

THEME 3: THE PREMISE OF POMPEII

March 5

[NOTE: keep in mind that your 'adopt a volcano' Part II (the 'social' side of your volcano) presentations will be next week, March 12]

Our focus for the week is on Pompeii; rather than discuss the archaeological site per se (which is a huge topic, evidenced for example by the fact that Michelle Berenfeld teaches a semester-length course on it!), we will be discussing 'the premise of Pompeii'. That is to say, we will examine the role that Pompeii has in archaeology and the modern imaginary. Should you like to see examples of art actually from the site of Pompeii itself, I would suggest the following as possible places to start:

Mattusch, Carol. 2009. *Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture around the Bay of Naples*. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art. [this was from an exhibit Oct 19 2008 – March 22 2009 and has a tremendous amount of art and artifacts from Pompeii as well as many examples of art done of Pompeii in recent centuries; I have a copy in my office if you are interested in seeing it and there is also a copy at Rock]

Jashemski, Wilhelmina, and Frederick Meyer. Editors. 2002. *The Natural History of Pompeii*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [also in both my office and Rock]

These are not required for the class discussion and I only list them should you like them at some point for the gratification of your own intellectual curiosity.

In line with our theme of last week ('Google is Good!(!)'), you can also take a peek at what comes up when you google 'Pompeii images' as it is a fascinating mixture of the sublime (plaster casts of the voids left by victims of the pyroclastic flows), the archaeological (maps and plans), the touristic (personal photos of the site by people who visited it), the artistic (paintings and renditions from a varied period of times), and the oddly scientific (such as the 'Pompeii worm').

Pompeii was integral in archaeology; through its re-discovery (that is, once people outside of the local area re-discovered it) and excavations by Swiss army engineer Karl Weber in the 18th century, antiquarianism morphed into classical archaeology with systematic archaeological methods. The metaphor of Pompeii is still incredibly present in archaeology done in regions far from Italy; the significance or exceptionality of a site is often highlighted by calling it 'the Pompeii of [Poland (Biskupin), the Americas (Ceren), the East (Tambora), etc.]. Pompeii was integral as well in the formation of volcanology as a modern science through the 18th century observations of William Hamilton, and as we will see in our readings this week was also integral in the development of psychoanalysis. The site of Pompeii, thereby, has been integral in the formation of these three very young sciences (archaeology, volcanology, psychoanalysis) that stem from it.

What is the resonance of Pompeii in the larger contemporary context? How much does the modern imagination of Pompeii inform archaeology, and how much has archaeology informed the modern imaginary??

We will watch *Doctor Who*, 'The Fires of Pompeii' together in class (50 min). As context for our discussion of the episode please think about the items below...[and please keep in mind that I've assigned a lot of reading this week; just try to take one thing that interests you from each and don't get bogged down. Search for over-arching themes to avoid getting lost in the details! And do keep in mind if I have asked you to lead the discussion of a particular item that we will get very little time for each one so no long presentation or massive time expense on preparation is expected.]

Your readings (and non-readings) for the week are:

Several of you expressed your desire in our discussion of the 'Metaphor' theme to read excerpts of Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* rather than only *about* it, so I know you are keen to read direct writings! There are myriad literary or psychoanalytical references this week and it will be impossible to read all of them in their original form. I've chosen an excerpt from Dickens' *Pictures from Italy* and two poems from Tryanis' *Pompeian Dog* somewhat randomly as our direct readings; we also have a sample of *Gradiva* by Jensen and Freud's response to it, which was called *Delusion and Dream*.

Antin, Eleanor. 2001. "The Last Days of Pompeii," Chromogenic print series. Exhibit held Feb 16-March 16 2002, Feldman Gallery, New York City.

Allison, Penelope. 2002. "Recurring tremors: The continuing impact of the AD 79 eruption of Mt Vesuvius," in *Natural Disasters and Cultural Change*. Edited by R. Torrence and J. Grattan, pp. 107-125. London and New York: Routledge.

Binford, Lewis. 1981. Behavioral archaeology and the "Pompeii premise". *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37 (3):195-208.

*this important debate between Lewis Binford and Michael Schiffer regarding how to see the archaeological record was a pivotal component of late-20th century archaeology. Think about how Pompeii is 'used' in it.

Dali, Salvador. 1931. "Gradiva Finds the Anthropomorphic Ruins." Madrid, Spain: Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection.

*To understand this painting's subject, you may like to look at the text that is attached at the end of the list of readings (and also available at <http://www.freud.org.uk/exhibitions/10507/gradiva-the-cure-through-love/>) as well as the Freud 1917 excerpt for this week. The URL is for the 2007-2008 exhibit at the Freud Museum in London titled "Gradiva: The Cure Through Love - An exhibition on Freud as archaeological literary critic" also allows you to peruse the museum's other holdings and exhibits if you choose and see a sample of some of the items that Freud collected.

Dickens, Charles. 1846. "Chapter XI: A rapid diorama," in *Pictures from Italy*, pp. 160-184. Paris: A. and W. Galignant.

Freud, Sigmund. 1917. *Delusion and Dream: An interpretation in the light of psychoanalysis of Gradiva, a novel, by Wilhelm Jensen, which is here translated*. New York: Moffat, Yard and Company.

* While the book *Gradiva: A Pompeiian Fancy* (1903) by Wilhelm Jensen was not considered a great book on its own, Freud's response to it became an incredibly important contribution to the early canon of psychoanalysis. As I know you also like reading the actual material, rather than ABOUT it, I'm also attaching the first 15 pages of both Jensen's *Gradiva* and Freud's

Delusions and Dream in Wilhelm Jensen's Gradiva just to give you a taste of each author's writing.

Goldstein, Laurence. 1979. The impact of Pompeii on the literary imagination. *Centennial Review* 23:227-241.

Købke, Christian. 1841. "The Forum, Pompeii, with Vesuvius in the Distance," oil on canvas. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum.

Levin, Yael. 2005. Conrad, Freud, and Derrida on Pompeii: A paradigm of disappearance. *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 3 (1):81-99.

McCollum, Allan. 1991. "The Dog from Pompei." New York: Cast polymer-enhanced Hydrocal.

Rolandi, G. 2010. Volcanic hazard at Vesuvius: An analysis for the revision of the current emergency plan. *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research* 189:347-362.

Siouxsie & the Banshees. 1985. "Cities in Dust," (4:03), song from the album 'Tinderbox'. Polydor/Geffen Records, produced by Mike Hedges.

Trypanis, C.A. 1964. "Williamsburg, Pompeian Dog," in *Pompeian Dog*, pp. 18, 36. New York: Chilmark Press.

*note that I left the poems on the opposing pages, but you are not required to read them.

Warhol, Andy. 1985. "Vesuvius," acrylic on canvas. Naples: Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte.

From <http://www.freud.org.uk/exhibitions/10507/gradiva-the-cure-through-love/>

6 December 2007 - 7 February 2008

Freud Museum

Gradiva: The Cure Through Love

An exhibition on Freud as archaeological literary critic

When the surrealists opened an art gallery in Paris in 1937, they called it Gradiva. This was a tribute to Freud and his essay 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' (1907) - the first psychoanalytic study of a work of literature. The title of Jensen's book referred to a Roman bas-relief of a walking woman. For the surrealists this figure symbolized the mystery of dreams, sexuality, amour fou. But Freud used the book as an example of the return of the repressed, the compromise of neurotic symptoms and the psychoanalytic cure.

Freud often compared psychoanalysis to archaeology. His collection of antiquities shows his own fascination with the ancient world. Jensen's novella *Gradiva* is about an archaeologist obsessed by an antique sculpture. The subject itself attracted Freud. He also found in the book a poetic depiction of repression and sexual neurosis and, above all, how they were resolved. The cure was through transference - the process by which the patient's feelings for a significant figure are transferred onto the analyst - a "cure through love".

Repression

In 1903 Wilhelm Jensen published a novella entitled *Gradiva*. Its hero, the German archaeologist Norbert Hanold, falls in love with the Roman bas-relief of a walking woman. He names her *Gradiva* ('the girl stepping forward'). On a visit to Pompeii, in a "strangely dreamy condition" he meets a woman who seems to be this *Gradiva*. Eventually he comes to realize that she is in fact his childhood sweetheart, Zoe Bertgang, whom he had failed to recognize.

Freud's study of this book, 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*.' (1907), psychoanalyzes its fictional hero. Freud reveals that coherent unconscious motivations guide his behaviour and dreams. The author himself, Freud deduces, wrote under the influence of his own unconscious drives.

Hanold's delusion about the *Gradiva* figure is the consequence of severe sexual repression: "Marble and bronze alone were truly alive for him; they alone expressed the purpose and value of human life." But what is repressed will inevitably return: Jensen's book is subtitled "A Pompeian Fantasy" and its setting in Pompeii offered Freud a poetic demonstration of his own ideas: "*There is, in fact, no better analogy for repression, by which something in the mind is at once made inaccessible and preserved, than burial of the sort to which Pompeii fell victim...*"

Dream

In the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) Freud had shown that there is no sharp frontier between normal and abnormal thought. In dreams we all think "pathologically" under the influence of unconscious desires. *Gradiva* offered Freud a chance of making psychoanalytic ideas accessible and acceptable by showing them implicit in a work of popular fiction.

In a dream Hanold saw the living *Gradiva* in Pompeii in 79 AD, overcome by the eruption of Vesuvius and turned into an ashen corpse. Behind this "manifest content" Freud showed that the "latent content" of

his dream was telling another story – of his desire to turn the statue back into the living girl it actually represented, his childhood sweetheart Zoe Bertgang.

Hanold had chosen archaeology as a retreat from love. But it was an archaeological object, the sculpture of Gradiva, that aroused his desire. Thus his repressed sexuality used the very instrument of its repression (archaeology) to gain access to consciousness. The symptom of his disorder, the delusion that the sculpture was a real woman, was a compromise formed between the sexual drive and the repression.

A dream gave access to this unconscious process. A forgotten childhood memory of playing with Zoe had turned into a fantasy of having once lived in Pompeii, and this created the delusion that a dead sculpture was alive.

Delusion

What first absorbed Hanold's attention was the curious angle of Gradiva's raised right foot in the sculpture. This led him to study the feet of real women as they walked. One day he thought he saw his Gradiva alive, walking in his German town. It was then he decided to travel to Pompeii on the pretext of study, but actually to escape his fear of - and his desire for - the real woman.

In Pompeii honeymoon couples disturb his peace and are transformed into a dream of Apollo lifting up Venus and laying her on a creaking carriage. In flight from love, wandering the streets of Pompeii, Hanold encounters his Gradiva. Though she speaks German to him and encourages their conversations, he still cannot believe she is real. He also meets a naturalist catching lizards in the sun. These experiences are "condensed" together: Gradiva returns to him in a dream, as a lizard-catcher sitting "somewhere in the sun".

Recent memories or "day-residues" are used by dreams, as are plays on words. The real Gradiva, Zoe Bertgang, was staying "in the sun", at the Albergo del Sole (Sun Hotel), while the naturalist was her real father. Though Hanold still failed to recognize her, she knew him and played along with his delusion. In all delusions there is a grain of truth. His real feelings for Zoe had simply been displaced onto the Pompeian Gradiva. Her sympathy was a necessary instrument to transfer them back to their real object.

Cure

At the end of Jensen's *Gradiva* Hanold is cured by Zoe. Through her patient sympathy with his delusion, she reveals that Gradiva was a disguise for his childhood love for her. When he realizes she loves him, his own repressed love for her is liberated.

In his study of the book Freud takes us through the stages of a psychoanalytic cure. Some part of the patient's desire had combined with resistance to form a delusion: the treatment consisted in giving him back repressed memories to which he himself had no access, except with outside help. Disguised as Gradiva Zoe was able to give Hanold back his lost memories.

In the *History of the Psychoanalytical Movement* Freud wrote: "*the theory of repression is the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests.*" In psychoanalytic treatment the repressed is brought to consciousness. The essence of this change is the awakening of lost feelings.

"Psychoanalytic treatment is an attempt at liberating repressed love which has found a meagre outlet in the compromise of a symptom."

In his study of Gradiva Freud found a way of illustrating his ideas in terms of a work of literature. Art and science converged. Psychoanalysis was revealed as a science of love.