

Editorial

In *A Small Town in Germany*, de Lisle says that the trouble with Americans is ‘all that emphasis on the future. So dangerous. It makes them destructive of the present. Much kinder to look back’ (Le Carré 1969: 121). Freud might well have agreed. For his interests lay in what was forgotten, in what was remembered and in the act of remembering itself. In repetition and in the tacit way we re-live the anguish of the past; in the history of those suffering (*Krankengeschichten*) and in the historiography of culture, in relation to the figure of Moses (SE XXIII). In this regard, there is a striking similarity or what has been called ‘stylistic processes of discourse’ in both Augustine and Lacan (Benveniste 1971). While the former identifies the subject with memory (*memoria*) - ‘*hoc ipse ego sum*’ (Aug. *conf.* X. XVII, 26 cf. X. XIV, 21) - the latter described the unconscious as a sort of ‘register of memory’ (S3: 155). The history of the subject. In fact, Lacan, drawing directly on Heidegger, writes that ‘what we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history – in other words, we help him complete the current historicization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of historical “turning points” in his existence’ (E 261). Thus, Lacan etches Freudian thought into the philosophic discourse.

Like philosophy, the practice of psychoanalysis compels the subject ‘to travel over a wide field of thought criss-crossing in every direction’ in the course of ‘long, involved journeys’ (Wittgenstein PI Preface). It is a path in thinking that cannot be rushed and, at times, leads nowhere (Heidegger 1965). It cannot have a telos in mind and does not proceed logically. It is, rather, a kind of wandering. An extended, twisted, meandering journey. ‘The same or almost the same points being approached afresh from different directions’ (ibid).

But as a discourse, psychoanalysis is closer to history than to any other discourse as the composite title of Freud’s first major study clearly shows (SE IV; cf. Bartels 1980¹). That is to say, its focus (*Deutung*) is entirely hermeneutic. With notable exceptions, one of the key differences between the interpretation of dreams as we find it in pagan antiquity and in Freud is that while the former was primarily concerned with predicting the future, the latter’s interest was not only in the operation (‘a particular *form* of thinking’ SE V: 506) or transformational mechanism of the dream (its deception) but with the past, in the sense of the sources of dreams and the role of memory. Dreams were, for Freud, ‘another kind of remembering’ (SE XVII: 51).

¹ Bartels studies Freud’s *Traumdeutung* in relation to Heidegger.

Due to his lack of interest in late antiquity, however, Freud failed to notice that a number of early Christian writers, while often retaining a biblical, prophetic reading of dreams, also espoused, at least in part, a hermeneutic view. We see this notably in Gregory of Nyssa, where he discusses the genesis and validity of dreams (Gr. Nyss. *hom. opif.*), in Evagrius Ponticus, in his analysis compulsive thoughts (Evagr. *cap. cog.* 27, 28²; prak. 55; *or.* 95; cf. Refoulé 1961), and in Augustine (Aug. *de civ. Dei* XVIII, 18; cf. Dulaey 1973). These authors understood the dynamic effect exercised on dream activity by the emotions a person experiences during the day and by the role of memory in mental life. For them, as for Freud, the dream was a psychic mechanism of intricate signs which bore a direct meaning, capable of interpretation³. We also see Freud looking back in the act of collecting. Surrounding himself with antiquities. Hemmed in, as it were, by a huge assortment of artifacts, relics that he began to amass as a response to the absence of his father. An ‘act of substitution’ that was, simultaneously, a turning to the past and a delusory way to forget that death is what it means for the subject ‘to be defined by his historicity’ (E 318). Torn, as he was, between the memory of the past and the future. In Augustine’s words, ‘divided up in time, whose order I do not know’ (*et ego in tempora dissilui, quorum ordinem nescio*) (Aug. *conf.* 11: 29-39).

Preserving the memory of the departed was, in antiquity, one of the functions of the tomb (*sēma*). It stood, metonymically, for the person whose memory it sought to preserve. Indeed, the tomb operated as a ‘body’ with which the living interacted in a variety of ritually distinct ways in which absence was articulated. This might take the form of an idealised statue or non-iconographical representations which then become the sign of the deceased forming a signifying chain in the memory of the living (Gale 2017). As they are little affected by time, stone inscriptions suggested permanence and durability. But Herodotus undermines the perception of the stability of epigraphic records by pointing out how all of Darius’ stone memorials, save one *stēlē*, were later removed and brought to Byzantium where they were reused as building blocks for the altar of Artemis. The exception being a single plinth with Assyrian letters that years afterwards was still lying in front of the temple of Dionysus. Grethlein (2013) points out, that in the end, the fate of a *stēlē* merely illustrates a failure to establish permanent memory. In the fifth century BC *lekylthoi* were used as grave markers, thus performing, in effect, a double metonymic function, as a sign of the sign of the deceased. Here

² The text is found in PG 79, 1200-1233 under the name of St Nilus as well as in the *Philokalia* I, 44-57. Muyldermans (1932) studied the Syriac ms tradition and authenticated Evagrian authorship; on dreams see 50-52. Also, Refoulé (1961: 476) and Hausherr (1960: 131).

³ On the background see Dodds (1947), Athanassiadi (1993), Harris (2003), Price (2004). Perhaps less reliably, Näf (2004).

they resemble a palimpsest, in which the original text has been erased and the surface used again for some quite different writing.

Subterranean burial is known to have been practiced in the early Church in North Africa and Asia Minor as well as in Rome, where we find the most famous and largest of the catacombs. These were built outside the city, and some forty survive to the north east and to the south. Bodies were set in *loculi* or for the more important members of the community in *arcosolia* set into the walls of labyrinthine chambers (Gale 2016). Early martyrologies marked the cycles of religious ritual, identifying the place and day of death of the saint in the form of a register. We know, for example, that the eucharistic liturgy was celebrated on these tombs on the anniversaries of the deaths of the martyrs, at least from the fourth century. It is no coincidence that the Greek word used to describe the eucharist was *anamnēsis* (memorial). Early calendars marked religious and secular points in time as well as durations of time, revealing our connection to nature, as they set out a form of cyclical time. This reflects the fact that the daily life of the peasant was, first of all, a question of meteorology and of the way the changing seasons effected the crops.

In its concern with the past, psychoanalysis turns chronology on its head by recognising that the relationship between the past and the present is one of imbrication, substitution and repetition. Furthermore, Freud describes present events in some sense creating the past (*Nachträglichkeit*) (Freud 1950). As Sergio Benvenuto reminds us in a masterful text in this issue of the journal, *après-coup* is one of the central knots of psychoanalysis.

John GALE

Ozenay, France

Abbreviations

- Aug. *conf.* *Œuvre de saint Augustin 13, 14. Les confessions.* 2 vols. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1996-98.
- Aug. *de civ. Dei* *La Cité de Dieu.* Bibliothèque Augustinienne 33-37 (ed.) G. Bardy and G. Combres. Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1959-60.
- Evagr. *cap. cog.* Évagre le Pontique *Sur les Pensées* (ed.) P. Géhin and C. Guillaumont Source Chrétiennes 438. Paris : Les Éditions du Cerf, 1998.
- Evagr. *prak.* Évagre le Pontique *Traité Pratique.* (ed.) A. and C. Guillaumont Source Chrétiennes 171. Paris : Les Éditions du Cerf, 1971.
- Evagr. *or.* *Les Leçons d'un contemplatif. Le Traité de l'Oration d'Évagre le Pontique* (ed.) I. Hausherr. Paris : Beauchesne et ses fils, 1960.
- Gr. Nyss. *hom. opif.* Gregory of Nyssa. *De hominis opificio.* *Migne Patrologia Graeca* 44, 124-256.
- Freud SE IV Freud, S. (1900). The Interpretation of Dreams. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* Volume IV (ed) J. Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.
- Freud SE XVII Freud, S. (1918b) [1914]. From the History of An Infantile Neurosis *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* Volume XVII: 3-123 (ed) J. Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.
- Freud SE XXIII Freud, S. (1939a) [1937-9]. Moses and Monotheism. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* Volume XXIII (ed) J. Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

- Lacan S3 *The Psychoses. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book III, 1955-1956*
(ed.) J.-A. Miller, (trans.) R. Grigg. London: Routledge.
- Lacan E Jacques Lacan [1953]. *Écrits* (trans.) B. Fink. New York/London:
W.W. Norton and Company.
- Wittgenstein PI Wittgenstein, L. (1999) [1953]. *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford:
Blackwell Publishers.

References

- Athanassiadi, P. (1993) Dreams, Theurgy and Freelance Divination: The Testimony of Iamblichus *The Journal of Roman Studies* 83: 115-130.
- Bartels, M. (1980). Is der Traum eine Wunscherfüllung *Psyche. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse und ihre Anwendungen* XXXIV: 97-131.
- Benveniste, E. (1971). *Problems in General Linguistics* (trans.) M.E. Meck. Miami: University of Miami Press.
- Dodds, E.R. (1947) Theurgy and its relationship to Neoplatonism *Journal of Roman Studies* 37: 55-69.
- Dulaey, M. (1973) *Le rêve dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes.
- Freud, S. (1950). *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse*. Imago Publishing.
- Gale, J. (2016). The Relics of Absence *Grief and its Transcendence* 51-63 (eds.) A. Tutter and L. Wurmster. New York/London: Routledge.
- Gale, J. (2017). Some aspects of historiography of the body *Vestigia* 1 (1): 206-25.

Grethlein, J. (2013). *Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography. 'Futures Past' from Herodotus to Augustine*. Cambridge: CUP.

Harris, W.V. (2003) Roman Opinions about the Truthfulness of Dreams *The Journal of Roman Studies* 93: 18-43.

Heidegger, M. (1965). *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*. Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske.

Le Carré, J. (1969). *A Small Town in Germany*. London: Pan Books.

Muldermans, J. (1932). *A Travers La Tradition Manuscrite d'Évagre Le Pontique. Essai sur les manuscrites Grecs conservés a la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*. Louvain : Bureaux du Muséon.

Näf, B. (2004) *Traum und Traumdeutung im Altertum* 157-9. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Price, S.R.F. (2004). The future of dreams: from Freud to Artemidorus *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society* 226-59 (ed.) R. Osborne. Cambridge: CUP.

Refoulé, F. (1961) Rêves et vie spirituelle d'après Evagre le pontique *La Vie Spirituelle Supplément* 14: 470-516.