

FREDERICK RITTER

ADAM AND EVE IN THE GALAPAGOS

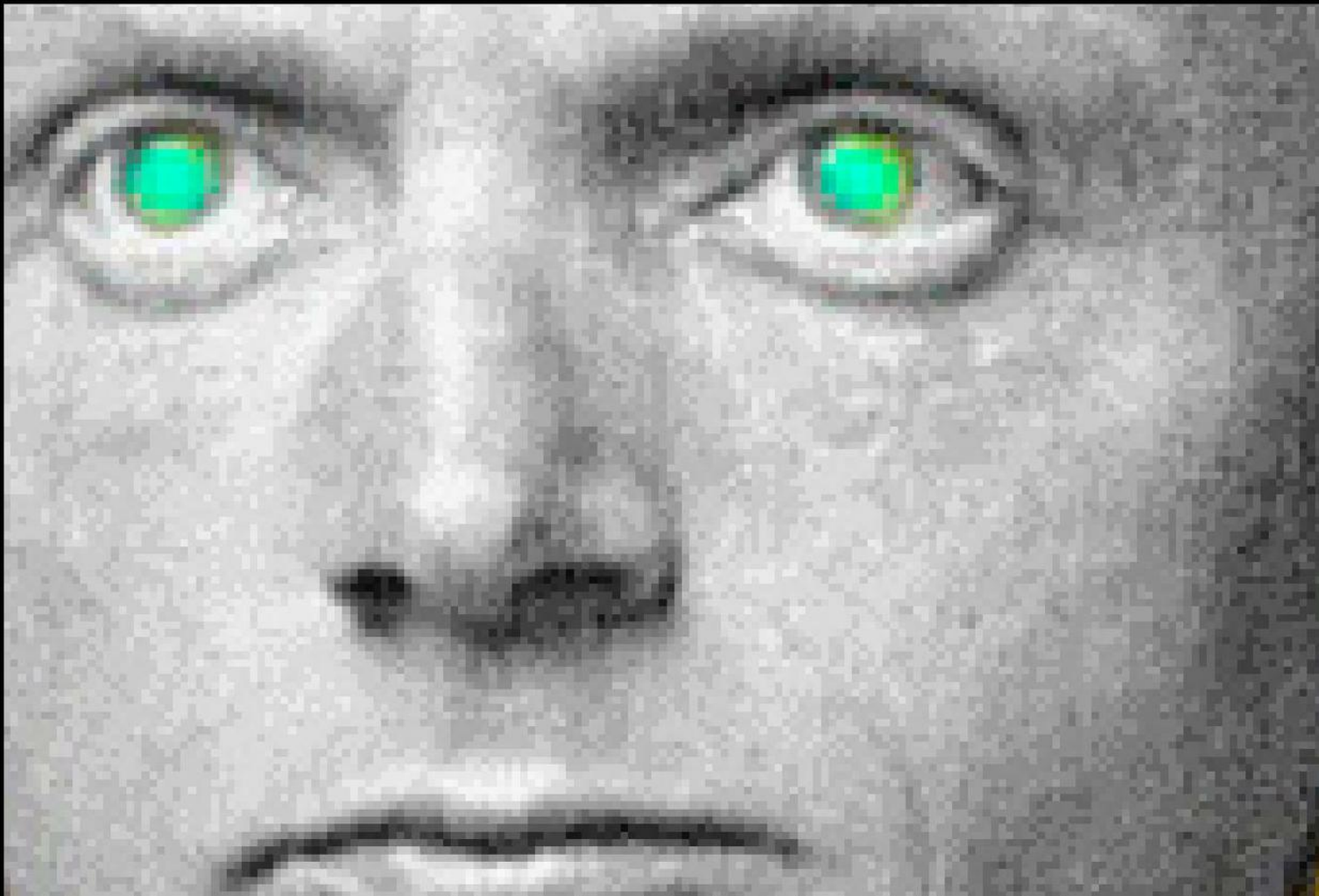


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Titel: Adam and Eve in the Galapagos

Frederick Ritter

Adam and Eve in the Galapagos

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Introduction

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In 1929, a Nietzsche-obsessed doctor, Friedrich Ritter, left his wife and his German homeland to flee with his mistress, Dore Strauch, to Floreana, a deserted island in the Galapagos archipelago off the coast of Ecuador. The pair of humorless vegetarians had become disillusioned with society's constraints and obsession with wealth, so living off the land far away from civilization seemed like the right antidote. But **news articles** about the couple's escape, some of these unfortunately written by Ritter himself, gave other eccentrics the idea to follow. Ritter and Strauch were not amused when the German Wittmer family — Heinz, Margret (five months pregnant at the time) and their young son — crashed the couple's private party. The misanthropic Ritter was especially annoyed, and even told Margret he would offer no medical assistance in case of complications during childbirth. The Wittmers, who wanted to live like the Swiss Family Robinson, were in turn highly agitated about the arrival of another group led by an exhibitionist, self-proclaimed Viennese baroness Eloise von Wagner-Bosquet. She brought along not only her three lovers, but also plenty of media attention with her habit of dreaming up outrageous stories about herself and her neighbors on the island, which she fed to reporters. The grandiose Baroness soon acclaimed herself Empress of Floreana and appeared not averse to appropriating property of the other island residents as well as opening their mail. She sported a riding crop and an ivory handled pistol which she was fond of pointing at people who

displeased her. She soon had the Wittmers as well as Friedrich and Dore very nervous of her and her armed entourage. The Baroness could be very charming and became something of an international celebrity, much to Ritter's distress as he had previously had the press limelight as the "Robinson Crusoe" of Floreana. In 1931, Frederick Ritter's important articles were published in the newspaper *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 148. You can read these historic stories below:

Adam and Eve in the Galapagos

Article 1: "ADAM AND EVE IN THE GALAPAGOS" (October 1931)

On July 4, 1929, Dore and I, Frederick Ritter, sailed from Amsterdam on board the freighter *Boskoop* bound for the Galapagos Islands. To those who could not know or understand our motives, the journey upon which we had embarked must have seemed the strangest ever undertaken. Leaving behind me a lucrative practice of medicine in Berlin, I and my comrade were in fact turning our backs forever upon civilization and the society of our fellow men. Of our own free will and choice we were going into exile to seek in the solitude of an almost desert island in the far Pacific the independence, the peace of mind, the opportunity to cultivate our reflective powers to the fullest, which are denied to man by the complexities of modern life. My decision to go into solitude was not a rash inspiration; for twenty years the idea had been maturing in my mind. But I had early perceived that one must learn to wait, even though patience, as Nietzsche says, is the most difficult of virtues. Now, at the age of forty-three, my time had come, and I did not hesitate to take the bold step which I had so long forseen as an inevitable one for me. Every human life follows natural laws in its development, and if I am to make my 'unnatural' decision to forsake society seem natural to others, as it unquestionably was to me, I shall have to sketch a few facts of my childhood and youth which will be enough to explain me as the *Homo solitarius*. One does not have to be