] This is not to say that the FBI did not investigate Paul Radin. For a discussion on the files of some of the American cultural anthropologists who were legally identified by the Bureau as Marxists, Socialists, or Communists during the era of McCarthyism, consult David Price's politically biased but factually enlightening book (2004). Notice that even Price (2004) remarks that despite his reported left-wing activities, Radin as an ethnographer rarely focused "on topics that might be expected of a Marxist or Communist theoretician, such as economic systems, political economy, or stratification" (Price 2004: 199). Let me add that when Radin did focus on topics such as economic systems as in his *Primitive Religion* (1937), he did not apply Marxist theoretical frameworks such as historical materialism.

[12] The settlement founders arrived from distinct directions in 1900. Henry Oedenkoven from Antwerp, the pianist Ida Hofmann from Montenegro, the artist Gusto, and his brother Karl Gräser from Transylvania. They renamed Monte Monescia the "Mountain of Truth" as they took over the hills. The group promoted a vegetarian diet, nudism, and theosophy amongst others (Landmann 1973).

[13] Henry Oedenkoven and Ida Hofmann, for instance, founded the Nature Healing Sanctuary Sun Sanatorium, which was followed by the Sanatorium Monte Verità (Landmann 1973). One of the early guests of this institution was the barefooted preacher Gustaf Nagel, who took a short break on Monte Verità in 1902 during his missionary journey from Arendsee to Jerusalem (Landmann 1973).

[14] Rudolf Attila von Laban, the well-known Hungarian choreographer and dance theoretician, opened his "School of Movement" on Monte Verità in 1913 (Landmann 1973). He continued to run his summer schools every year until 1917. In that same year he moved to Zürich to operate the O.T.O. Lodge called *Libertas et Fraternitas*.

[15] The alternative movements of Monte Verità were ideologically and politically diverse. Some groups for example based their ideas on *völkisch* elements. For a discussion of the political situation at Eranos situated in neutral Switzerland between 1933 and 1938, and during World War II turn to Hakl (2014). As Paul Radin's and Richard Thurnwald's (see Rohrbacher 2024) cases illustrate, individual Eranos lecturers' political and ideological affiliations were not only varied but also complex, and at times inconsistent, erratic, and even obscured. These relations should be addressed objectively and unearthed accurately with rigorous archival methods.

[16] Note that Edward Said (2003) does not mention Eranos in his post-structural bestseller entitled *Orientalism*, a volume which essentially reflects his subjective and secular outlook. An impartial, serious, and nuanced discussion of the topic is beyond the scope of this study.

[17] Gilbert Durand lectured at Eranos sixteen times between 1964 and 1988.