

Silvano Arieti

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It was the slim and dreamy face of a twenty-four-year-old man that appeared on the passport photo of Silvano Arieti, an Italian psychiatrist who emigrated to the United States after the enactment of the racial laws. Barely six months after graduating, the young man left Italy in January of 1939. After a brief stay in Switzerland and England, he arrived in New York in April of the same year, where, despite the many hardships linked to his immigration status, he would succeed at establishing himself as one of the most important psychiatrists of the 20th century. In 1955 he published *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*, a book of enormous fame and success, which was translated into many languages (including Japanese), and whose second edition, in 1974, won the National Book Award for the category dedicated to science.

His childhood in Pisa

Silvano Arieti's life was deeply connected to the wider human tragedy that marked Europe's history in the 20th century. A connection, moreover, that he himself repeatedly emphasized, when speaking about his birthdate: 28 June 1914, which is the same day of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo - the event that marked the beginning of World War I¹.

Silvano Arieti was born in Pisa, son of Elio Arieti, an internist with a track record as an assistant at the Medical clinic of the University², and Ines Bemporad, who came from a merchant family. His maternal grandfather, Giacomo Bemporad, was a prominent figure in the Pisan Jewish community: he arrived from Piedmont as a street vendor; in Pisa he succeeded in creating a viable chain of stores; and it was

¹ Ian Alger, *The Intellect and Humanism of Silvano Arieti*, «Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis», 11, 1983, pp. 15-34. On Silvano Arieti's biography see Roberta Passione, *La forza delle idee. Silvano Arieti: una biografia, 1914-1981*, Milan, Mimesis, 2020.

² As such it appears on Elio Arieti's letterhead paper preserved in the archive in Washington. See Library of Congress, Washington DC (LC), Manuscript Division (MD), Silvano Arieti Papers (SAP), f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Arieti, Elio, 1914-1969».

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in one of these, managed by his grandmother, where Silvano spent many of his childhood afternoons, observing with interest the multifaceted characters who crowded it: almost «a living theater filled with characters in search of a would-be psychiatrist: the usurer, the alcoholic, the mother of prostitutes [...], the pauper, the derelict as well as the affluent and the aristocrat»³. He attended the elementary school of the Pisan Jewish Congregation where, besides learning how to read and write, he also learned a simple, pristine and clear way of thinking that he would later attribute to the teachings of his beloved teacher, Luisa Orvieto⁴. He had a peaceful childhood.

His adolescence was instead more troubled; during this time a deep conflict arose between Silvano and his father. Elio Arieti, who harbored a profound and desperate dislike for Mussolini, could not make sense of his son's liking for the Duce: «Mussolini became the hero... for me, too, when I was ten to thirteen years old»⁵. In 1929 he enrolled in the Liceo classico Galileo Galilei. Humanistic studies engrossed him. The classics of Greek tragedy, Shakespeare, Pirandello and Vico enthralled and ravished him. And he was fascinated by the work of Dante, of whom, not by chance, he will later keep a marble bust in his American studio⁶.

He also had a strong passion for writing, which manifested itself in the many stories and screenplays contained in the notebooks of his youth. He even used to speak at length about literature and philosophy with his dearest friends and fellow classmates, engaging with them in long discussions that would usually continue on the pages of his diaries, like a continual dialogue that flowed without interruptions⁷.

³ Marianne Arieti, *Silvano Arieti. A Profile*, «Newsletter. Society of Medical Psychoanalysts», 9, 1969, pp. 29 and 43-44. See also Silvano Arieti, *The Parnas*, New York, Basic Books, 1979; Ital. trans. *Il Parnàs*, Milan, Mondadori, 1980; *Il Parnàs*, Pisa, ETS, 2012.

⁴ See Id., *The Parnas*, cit. See also the dedication to Orvieto in Id., *Creativity: The Magic Synthesis*, New York, Basic Books, 1976; Ital. trans. *Creatività. La sintesi magica*, Rome, Il Pensiero scientifico, 1979.

⁵ Id., *The Will To Be Human*, New York, Quadrangle Books, 1972, p. 86.

⁶ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Photographs, circa 1929-1976».

⁷ Ibid., f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Education - Workbooks, circa 1930». On Arieti as a writer see James Arieti, *The Literary Ambitions and Storytelling Art of Silvano Arieti*, «Academy Forum», 60, 2016, pp. 11-14.

His studies in medicine

After earning his *maturità classica* [high school diploma], in 1932 Silvano Arieti switched «from literary metaphysical discussions [...] to anatomy»,⁸ and decided to enroll in the Facoltà di Medicina [School of Medicine] of the University of Pisa⁹. It was a choice that had nothing to do with the «religion of science» of positivist memory, which had attracted many young people of the previous generation towards medicine. For Arieti this rather reflected two different but intertwined drives: on one hand, a somehow romantic vision of nature, conceived as a marvelous and superhuman intelligence that imposes its harsh laws by driving us inexorably towards death; on the other, the will to follow in his father's footsteps, for whom he felt - apart from conflict - a sincere admiration and profound respect: «guilty is nature», he wrote, in fact, addressing Elio Arieti, «and holy is that *schiera* [TN: a recurrent term in Dante's *Commedia* to indicate a company of people] to which you [...] belong and which, in the name of science, gives man a ray of hope, and consoles him with the illusion of temporarily warding off the mystery of death and of the unknown [...]»¹⁰.

With an excellent résumé, Silvano Arieti in his university years developed a particular interest in psychiatry - a discipline which for him, an enthusiastic investigator of inner turmoil, was «the form of medicine closest to the writing of tragedy»¹¹. Thus, he began to attend the Clinic of nervous and mental disorders directed by Giuseppe Ayala, a pupil of Mingazzini who had graduated in Rome in 1905. Ayala introduced Arieti to the study of the most recent and cutting-edge developments in neurology, directing him - among other things - to the reading

⁸ As stated by Arieti in a letter to his friend Giacomo Dirindelli, n.d., held in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Education - Workbooks, circa 1930».

⁹ ASUPi, f. «Silvano Arieti». See also *Curriculum Vitae of Sylvan Arieti*, n.d., typescript, in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Curriculum Vitae, 1940-circa 1980». On the Medical School in Pisa see Stefano Arieti, *Gli anni pisani di Silvano Arieti*, in R. Bruschi (edited by), *Uno psichiatra tra due culture. Silvano Arieti 1914-1981*, Pisa, ETS, 2001, pp. 81-90; Mario Del Tacca and Giuseppe Pasqualetti, *La medicina alla Sapienza pisana*, «Annali di storia delle Università italiane», 4, 2010, pp. 217-227.

¹⁰ S. Arieti, untitled manuscript, in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Education - Workbooks, circa 1930».

¹¹ James Arieti, *Ricordi del figlio di uno psichiatra*, in R. Bruschi (edited by), *Uno psichiatra tra due culture*, cit., p. 33.

of Kurt Goldstein¹².

What drove Silvano Arieti towards psychiatry was also the acquaintance with Pardo Roques, *parnas* [head] of the Pisan Jewish community, whose intellectual salon young Arieti regularly attended during his university years. A figure of high intellectual and moral stature, Roques suffered from a serious phobic disorder that did not allow him to travel too far from home, and that forced his daily life into a terrible slavery: a state that led Arieti to ask himself about the contradictions of the human condition, and which represented a further push for him towards psychiatry¹³.

In Pardo Roques' salon: his encounter with psychoanalysis

In Roques' salon, characterized by a special fusion of Jewish intellectualism and lively cosmopolitanism, Arieti saw his horizons broaden on a vast world unknown to him. Here he heard for the first time about Martin Buber and existentialism; here he met Nahum Sokolow, who was at the helm of the World Zionist Organization at that time; here he also had the opportunity to encounter that psychological and psychoanalytical culture that his university education, in line with the organicist tradition of Italian psychiatry at the time, did not allow him to acquire¹⁴. At Pardo's home he actually heard for the first time about Janet and Stanley Hall, about Weiss and Freud. More precisely, he was introduced to the work of the father of psychoanalysis by Enzo Bonaventura, who was also a guest in the Pisan salon. Arieti thus began to compensate autonomously, through self-study, for the lack of a psychological and psychodynamic instruction that was completely disregarded in university education. Recognizing the enthusiasm and skills of his pupil, Ayala, to whom Arieti attributed this interest of his, did, so to speak, what he could: if he did not help Arieti to delve into this field of study when he was taking his course, at least he allowed him to approach some patients at the psychiatric clinic, in order

¹² See Silvano Arieti, *Schizophrenic Thought*, «American Journal of Psychotherapy», 13, 1959, pp. 537-552.

¹³ Id., *The Parnas*, cit.

¹⁴ See Valeria P. Babini, *Liberi tutti. Manicomi e psichiatri in Italia: una storia del Novecento*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2009.

to put his readings to the test. That is how Arieti met Pietro, his first patient, with whom he attempted - with the few skills that he had developed thus far - a psychological therapy¹⁵.

On 15 July 1938 Silvano Arieti graduated with honors in medicine, with a thesis titled *Contributo allo studio delle encefalomieliti* [Contribution to the study of encephalomyelitis], under the supervision of Ayala, Cassano and Monasterio. In addition, with Igino Spadolini he discussed a short oral thesis on the adjustment of muscular tone «by means of proprioceptive reflexes»¹⁶.

His joy for this amazing achievement however was tragically marred on 14 July 1938 by the publication in the «Giornale d'Italia» of the article *Il Fascismo e i problemi della razza*, whose content paved the way for the racial laws of the following autumn. «Jews don't belong to the Italian race»: seven repugnant words that marked a dramatic turning point in Silvano Arieti's life, intertwined, yet again, with the most far-reaching human tragedy of his time.

Escape from Italy

The summer of 1938 must certainly have not been a happy period in Silvano Arieti's life. The young man spent it at the Ospedali riuniti Santa Chiara, where shortly before his graduation he started to work as an intern¹⁷. At home the opportunity to leave the country was continually discussed. Silvano was greatly torn¹⁸. He did not want to leave, but at the same time he could not help but witness, with growing fear, the antisemitic legislative escalation that had been set in motion. In September, he received from Ayala a certification confirming his particular aptitude

¹⁵ See S. Arieti, *The Parnas*, cit.

¹⁶ ASUPi, f. «Silvano Arieti», Facoltà di Medicina e chirurgia, «Verbale degli Esami di Laurea in Medicina e Chirurgia, addì 15 luglio 1938».

¹⁷ «Regia Università degli Studi di Pisa. Libretto Diario del Sig. Arieti Silvano», in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Education, University of Pisa, Italy, 1938-1940, 1965». This is a document on which the activities that Arieti carried out for his internship at the Medical, Surgical and Obstetric-gynecological clinics are reported.

¹⁸ On his anguish prior to his decision to leave Italy see LC, MD, SAP, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - The Parnas - Correspondence, 1976-1980», letter from Paolo Decina to Silvano Arieti, 10 November 1979.

for neuropsychiatry¹⁹. He applied for a passport, which was issued to him on 31 December 1938 and which allowed him to go to France and Switzerland, but not to England or the United States²⁰.

On the night of 11 January 1939 Silvano hugged and kissed his parents, who had decided to stay in Pisa, and fled from «Mussolini's hordes»²¹. Everything happened quickly and in great secrecy. He barely managed to say goodbye to Pardo Roques - who entrusted him his copy of Bonaventura's *La psicoanalisi*, to bring with him - and to some friends. Not all of them, though. In fact, he was unable to meet his dearest friend, Giacomo, who would die in war²². And he could not take the State medical licensing examination, for which he had already applied²³.

From Lausanne to New York

In Switzerland, where his brother Giulio joined him, he stayed in Lausanne. Here he attended the University psychiatric clinic of Bois de Cery,²⁴ which he would always remember with a sense of gratitude and fond nostalgia²⁵. In this period he also acquainted himself with four Polish students, three of whom would die in concentration camps²⁶.

In March 1939, thanks to their cousin Yolanda Bemporad, who had preceded them along with her husband Gian Paolo, the Arieti brothers obtained a visa for England and departed for London, where they waited for the necessary time to obtain the

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Education, University of Pisa, Italy, 1938-1940, 1965».

²⁰ Silvano Arieti's passport, in *ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Family Passports, 1938-1968».

²¹ Silvano Arieti, *Some Memories and Personal Views*, «Contemporary Psychoanalysis», 5, 1968, p. 85.

²² The notice of his death was given to Arieti by Aldo Ballerini, a mutual friend, in a letter dated 29 August 1948.

²³ See the document dated 7 March 1939, with which the secretary of the School of Medicine of Pisa informs Elio Arieti that they will not be able to reimburse his son the fees paid for the admission to the State exam that he did not take. In LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Arieti, Elio, 1914-1969».

²⁴ See, in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Education - University of Pisa, Pisa, Italy 1938-1940, 1965» the statement by Hans Steck, director of the Clinic, certifying Silvano Arieti's attendance from 1 February to 4 March 1939.

²⁵ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1970-1972», letter from Silvano Arieti to Christian Müller, 12 April 1971.

²⁶ Arieti will find this out in 1965, by means of a letter sent to him by the only survivor of the group of the four young men. See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1958-1967», letter from Roman Rossleigh to Silvano Arieti, 17 October 1965.

visa of intercontinental expatriation. Here Silvano Arieti - who knew a bit of French but did not speak a single word of English²⁷ - turned to some emigrant relatives of his first patient Pietro, who helped the two young men during the days that separated them from their departure for America. In the end, on 1 April Silvano and Giulio boarded the Queen Mary headed to New York. They traveled with their cousins Vana and Enrico Bemporad and their children, Jack and Jules. The voyage lasted five days, at the end of which they disembarked on Ellis Island - a storied place of entrance to the United States for millions of immigrants hailing from all over the world²⁸.

In America the paths of the two brothers divided: Giulio headed to Miami, where Yolanda had started a business²⁹, while Silvano stayed in New York, where Ayala had directed him to Columbia University, and more specifically to the Department of Neuropathology at the New York Psychiatric Institute, directed by Armando Ferraro, a neuropathologist of Egyptian origins who was educated in France, with Pierre Marie, and in Italy, with Luigi Luciani and Giovanni Mingazzini³⁰.

His hardships during his first years in America

Silvano Arieti was welcomed with attention and care at the Department of Neuropathology. Since he did not know the language, he could not work directly with patients; therefore, Ferraro assigned him some experimental research, and was able to get him a scholarship from the Dazian Foundation for Medical Research³¹. However, despite Ferraro's kindness and attention, Arieti's first encounter with the New York Psychiatric Institute, which was directed by Nolan Lewis in those years,

²⁷ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Alphabetical file - M-Q miscellaneous, 1956-1981», letter from Silvano Arieti to Steven Moll, 28 October 1975.

²⁸ See the travel booklet of the Queen Mary, *Queen Mary. Saturday April 1, 1939. List of Tourist Passengers*, in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Mementos, 1955-1969». The names of the Arietis and the Bemporads also appear in the registers of the «Statue of Liberty - Ellis Island Foundation».

²⁹ See the rich correspondence between the two brothers in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981».

³⁰ Leon Roizin, *In Memoriam. Armando Ferraro, M.D. (1896-1982)*, «Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology», 42, 1983, pp. 213-215.

³¹ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Curriculum Vitae, 1940-circa 1980», *Curriculum Vitae of Sylvan Arieti*, typewritten.

was not simple. Due to his linguistic limitations, the young man experienced a strong sense of inadequacy and embarrassment³². Despite that, armed with an ironbound will and determination, he soon started to familiarize himself a bit with the language - both because he studied a lot and also thanks to his first American friendships, that he formed in the classroom at Columbia, where he participated in psychiatric seminars³³. This was how in December 1939, after eight months since his arrival in America, Silvano Arieti managed to pass the English exam for foreigners³⁴. He certainly was not yet fluent in the language, but this was still an important first step, which the young man did not fail to share with his parents by letter³⁵.

In the meantime, with the deadline of the scholarship approaching, Silvano Arieti had contacted the Medical Bureau of Chicago, an office that collected the job applications of doctors and directed them for employment to various hospitals in the country. He had however received negative feedback: since he was still without a United States medical practice license, finding a hospital willing to welcome him as a medical resident turned out to be impossible³⁶. The young man had felt deeply discouraged. Getting the license was not easy: first of all, he needed to get an official document from the American Consulate in Italy formally validating his Italian degree; this document, however, had yet to be issued to him³⁷. After that, he needed to be an American citizen, or at least obtain an official registration document as a «foreigner» from the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the Department of Justice. This however was also a complicated process, with very long

³² Silvano Arieti, *On Schizophrenia, Phobias, Depression, Psychotherapy and the Farther Shores of Psychiatry*, New York, Brunner-Mazel, 1978, p. IX.

³³ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Alphabetical file - M-Q miscellaneous, 1956-1981», letter from Silvano Arieti to Marie Coleman Nelson, 21 May 1974.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Certificates, 1940-1975».

³⁵ LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Elio and Ines Arieti to Silvano Arieti, n.d.: «Dearest Silvano, with great joy we have received your very dear letter with the amazing news that you passed the English exam. You cannot imagine how much happiness the successful outcome of your exam has brought. I am sure that you have a good future ahead of you and that you will become a real scientist, as you used to write in your letters to me when you were little».

³⁶ *Ibid.*, letter from Burneice Larson (director of the Medical Bureau) to Silvano Arieti, 4 August 1939.

³⁷ Arieti will finally be able to come into possession of the degree validation only in May 1940. See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Certificates, 1940-1975».

waiting times: suffice it to say that Arieti would receive his «Alien Registration Card n. 2437770» only in February 1942³⁸.

In short, in his new American life the young man was forced, from the very start, to contend daily with the hardships linked to his immigrant status. Discouraged, he wrote to his parents about feeling tired, unexpectedly aged. Ines and Elio Arieti responded trying to hearten him: by treating the exceptionality of his status as a part of a physiological process of growth, they tried to subdue the harshness of a life on the line, and instill hope and courage in him. «Don't think about being old» - his father wrote to him - «at your age, one certainly needs to struggle a little to find one's own place». «I'm sorry that you tell me that you feel old» - Ines Arieti reiterated; «instead, you study too much. So I beg you to take care of your own health. Do me this favor, care for yourself, try to be well and don't study excessively as you usually do. One day you will be a great professor, a grown man, but not at all old, and you will instead find me a bit gray-haired, but always at peace and strong»³⁹.

His experience at Yale

In May 1940 Silvano Arieti left the New York Psychiatric Institute for a few months to go to Yale, to the Primate Biology Laboratories, a research center directed by Robert Yerkes. Yerkes, who had been president of the American Psychological Association (1917), was a prominent figure in American psychology. A leader in functional psychology, in 1909 he had introduced Ivan Pavlov's work in the United States, giving momentum to a new season of experimental behavioral studies⁴⁰. And it was precisely because of this that Arieti went to Yale (where other European and Italian exiles, among whom Massimo Calabresi and Arturo Castiglioni, studied and worked): to learn the basics of behavioral research for some studies on the

³⁸ Ibid., f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Naturalization Documents, 1940-1943».

³⁹ LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Elio and Ines Arieti to Silvano Arieti, 17 May 1940; letter from Elio and Ines Arieti to Silvano Arieti, 10 June 1940.

⁴⁰ Robert M. Yerkes and Sergius Morgulis, *The Method of Pavlov in Animal Psychology*, «The Psychological Bulletin», 6, 1909, pp. 257-273.

functions of cerebral lobes in monkeys that he intended to apply in New York, with Ferraro⁴¹.

Yerkes was immediately won over by this very young man, who was as intelligent, serious and impassioned as shy and clumsy because of his linguistic difficulties, and he immediately showed a kind regard for him. In short, he took his situation to heart: so much so that he spontaneously decided to write to Emanuel Libman, president of the Dazian Foundation, to advocate for the renewal of his scholarship⁴². His advocacy was successful, and finally the young man was able to catch his breath for a while⁴³.

In July 1940 Silvano Arieti went back to the New York Psychiatric Institute, where, besides resuming ongoing studies,⁴⁴ he worked hard at continuing the research he had begun at Yale. Due to the war in Europe, however, he ran into some difficulties with the organization of the laboratory: he was supposed to get some monkeys, which the Institute did not have, but the international situation made the shipment of the animals from abroad complicated. He therefore had to wait a few months,⁴⁵ but in the end he was able to set up a well-equipped laboratory, which he used to show with pride to his colleagues who would visit him from Connecticut⁴⁶.

Meanwhile, however, the renewal of the scholarship was about to expire, and for Arieti it became even more urgent to find a job that would allow him to support

⁴¹ *Curriculum Vitae of Silvano Arieti*, 5 July 1940, typewritten, in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Curriculum Vitae, 1940-circa 1980».

⁴² LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Robert M. Yerkes to Robert A. Lambert, 26 June 1940; *ibid.*, letter from Robert M. Yerkes to Emanuel Libman, 27 June 1940.

⁴³ The scholarship was renewed until November of 1941. See *ibid.*, letter from the Dazian Foundation to Silvano Arieti, 5 May 1941.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Curriculum Vitae, 1940-circa 1980», *Curriculum Vitae of Silvano Arieti*, 5 July 1940, typescript. This research would get published at a later time, and specifically: Silvano Arieti, *Histopathological Changes in Experimental Metrazol Convulsions in Monkey*, «American Journal of Psychiatry», 98, 1941, pp. 70-76; Armando Ferraro and Silvano Arieti, *Cerebral Changes in the Course of Pernicious Anemia and Their Relationship to Psychic Symptoms*, «Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology», 5, 1945, pp. 217-239; Silvano Arieti, *General Paresis in Senility. Critical Review of the Literature and Clinico-Pathologic Report of Six Cases*, «American Journal of Psychiatry», 101, 1945, pp. 585-593.

⁴⁵ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Silvano Arieti to Robert M. Yerkes, 12 July 1940; letter from Walter Grether to Silvano Arieti, 16 July 1940; letter from Silvano Arieti to Robert M. Yerkes, 26 October 1940.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, letter from S. Arieti to Robert B. Malmo, 18 March 1941.

himself. Again, notwithstanding his solid scientific background and experiences at Columbia and Yale, finding a hospital willing to accept him as a resident turned out to be nearly impossible, since he was still without the necessary documents to take the medical licensing exam.

The help of Robert M. Yerkes

At this point, Robert Yerkes intervened again to try to break the deadlock by writing to some of his psychiatric acquaintances to promote the cause of this dedicated young man⁴⁷. He immediately received a response from Arthur Ruggles, superintendent of Butler Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island, who informed him about the availability of a position at Pilgrim State Hospital in Brentwood, but he also told him that he himself was in search of medical interns for his institute⁴⁸. So, having also been supported by Ferraro's recommendation,⁴⁹ Silvano Arieti went to Providence for a job interview in August 1941, hoping that this would be his chance. The outcome, however, was not what he hoped for: given his lacking proficiency in the language, which could be an obstacle with the patients, Ruggles in fact decided to hire another candidate⁵⁰. Discouraged and dejected, Arieti reported on what happened to Robert Yerkes with these words:

Dear Dr. Yerkes [...], I am writing to you in relation to my conference with Dr. Ruggles. A few days after his return from vacation, Dr. Ruggles interviewed me in Providence, and very kindly welcomed me. He mentioned your recommendation and had many words of encouragement for me. However [...], on Tuesday September 2nd I received a letter [...] in which he notified me that he did not consider it convenient to appoint me because even a slight linguistic handicap is not well accepted by private patients. Accordingly, as you can well imagine, Dr. Yerkes, this experience left me quite discouraged.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Ibid., letter from Robert M. Yerkes to Silvano Arieti, 9 July 1941.

⁴⁸ Ibid., letter from Robert M. Yerkes (under the signature of Helen Marford, Yerkes' secretary) to Silvano Arieti, 11 July 1941.

⁴⁹ Ibid., letter from Armando Ferraro to Arthur Ruggles, 25 August 1941.

⁵⁰ Ibid., letter from Arthur Ruggles to Silvano Arieti, 29 August 1941; letter from Arthur Ruggles to Armando Ferraro, 29 August 1941.

⁵¹ Ibid., letter from Silvano Arieti to Robert M. Yerkes, 4 September 1941.

So it was that the doors of the Pilgrim State Hospital, «the largest psychiatric hospital in the world»,⁵² opened wide for Arieti, a hospital where his «linguistic handicap» did not have much importance: first and foremost, because here the inmates were not paying patients; and then because his humble job was essentially that of surveilling the patients in the wards, a task for which speaking counted for little.

On 1 Novembre 1941 Silvano Arieti passed through the gates of Pilgrim,⁵³ where he would remain until 1946. Five long and hard years, but also, unexpectedly, so rich from the scientific and human point of view.

In the world's largest psychiatric hospital

Silvano Arieti's stay at Pilgrim was certainly not easy. It was the world's largest psychiatric hospital, which experienced an exponential increase in its population during the years of the war. To get there one would take the Long Island Rail Road train - almost a sinister detail reminiscent of European concentration camps.

In this dismal scenery, characterized by a chaotic overcrowding, Arieti found himself face to face with the human devastation of insanity, in an infernal bolgia that put his shy and reserved disposition to the hard test. He lodged in a room of the apartments reserved for the staff and was totally absorbed by the daily tasks that were assigned to him: a job mainly as a guard, which exhausted and stunned him on account of its bureaucratic monotony⁵⁴.

In all this, however, Silvano Arieti at least had the luck to meet at Pilgrim an important figure for his future: he had in fact been assigned to the supervision of Newton Bigelow, the first medical assistant of the Institute at the time, who understood the young man's discomfort:

⁵² S. Arieti, *On Schizophrenia, Phobias, Depression*, cit., p. IX.

⁵³ Arieti was hired by Pilgrim, as a medical resident, with a yearly salary of 1,800 dollars. See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Position appointments, 1941-1961», letter from Harry J. Worthing (superintendent of Pilgrim) to Silvano Arieti, 3 October 1941.

⁵⁴ Jules Bemporad, *In Memoriam. Silvano Arieti 1914-1981*, «Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis», 9, 1981, p. III. See also Gerard Chrzanowski, *Profile: Silvano Arieti*, n.d., typescript, in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Profile, undated».

he realized that I had only been in this country for a short time. I could barely communicate in broken English. I had very few friends and I was unfamiliar with the American ways. In spite of all these shortcomings, Dr. Bigelow recognized in me a real concern for the mentally ill and a desire to do research, and he helped me as much as he could.

More precisely, Bigelow invited the young Arieti to use the mental hospital's rich clinical material as an opportunity for scientific growth, and on this path he helped him with the publication of his first work as a medical resident at Pilgrim: «needless to say, my English at that time was so poor that I would not have been able to write the paper without help. Dr. Bigelow went over the paper with me correcting grammar, syntax, spelling and style»⁵⁵.

From «foreigner» to American citizen

The mental hospital was also the place where Arieti began to plant more solid roots in his new American life, and that precisely happened starting from the language, for which Pilgrim turned out to be a very precious training place: it was in fact with schizophrenics, whose surveillance had been assigned to him, that he learned to fully master the English language. In the later phases of the illness, in fact, these patients usually expressed themselves with that bizarre way of speaking that psychiatric treatises, from Kraepelin onwards, had defined as 'word salad', that is an incoherent and nonsensical speech. For Arieti, who had arrived at Pilgrim without a full command of English, the confrontation with this aspect of his daily job certainly represented a very hard obstacle to overcome. Yet, that was exactly how the young man was finally able to settle into his second language⁵⁶. In this regard, however, he was also helped⁵⁷ by his relationship with Jane Jaffe, who he married in December 1941⁵⁷. When he could, Arieti joined her in their home on Creston Avenue, in the Bronx, where he had changed his residence to and where

⁵⁵ Ibid., S. Arieti, *My Chance and Luck in Crossing Dr Bigelow's Path*, 1972, typescript. The article in question is Silvano Arieti, *Frontal Lobe Tumor Expanding Into the Ventricle. Clinicopathologic Report*, «Psychiatric Quarterly», 17, 1943, pp. 227-240.

⁵⁶ Roberta Passione, *Language and Psychiatry: The Contribution of Silvano Arieti Between Biography and Cultural History*, «European Yearbook of the History of Psychology», 4, 2018, pp. 11-36.

⁵⁷ The two will get divorced in 1965. See the documentation contained in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Divorce, 1964-1965».

he registered his medical license, which he finally obtained in November of 1942 after receiving the official registration document as a «foreigner» from the Immigration Service⁵⁸. In the meantime his paperwork to acquire citizenship was also moving along. This lengthy process ended on 31 August 1943, the day when Arieti finally became an American citizen⁵⁹.

The following year, in the spring, Arieti received the certification in psychiatry and neurology from the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology,⁶⁰ which allowed him to work as a specialist in this field. Meanwhile, his job with the schizophrenics at Pilgrim began to bear fruit. Arieti dedicated close attention to the study of this illness. He filled his notebooks with notes on the way these patients feel and think⁶¹. He carefully studied Bleuler's work, which for him - still lacking an education in psychodynamics - represented a first useful instrument to orient himself in the world of schizophrenia⁶². In 1944 he published his first article on this disorder. Many others would follow.

The years spent at Pilgrim were therefore rich in important scientific achievements for Silvano Arieti. Nevertheless, they were also very distressing years from a personal standpoint. The war in Europe had reached its most tragic phase, and the thought of his family members' fate profoundly anguished him. Every day he would rush to buy the daily paper to follow the events in Italy⁶³. So, driven by the desire to do something, to give his contribution and to respond with facts to the anxiety and the sense of impotence that gripped him when he would read the newspapers, in November 1943 Arieti requested the Department of War to serve in the military.

⁵⁸ See *License to Practise Medicine and Surgery in the State of New York and Certificate. County Clerk's Office. County of Bronx*, 15 December 1942; both in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File. 1914-1981 - Personal - Certificates, 1940-1975».

⁵⁹ See *ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Naturalization Documents, 1940-1943».

⁶⁰ Arieti was informed of the positive outcome of the exam by Walter Freeman, secretary of the Board. See *ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Position appointments, 1941-1961», letter from Walter Freeman to Silvano Arieti, 16 May 1944.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - Miscellany - Notes».

⁶² Arieti refers, specifically, to Eugen Bleuler, *Textbook of Psychiatry*, New York, Macmillan Company, 1924.

⁶³ Silvano Arieti's archive preserves numerous copies of the «New York Times» and the «Herald Tribune» of those days. Arieti also speaks about his state of mind while reading these pages in *The Parnas*, cit.

His request however was declined because during the conflict, the United States government implemented a job freeze for all public officials⁶⁴. Not being able to leave Pilgrim, neither to enlist nor to look for employment elsewhere⁶⁵, Arieti had to temporarily resign himself to staying at the world's largest mental hospital, which he would be able to leave only once the war was over.

After the war: his training at the William Alanson White Institute

In 1946, after the war, Silvano Arieti left Pilgrim, starting a new phase of his professional and personal life. With his wife and son David, born in June 1945, he settled in New York, where he began to collaborate with several hospitals as a consultant neuropsychiatrist. There he met Claudio Gerbi, who became his friend as well as his family doctor⁶⁶. In 1946 he opened his own private studio in Manhattan⁶⁷. Moreover he could finally hug his parents again: in 1947 he joyfully welcomed his father, who went to visit him in America, while the following year it was the turn of Ines Arieti, who joined her son on the eve of the birth of her second grandson, James⁶⁸.

Silvano Arieti's private practice in this period was limited to neurology and clinical psychiatry, while it excluded psychoanalysis, a discipline in which he was still only self-taught. After leaving Pilgrim, however, Arieti decided to fill this gap and applied to the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, which however declined his application to be admitted as a student⁶⁹. He turned then to the William Alanson

⁶⁴ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Position appointments, 1941-1961», letters from the War Department-Army Service Forces to Silvano Arieti, 23 November 1943 and 31 December 1943.

⁶⁵ Silvano Arieti would have liked to follow Newton Bigelow, who had moved in the meantime to the Department of Mental hygiene in Albany, and who would have gladly welcomed him to work with him. Because of the «freezing» rule laid down by the authorities, however, that was not possible. See *ibid.*, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Newton Bigelow to Silvano Arieti, 2 March 1945.

⁶⁶ I wish to thank James Arieti for this information.

⁶⁷ See R. Passione, *La forza delle idee*, cit.

⁶⁸ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Giulio Arieti to Silvano Arieti, 9 August 1947; telegram from Gian Paolo Rocca to Ines Arieti, 7 May 1948; telegram from Elio Arieti to Silvano Arieti, 13 May 1948.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, letter from Silvano Arieti to Bettina Warburg, 7 December 1946; letter from Sidney Char to Silvano Arieti, 12 March 1947.

White Institute, the headquarters of a psychoanalysis that was not aligned with Freudian orthodoxy but rather oriented towards a cultural and interpersonal approach, following the path marked by Erich Fromm and Harry Stack Sullivan. This time his application was successful, and in 1947 Arieti made his first entrance in the WAWI, then directed by Clara Thompson,⁷⁰ where Janeth Rioch was his supervisor and where he had the opportunity to meet Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, who also escaped from Europe because of Nazism⁷¹.

Fromm-Reichmann's teaching was very important for Arieti, who besides appreciating her pluralist approach, was enthralled by her conception of the mental illness as a tragic downfall of a common human condition: it is from her that he learned that «the numberless ways, the infinite nuances with which people love or hate, help or hurt one another, in no other condition can be better observed than in the study of schizophrenic disorder»⁷². More specifically, what impressed him was Fromm-Reichmann's reflection on solitude as an extreme human experience that schizophrenia discloses⁷³. Solitude was in fact a topic that went beyond the perimeter of schizophrenia: more generally, Arieti wondered, «what does the cry of loneliness mean to any human being?»⁷⁴. A concept, a feeling, which the English language articulated with many different words - alone, lonely, aloneness, loneliness, solitude - that had no direct equivalent in Italian but whose various nuances the young psychiatrist personally knew, having experienced them during his first difficult years in America⁷⁵; and he was finally able to free himself from them thanks to the experience he gained at the WAWI, where, more than in all his other apprenticeships, he really understood that «one becomes a person by virtue

⁷⁰ Ibid., letter from Clara Thompson to Silvano Arieti, 3 June 1947.

⁷¹ See Gail A. Hornstein, *To Redeem One Person Is to Redeem the World. The Life of Frieda Fromm-Reichmann*, New York, The Free Press, 2000.

⁷² LC, MD, SAP, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - Lectures», *Response to the Presentation of the Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Award by Silvano Arieti, MD, Boston, May 11, 1968*, typescript. This speech was later published, with some changes, in S. Arieti, *Some Memories and Personal Views*, cit.

⁷³ See Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, *Sulla solitudine*, in Ead., *Psicoanalisi e psicoterapia*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1964.

⁷⁴ S. Arieti, *Some Memories and Personal Views*, cit., p. 88.

⁷⁵ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Silvano Arieti to Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, 9 June 1956; letter from Frieda Fromm-Reichmann to Silvano Arieti, 15 June 1956.

of relations with other human beings and not of inborn instinctual drives»⁷⁶.

In 1952 Silvano Arieti ended his educational program at the WAWI and received a diploma in psychoanalysis⁷⁷. He was no longer the skinny, shy and clumsy boy he once was. He had acquired a new personal and professional staunchness that also manifested itself physically, in a burlier figure than before⁷⁸. By this time, he was a renowned psychiatrist - in 1948 he had achieved prominence with an original article titled *Special Logic of Schizophrenic and Other Types of Autistic Thought*⁷⁹. He was also an important point of reference for his family and friends, in America as well as in Italy. In short, in the New world he was no longer a foreigner, but he was growing solid roots.

His fame as an American psychiatrist

Among the many tasks that occupied Silvano Arieti after leaving Pilgrim was also his teaching job at the Department of Psychiatry of the Long Island College of Medicine, chaired by Howard Potter. This was an unpaid position, which excluded administrative responsibilities but included a clinical component, since Arieti was required to work with the Institute's outpatients⁸⁰.

It was in this context that in 1951 Arieti held a seminar dedicated to schizophrenia for first-year medical residents. This experience represented an important workshop for the preparation of his book, with which he would acquire great fame shortly afterwards: *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*, published in 1955⁸¹.

⁷⁶ S. Arieti, *Some Memories and Personal Views*, cit., p. 86.

⁷⁷ LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Education - Certificate in Psychoanalysis Graduation, 1953». The date 1953, reported erroneously in this archival section, refers not to the year of the diploma, but to the award ceremony thereof.

⁷⁸ This metamorphosis is clearly proven by the photographs preserved in the archive. See *ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Personal - Photographs, circa 1929-1976». See the photographic appendix contained in R. Passione, *La forza delle idee*, cit.

⁷⁹ Silvano Arieti, *Special Logic of Schizophrenic and Other Types of Autistic Thought*, «Psychiatry», 11, 1948, pp. 325-338.

⁸⁰ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Employment - Position appointments, 1941-1961», letter from Howard Potter to Silvano Arieti, 5 November 1946; letter from the Board Of Regents - Long Island College Hospital to Silvano Arieti, 20 June 1947.

⁸¹ See *ibid.*, letter from Silvano Arieti to Howard Potter, 25 June 1952; letter from Silvano Arieti to Howard Potter, 30 June 1951. The book accurately keeps to the structure of the seminar, about which Arieti writes in detail by letter to Potter.

His book had immediate and enormous success. It was a true initiation: it represented not only an important scholarly contribution to psychiatric knowledge, but also the affirmation of an immigrant who had to work very hard to establish himself professionally. Arieti suddenly became one of the most famous psychiatrists in the United States, so much so that in 1956 the American armed forces inserted his autographed photo and his works in a special collection dedicated to American citizens who made significant contributions to the medical sciences⁸².

Moreover, by explicitly mentioning his scientific debt to the New world, it was Arieti himself who emphasized the American matrix of his work: it was a book that he could not have written in any other place but the United States, where it was not only the psychoanalytical lesson at the WAWI that fed his reflection - an «American psychoanalysis», the author specified⁸³ - but also the more general richness of the dynamic and psychological culture typical of the country.

Interpretation of Schizophrenia, however, is not only an American work - an Americanness that was consecrated, in its second edition, by the winning of the National Book Award⁸⁴. It is also an original, eclectic work, that stood up in an unusual and innovative way in the America of those years, opening never-before-seen paths to psychiatric reflection⁸⁵.

The value of difference

The eclecticism characterizing the structure of *Interpretation of Schizophrenia* was revamped shortly thereafter with another comprehensive work that he designed

⁸² Ibid., letter from Samuel Lazerow (Assistant Librarian for Acquisition, Armed Forces Medical Library) to Silvano Arieti, 8 May 1956. See *ibid.*, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - Books - *Interpretation of Schizophrenia* - First edition - Correspondence, 1954-1963»; *ibid.*, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - Books - *Interpretation of Schizophrenia* - First edition - Publishing, 1954-1955»; *ibid.*, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - Books - *Interpretation of Schizophrenia* - First edition - Reviews, 1954-1956».

⁸³ Ibid., f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1938-1957», letter from Silvano Arieti to Igino Spadolini, 22 March 1955.

⁸⁴ Ibid., f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - *Interpretation of Schizophrenia* - National Book Award, 1975».

⁸⁵ See R. Passione, *La forza delle idee*, cit.

and edited, namely the *American Handbook of Psychiatry* - a work that put centerstage the scientific value of diversity, the importance of comparing and integrating various perspectives as an antidote to the domain of single thought as well as to reductionist and one-sided conceptions of the human being.

It was a work with a clear «American» influence - over one-hundred leading exponents of American psychiatry were involved in it - but, at the same time, it was also original and unusual in the scientific landscape of the country, where the manuals tradition, supported in Europe by a more uniform adherence to the neurobiological paradigm, was challenged by the coexistence of many schools of thought, often in contrast with one another.

Defined as the «*Gone with the wind* of American Psychiatry»⁸⁶, the *American Handbook* came out in three volumes in its first edition (1959-1966) and in seven in its second (1974-75 and 1981). A true «Herculean» undertaking,⁸⁷ it had an immediate and enormous success and further enhanced the fame Arieti had achieved with his previous work.

At this point of his career Arieti had really become a celebrity. A celebrity, however, who worked outside of any scientific orthodoxy and rather embraced that risk of pluralism, which represented at the same time a scientific merit⁸⁸ and an academic obstacle. This intellectual positioning may in fact be responsible for his failure to have a post in the Ivy League empyrean of American universities. As a matter of fact, for his whole life Arieti would continue his unpaid teaching job, which he carried out on a voluntary basis at New York Medical College, where he moved as a «Clinical Professor» in 1961⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ A.G., *The American Handbook of Psychiatry*, «William Alanson White Newsletter», 1, 1966-67, p. 1.

⁸⁷ *The American Handbook of Psychiatry*, edited by Silvano Arieti, «Journal of the Indian Medical profession», 6, 1960, p. 2987. See also LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - *American Handbook of Psychiatry* - Correspondence, 1956-1980»; *ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - *American Handbook of Psychiatry* - Reviews, 1959-1975».

⁸⁸ See Donald W. Hastings, *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, vol. 1 and vol. 2. Silvano Arieti ed., «Science», 131, 1960, pp. 656-657.

⁸⁹ On this aspect of Silvano Arieti's biography see R. Passione, *La forza delle idee*, cit.

From the Ruby case to the Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Award

In 1963 the fame gained by Silvano Arieti in the field of psychiatric studies catapulted him into the core of the history of an America shaken by the homicide of John Fitzgerald Kennedy: in December of that year Arieti was in fact contacted for a consultation on the mental state of Jack Ruby, who, on the 24 of the previous November, had killed Lee Harvey Oswald, who had been arrested on the charge of being the perpetrator of the president's homicide. Arieti flew immediately to Dallas, where he collaborated with the psychiatrist expert witness of the prosecution, John Holbrook, and where - after some initial impediments - he was eventually able to meet Ruby in person. Contrary to the positions of the defense, which aimed to exonerate the defendant on account of his mental illness, Arieti and Holbrook were convinced of his guilt⁹⁰. More specifically, Arieti questioned the applicability in Ruby's case of the concept of *episodic dyscontrol*, described in 1955 by Karl Menninger⁹¹.

The attitude and style with which Arieti took part in this important chapter of American history were notably different from those of other colleagues: in fact he never intervened in the journalistic bedlam which often brought the voice of psychiatrists to the foreground. He had ended up in Ruby's case by virtue of his acquired fame, but did not participate in it to gain further publicity.

His Dallas experience is certainly indicative of deep roots that Arieti was able to put down in his country of adoption. Roots that in the 1960s he also cultivated institutionally, in the scientific and professional organizations in which he took part, such as the *American Psychiatric Association* and the *American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, where, in his capacity as member of the Research committee, he worked on strengthening a much closer relationship with the *American Association for the Advancement of Science*. In 1964 he became president of the *William Alanson White Psychoanalytic Society* and in 1966, he began to collaborate with the *National Institute of Mental Health* on the development of a special research

⁹⁰ LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Ruby, Jack, 1953-1975».

⁹¹ K. Menninger and M. Mayman, *Episodic Dyscontrol: A Third Order of Stress Adaptation*, «Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic», 20, 1955, pp. 153-165.

program on schizophrenia⁹².

In short, at fifty years of age Silvano Arieti seemed to have definitively overcome the tribulations of his immigrant past in a foreign country. A past that not surprisingly he himself recalled in his speech upon receiving the *Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Award*, which was bestowed on him in 1968 for his extraordinary results in the diagnosis and treatment of schizophrenia. An event during which Arieti, touched, went up on stage and recalled the sequence of his scientific journey looking back to where it all started - the tearing of his roots and escape from Italy. Since 1939 he had covered a lot of ground⁹³.

An international figure

In addition to being a protagonist of American psychiatry, Arieti has also been very well-known abroad. More specifically, from the end of the 1960s he began to increase his international reputation with numerous trips that brought him to Argentina, Canada, Switzerland, Israel, England, Mexico, Finland, Japan, Venezuela, Norway. This made it possible for him to deal with many different contexts, to get to know new colleagues with whom he would build solid relationships, to meet students who sometimes tried to reach out and collaborate with him in America⁹⁴. These were experiences that aimed at opening American psychiatry to new scientific and cultural scenarios, strengthening that eclecticism that was always a foundational characteristic of his work.

It was in this context that a new scientific project came to life: *The World Biennial of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, a book that recalled the approach of the *American Handbook* but at the same time expanded its horizon by incorporating an international perspective. It was an undertaking in which Arieti strongly stated that importance of similarities and differences, identity and otherness, which constituted a founding focal point of his scientific reflection, but also was a direct

⁹² See R. Passione, *La forza delle idee*, cit.

⁹³ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - Lectures», *Response to the Presentation of the Frieda Fromm-Reichmann Award*, cit.

⁹⁴ The correspondence that spans the 1970s, preserved in the archive, is very rich in letters from students, medical residents and scholars who write to Arieti from all over the world.

result of his life experience:

This book reflects, as does the restive cultural scene, the new spirit that pervades man. Frontiers, political divisions, and separate histories have increasingly less significance, for while we respect our distinctiveness more and more, we feel more and more alike. This book will, hopefully, prove once more that anyone can benefit from whatever psychiatric achievement is made in any part of the world; it will, thus, in its own way, be a humble testimony to that which needs constant reaffirmation - the universality of man. Further, in that it will simultaneously highlight the benefit that all can derive from that which is specific to certain groups of men in particular conditions in different lands, it will reassert the importance of man's diversity within the greater realm of his universality.⁹⁵

This work, conceived as a biyearly publication, aimed at gathering the most recent psychiatric works from every part of the world and at disseminating their knowledge, in the belief that the exchange of views among different cultures was a fundamental key to the enrichment of psychiatric knowledge⁹⁶. This belief of Arieti's derived from his direct experience as an immigrant psychiatrist in America: in his studies on schizophrenia, it was also his solid neurological preparation - a result of his university education and Italian psychiatric culture - that allowed him to productively integrate a dynamic perspective, and to develop a totally innovative conception of this disorder.

His immigrant experience also informed his battle against the restrictions of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, which in 1970 seemed to float the idea of prohibiting access to the professional certification exam to foreign university graduates. This was an initiative that Arieti did not hesitate to sternly attack by organizing a committee against discrimination in psychiatry⁹⁷ and by writing to the editors of the most important psychiatric journals to urge them to take a stand:

⁹⁵ Silvano Arieti, *Preface*, in Id. (edited by), *The World Biennial of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, vol. I, New York, Basic Books, 1971, p. IX.

⁹⁶ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - *World Biennial of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*, editor»; *ibid.*, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - *New Dimensions in Psychiatry*, 1976». See also R. Passione, *La forza delle idee*, cit.

⁹⁷ LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Organizations - American Board of Psychiatry and neurology, 1971», *Committee Against Discrimination in Psychiatry*, 1970, typescript.

I was alarmed, dismayed and surprised when I read the new rules of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology which prevent foreign graduates from being admitted to the examination [...] I fear how such discriminatory rules will dishearten those of us who put our faith in America and its noble traditions of equality and justice; [...] I would not have expected the Board to act in so arbitrary way [...]. The idea that a foreign background disqualifies a person from being a good psychiatrist to American patients is disproved by those foreign-trained psychiatrists who do practice in the United States. The disadvantage a psychiatrist might possibly have at first in understanding patients in a cultural setting different from that in which he was born is more than compensated for by the advantage of being able to compare two cultures [...].

I may be considered by some too personally involved [...], since I myself would have been prevented from taking the examination in 1944, if such rules had existed. I am indeed involved, and certainly I do identify with the victims. But perhaps this identification permits me to speak with more vigor to all my colleagues and to urge them to raise their voices and to do whatever they can to combat this parochial and unjust regulation⁹⁸.

His relationship with Italy

In the international landscape, the country with which Silvano Arieti had the closest contact was certainly Italy, his homeland of which he also kept a trace in his elegant accent. His works began to be translated and to circulate in Italy starting from the 1960s, thanks mainly to the initiative of Pier Francesco Galli - Gaetano Benedetti's pupil - and of the «Gruppo milanese per lo sviluppo della psicoterapia» [Milan group for the development of psychotherapy], i.e. a group of young psychiatrists who, unsatisfied with the state of their discipline in Italy, self-organized outside the university to brainstorm new perspectives and approaches to mental illness. In this context, since 1962 Arieti participated in the international workshops organized by the Group, which in 1964 awarded him a gold medal for the development of psychotherapy⁹⁹.

⁹⁸ Letter from Silvano Arieti, 29 December 1970. This is the text that Arieti sent to the editors of the following journals: «Psychiatry», «Psychiatric Quarterly», «American Journal of Psychotherapy», «American Journal of Psychiatry», «Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease». The American Board will later correct its position and retract its intention to pursue the prohibition. LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Organizations - American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology».

⁹⁹ During the workshops organized by the Milan Group Arieti met Marco Bacciagaluppi and Maria Mazza, who would later become the main Italian translators of his works. On the circulation of Silvano Arieti's works in Italy see R. Passione, *Language and Psychiatry*, cit.; Ead., *La forza delle idee*, cit.

During his frequent visits to his homeland Arieti was also often sought for clinical consultations. Therefore, in 1964 he applied for the professional license in Italy, since he had left in 1939 without taking the State examination¹⁰⁰.

In the 1970s, which represented a time of very intense scientific productivity for him, his visits to Italy increased and occurred on a regular basis. With Marianne Thompsen, whom he had married in 1965 after his divorce from Jane¹⁰¹, he used to spend his summer holidays in Sardinia, where, soon after his father's death, he had purchased a plot of land and built a house¹⁰².

His regular summer trips also offered him the opportunity to strengthen his scientific bonds with his homeland where - aided by the success of his *Handbook*¹⁰³ - he was increasingly sought-after. Someone also urged him to return permanently, encouraging him to consider the possibility of an academic position in Italy¹⁰⁴. Arieti however did not follow this route. He was deeply attached to New York City, and by this time he felt like a full-fledged American citizen. In 1979 he celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his arrival in the USA with a party during which the same proud smile as a young boy at his *Bar Mitzvah* reappeared on his face¹⁰⁵.

Nevertheless, his relationship with his roots always remained very solid. He continued to return to Italy regularly until the end of his life. His last visit was in 1981, in Pisa, where he went to present *The Parnas*, the book dedicated to the history of the Nazi massacre at Pardo Roques' home on 1 August 1944. This work, which wove together psychiatry, autobiography and historical fiction, was particularly close to Arieti's heart for through it, he reconnected the never soothed memories of his origins. The book, which Primo Levi appreciated and endorsed,¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ ASUPi, f. «Silvano Arieti».

¹⁰¹ The year of marriage is extrapolated from Silvano Arieti's will dated 25 October 1965, in which Marianne already appears as his wife. See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Finances - Wills, 1963-1981».

¹⁰² Ibid., f. «Subject File, 1914-1981 - Villasimius Property, 1969-1973».

¹⁰³ The first edition of the *American Handbook of Psychiatry* was translated in Italy in 1969-1970. The second one will instead make its appearance in 1976.

¹⁰⁴ See LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Chronological File - 1973-1976, letter from Alfonso Mangoni to Silvano Arieti, 9 September 1974.

¹⁰⁵ See Edward R. Clemmens, Rose Spiegel, Irving Bieber, and Ferruccio Di Cori, *Silvano Arieti: 1914-1981*, «Academy Forum», 26, 1982, pp. 6-9.

¹⁰⁶ LC, MD, SAP, f. «Correspondence, 1940-1981 - Levi, Primo, 1979»; *ibid.*, f. «Speeches and Writings,

was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and was included in the list of the best titles of 1979 by the «New York Times Book Review»¹⁰⁷. Among his many readers was also David Asheri, who was particularly moved and grateful for the remembrance of Enzo Bonaventura in it¹⁰⁸.

Following the success of his book, in April 1981 Arieti departed for his last trip, to Israel, where he held a conference at the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora in Tel Aviv. He died a few months later, on 7 August, in New York.

In April 2001, exactly sixty-two years after Arieti's arrival in America, the Associazione Silvano Arieti was established in Pisa. The association has promoted important initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the thought and work of the psychiatrist, to whom on 28 June 2014, on the occasion of the centennial of his birth, the Italian government dedicated a commemorative stamp¹⁰⁹.

Major publications

An extensive bibliography of Silvano Arieti's works is available on the website of the Associazione Silvano Arieti <<http://www.silvanoarieti.it>>. See also the bibliographical appendix in Bruschi (2001). Below are only the major volumes.

- *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*, New York, Brunner-Basic Books, 1955 (Ital. trans. *Interpretazione della schizofrenia*, Milan, Feltrinelli, 1963).
- (edited by), *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, New York, Basic Books, 1959-1966, vols. 3 (Ital. trans. *Manuale di psichiatria*, Turin, Boringhieri, 1969-1970).
- *The Intrapsychic Self. Feeling, Cognition and Creativity in Health and Mental Illness*, New York, Basic Books, 1967 (Ital. trans. *Il Sé intrapsichico. Affettività*,

1940-1981 - *The Parnas* - Promotion, 1979».

¹⁰⁷ See *ibid.* On the «New York Times» an enthusiastic review also appears; see C. Seebom, *The Parnas*, «The New York Times», 23 September 1979, p. 14, in LC, MD, SAP, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981. The Parnas. Reviews, 1979-1981». Arieti was informed by Mary Higgins, of Basic Books, by letter regarding his nomination for the Pulitzer Prize. See *ibid.*, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - Promotion, 1979», letter from Mary Higgins to Silvano Arieti, 31 October 1979.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, f. «Speeches and Writings, 1940-1981 - The Parnas - Correspondence, 1976-1980», letter from David Asheri to Silvano Arieti, 5 May 1980. On [David Asheri](#) and his father [Enzo Bonaventura](#), see the respective articles by Patrizia Guarnieri [here](#).

¹⁰⁹ See the Association's website: <<http://www.silvanoarieti.it>>.

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