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ABSTRACT: The temporal loop of Proust's *Recherche* complicates the unidirectional understanding of anamnesis in psychoanalysis, which, in turn, allows for a renewed reading of the temporality of the *Recherche*, highlighting the intrinsic link between artistic 'research' and unconscious affect — at the same time origin, motif, and destination.

Recherche II

Anamnesis

JULIE GAILLARD

Two meanings of the prefix 're-' coexist in the title *À la recherche du temps perdu*.¹ The *Recherche* unfolds at the same time *backward* in an iterative movement and *forward* in an intensive gesture. The (perhaps too) schematic outline of two general directional trends reveals that depending on which pole of the axis of chronological time is being given precedence, the *Recherche* can be accounted for as memory or as apprenticeship, as the narrative of a destiny determined by the workings of the unconscious or as a movement teleologically oriented toward the final revelation of a pure time of essences. Yet the double syllepsis that shapes the title suggests that the poles of such alternatives, however exclusive their directionalities might seem, would have to be thought jointly. I propose to interrogate anew this seeming impossibility by way of a linguistic

1 See Gaillard, 'Recherche I', in this volume.

subterfuge: reframing the enquiry of ‘re-’ by way of its Greek counterpart ‘ana-’, I will complicate our *recherche* on the temporality of the *Recherche* (of any *recherche*?) by confronting it to *anamnesis* — and more specifically to Jean-François Lyotard’s elaboration of this notion.

‘Anamnesis’ is the key operator that allows Lyotard to draw an analogy between the ways in which literature and psychoanalysis, respectively, relate to time, and to define both as a *recherche du temps perdu* — as a search for lost time.² Even though Lyotard never devoted a full length essay to Proust’s novel, the question of *temps perdu* and the strange modalities of its *recherche* haunt the philosopher’s writings after his 1983 monograph *The Differend*. Indeed, they resurface systematically each time that Lyotard attempts to compare the work of psychoanalysis and the work of art (and ultimately that of philosophy) with respect to the question of the immemorial. But assimilating Proust’s *Recherche* to the movement of anamnesis (literally: the action of recalling past events) by no means amounts to accrediting a determinist hypothesis according to which the directionality of the *Recherche* would be entirely geared towards a ‘remembrance of things past’. On the contrary: to Lyotard, ‘things past are remembered ahead’ (*Le temps perdu se recherche en avant*).³ ‘Ahead’, or forward: this direction does not merely describe a linear progression of the act of searching. As we shall see, this ‘search ahead’ rather characterizes an unsettling of sequen-

2 See Anne Tomiche, ‘Anamnesis’, in *Traversals of Affect: On Jean-François Lyotard*, ed. by Julie Gaillard, Claire Nouvet, and Mark Stoholski (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), pp. 73–88 (pp. 82–84).

3 Jean-François Lyotard, ‘*Domus* and the Megalopolis’, in *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, transl. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), pp. 191–204 (p. 198); ‘*Domus* et la mégapole’, in *L’Inhumain. Causeries sur le temps* (Paris: Klincksieck, 2014), pp. 181–92 (p. 187).

tial time, in which the past is not recalled but actually occurs at the end of a search that it nonetheless drives forward from the beginning. By conflating ‘*recherche*’ and ‘anamnesis’, Lyotard complicates the chronology that orients time in a linear succession of causes and effects from an origin to an end.

My aim is to highlight the consequences that Lyotard’s assimilation of psychoanalysis and literature as *recherche du temps perdu* have in both fields: on the one hand, the temporal structure of the *Recherche* complicates a simple understanding of anamnesis as remembering or tracing back, which Lyotard challenges in order to propose a radical view of the unconscious, absolutely devoid of any representational character. On the other hand, Lyotard’s conceptualization of the mechanisms of the *après-coup* allows for a renewed reading of Proust that seems to synthesize the two opposing trends — deterministic versus teleological — sketched out in my other contribution to this volume.

As Anne Tomiche has pointed out, ‘[Lyotard’s] use of the term “anamnesis” does not refer to Plato’s epistemological and psychological theory of knowledge’, but is elaborated in dialogue with Freudian psychoanalysis.⁴ Lyotard associates anamnesis with the Freudian *Durcharbeitung* (working-through), most famously defined in contradistinction to other modes of recollection in Freud’s 1914 essay on psychoanalytic technique titled ‘*Erinnern, Wiederholen und Durcharbeiten* (Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through)’.⁵ While something ‘simply’ for-

4 Tomiche, ‘Anamnesis’, p. 75 and p. 82.

5 Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, 17 vols (London: Imago, 1940–52), x: *Werke aus den Jahren 1913–1917* (1946), pp. 125–36; *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. by James Strachey, 24 vols (London: Hogarth, 1953–74),

gotten can be remembered, repressed ‘impressions, scenes or experiences’⁶ usually do not resurface as a memory, but, unbeknownst to the analysand, as an acting out in their life or in the transference relation to the analyst. Acting-out, another name for repetition, therefore constitutes a form of resistance to remembering: stuck in the loop of reiteration, the analysand does not know what they repeat. The analytic technique, relying on free association and transference, implies a working-through of the patient’s resistances, including screen memories and primal scenes, which do not ‘hide’ other memories but indicate the existence of repressed phantasies and mnemonic traces left by impressions that have never reached consciousness.⁷ Recollection, remembrance, (secondary) repression, resurfacing, repetition, resistance: all these modalities of memory imply the reiteration, indeed, the ceaseless retelling of a psyche to safeguard the linearity of causal temporality.

Lytard’s originality with respect to the Freudian *Durcharbeitung* concerns most clearly its temporal dimension.⁸ Indeed, in order to elaborate anamnesis as a pivotal operator, Lyotard combines the working-through of the paper on analytic technique with the temporal structure of afterwardsness (or *Nachträglichkeit*; in French: *après-coup*) and its corollary of primal repression that Freud first described in the early *Project for a Scientific*

XII: *The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works* (1958), pp. 145–56. Anne Tomiche notes that ‘the term [...] does not belong to Freud’s main lexicon’, but becomes an important operator in Lyotard’s works (*Anamnesis*, p. 76).

6 Freud, *ibid.*, p. 148.

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 148–49. For a comparison of the descriptions of screen memories in Proust and Freud, see in particular Jean-Yves Tadié, *Le Lac inconnu. Entre Proust et Freud* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), pp. 79–85.

8 See Tomiche, *Anamnesis*, p. 82.

Psychology. As will become clear, this combination allows to think an unconscious that is not constituted by repressed representations, but is completely non-representational, and therefore radically escapes any philosophy of consciousness.⁹ Anamnesis, understood as the act of working through representations and scenes towards the affect that knows no scene and escapes any representation, becomes for Lyotard a privileged modality of opening of a passage toward a 'past' that is lost — neither forgotten nor repressed, but indeed never inscribed in the first place.

As Lyotard demonstrates in *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, *Nachträglichkeit* implies 'a double blow that is constitutively asymmetrical'.¹⁰ A first event strikes the psychic apparatus, but its intensity is too excessive to allow the psychic apparatus to record it, let alone assimilate it. Lyotard illustrates this mechanism through an analogy with a whistle too high-pitched to be perceived by the human ear.¹¹ Not recorded, this first blow nonetheless leaves an imperceptible trace, which is dubbed, after Freud, 'unconscious affect' — although, as Lyotard notes, it is not localizable 'within' the psyche.¹² Lyotard imagines this trace 'to be like a cloud of energy particles that are not subject to serial laws, that are not organized into sets

9 Claire Nouvet has analyzed this distinction in 'For "Emma"', in *Traversals of Affect*, ed. by J. Gaillard, C. Nouvet, and M. Stoholski, pp. 37–54 (p. 39).

10 Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, transl. by Andreas Michel and Mark S. Robert (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 15. The pages on the mechanism of *après-coup* have already been commented in J. Gaillard, 'The Task of Thinking (in) The Postmodern Space of "The Zone"', in *Traversals of Affect*, ed. by J. Gaillard, C. Nouvet, and M. Stoholski, pp. 229–46 (pp. 234–37).

11 Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, p. 15.

12 See Nouvet, 'For "Emma"', p. 41.

that can be thought in terms of words or images, that do not experience any attraction at all.¹³ Because it has not been inscribed, the effect of the shock cannot be repressed: it insists beyond any word or image, beyond any representation, diffuse and inert. This is what Lyotard identifies after Freud as *Urverdrängung* (primal repression) — although it is not exactly ‘repressed’, for lack of prior inscription. The first blow is therefore ‘a shock without affect.’¹⁴ The second blow, conversely, is

an affect without shock: I buy something in a store, anxiety crushes me, I flee, but nothing had really happened. The energy dispersed in the affective cloud condenses, gets organized, brings on an action, commands a flight without a ‘real’ motive. And it is this flight, the feeling that accompanies it, which informs consciousness *that* there is something, without being able to tell *what* it is. It indicates the *quod* but not the *quid*.¹⁵

The sudden surfacing of affect cannot be ascribed to any apparent cause. According to the chronology of temporalizing consciousness, the affect that surfaces as the second ‘blow’ merely indicates that ‘there is’ something, without providing any indication as to what that ‘thing’ may be. This affect has no representation, no content but itself. As such, the second shock is not properly *caused* by the first blow, whose effects remained ‘outside the scene’ of the psychic apparatus — outside of any representation, conscious or unconscious. This implies a dismantling of chronology. Indeed:

13 Lyotard, *Heidegger and ‘the jews’*, p. 15.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

15 *Ibid.*

This 'before' of the *quod* is also an 'after' of the *quid*. For whatever is now happening in the store (i.e., the terror and the flight) does not *come from* [*proviient*]; it *comes back* [*revient*] from the first blow, from the shock, from the 'initial' excess that remained outside the scene, even unconscious, deposited outside representation. This is at least the Freudian (and Proustian) hypothesis. We may call this the chronologization, obtained by virtue of anamnesis, the setting into diachrony of what takes place in a time that is not diachronic, since what happened earlier is given at a later date (in analysis, in writing), and since what is later in the symptom (the second blow) occurs 'before' what happened earlier (the first blow). This chronologization of a time that is not chronological, this retrieval of a time (the first blow) that is lost because it has not had place and time in the psychic apparatus, that has not been noticed there, fulfills exactly the presumed function of a protective shield that Freud attributes to it in *Jenseits* [Lyotard is here referring to Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, J.G.]. Narrative organization is constitutive of diachronic time, and the time that it constitutes has the effect of 'neutralizing' an 'initial' violence, of representing a presence without representation, of staging the obscene, of disassociating the past from the present, and of staging a recollection that must be a reappropriation of the improper, achronological affect.¹⁶

Affect occurs 'before' the 'initial' shock which has 'caused' it: never registered by consciousness, detached from its logical origin, the unconscious affect knows no causality and obeys no chronology. As Claire Nouvet writes, 'it presents itself over and over again, without ever representing itself, each time as if for the first time.'¹⁷ Its achronic temporality undoes diachrony, interrupts it. Anamnesis thus can

16 Ibid., translation modified.

17 Nouvet, 'For "Emma"', p. 43.

be defined as the attempt to account for this unsettling achrony within a narrative organization that will establish the link between the first and the second blow, articulate the order of causes and effects within a chronological sequence of past, present, and future. The unconscious affect, a monstrosity for consciousness, is thereby forgotten in the very moment when it is ‘treated’, bound by the linear temporality of causal explanation. Always belated with respect to the apparition of the affect that seizes it, consciousness must reintegrate it into the causal diachrony of a sequence of scenes.¹⁸

In Lyotard’s works, ‘Proust’ and his *Recherche* become the passwords summarizing the workings of this aberrant temporality, and this necessity for consciousness of ‘explaining’ the affect by integrating it within a causal sequence, by narrating it. Their mention is always parenthetical, appositional, analogical — as if they were transparent synonyms for ‘anamnesis’. According to the temporality of afterwardsness, the affect without a cause befalls the subject ‘before’ any ‘reason’ that could have caused it in the first place can be even searched for — since whatever event caused this affect has never been registered. Which is why the directionality of the search, of the *Recherche*, proceeds *at the same time* backward and forward (in the chronological time of conscious succession): my *recherche*, my anamnesis, is initiated by an affect whose cause actually lies ahead of me, since it is reconstructed *après-coup*. Trying to understand it, attempting to locate its source, I will always be out of step with it. I contend that this mech-

18 See also Tomiche, ‘Anamnesis’, p. 82 and Nouvet, ‘For “Emma”’, p. 42, as well as ‘The Inarticulate Affect: Lyotard and Psychoanalytic Testimony’, in *Minima Memoria: In the Wake of Jean-François Lyotard*, ed. by Claire Nouvet, Kent Still, and Zrinka Stahuljak (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 106–22 (pp. 120–21).

anism, at stake in Lyotard's statement that 'things past are remembered ahead' (*le temps perdu se recherche en avant*), is also exactly what Proust describes in scenes such as the famous one of the Madeleine:

Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I sensed that it was connected with the taste of the tea and the cake, but that it infinitely transcended those savours, could not, indeed, be of the same nature. Where did it come from? What did it mean? How could I seize and apprehend it? [...] I put down the cup and examine my own mind. It alone can discover the truth. But how? What an abyss of uncertainty, whenever the mind feels overtaken by itself; when it, the seeker, is at the same time the dark region through which it must go seeking and where all its equipment will avail it nothing. Seek? More than that: create. It is face to face with something which does not yet exist, which it alone can make actual, which it alone can bring into the light of day.¹⁹

'Seek? [*chercher?*] More than that: create.' Proust writes it in so many words: explaining the sudden occurrence of an affect that befalls the subject 'without the notion of its cause' is not only a search backward to retrieve an origin: it is a search forward to produce it. And for Proust, as for Lyotard, the same goes for artistic creation in general, and for the structure of *À la recherche du temps perdu* in particular. As Anne Tomiche summarizes: 'Proust's cycle functions as a paradigm for the literary work of anamnesis because, Lyotard explains, the *Recherche*, which is entirely structured as a search for lost time, ends but only to open, at the end,

19 Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, 6 vols, trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. by D. J. Enright (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 1: *Swann's Way*, p. 61.

onto the time when the writing of the *Recherche* begins.²⁰ Affect does not demand to be reintegrated into the diachrony of causes: but consciousness seeks to integrate it nonetheless, creating scenes and links between scenes to account for it — thereby bound to miss it over and over again. Which is why anamnesis is interminable, and why the *Recherche*, as Lyotard writes, ‘ends on an acknowledgement of a debt [*une reconnaissance de dette*]’, in spite of the immense effort of Proust’s writing.²¹ The ‘lost time’ that affect is remains ‘lost’ for consciousness, ‘lost’ for representation, and nonetheless keeps re-presenting itself in making itself be felt, obliquely, through the lure of scenes that are always questioned as such.²²

But if the aim of anamnesis is to work through the resistance of matter, of representations, of ‘scenes’, in order to ‘regain’, as it were, or at least approach this ‘essence of time lost’, then it no longer has much to do with memory. What would be a memory of something that has never known any inscription? What does it mean to search back towards something that has never taken place?

With Proust, to create is to bear witness to the fact that ‘some-thing’ has been forgotten that escapes any retrieval because it escapes empirical diachrony. One could easily demonstrate throughout all aspects of the *Recherche* the in-

20 Tomiche, ‘Anamnesis’, p. 83.

21 Jean-François Lyotard, ‘La Peinture, anamnèse du visible’, in *Misère de la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 2000), pp. 97–115 (p. 104), my translation.

22 Tomiche, ‘Anamnesis’, p. 83: ‘all memories and all representations are questioned as possible deceptions [...] Freud and Proust meet in this remembrance of things past which is the task of art — and if anamnesis is a search for lost time, it is not insofar as the time lost would be represented, or even presented, but insofar as art ensures a passage towards the essence of time lost, a “pure affect”, the “pure event” of a “it happens”.’

sistence of such a motif and its effects in style, as creation opens a passage toward the immemorial affect through the matter of words and sounds. The narrator of *The Captive*, to quote only one instance, notes that the unique accent of Vinteuil's music is proof of the irreducibly singular existence of the soul, and asks: 'That Song, ... where did Vinteuil learn it, hear it? Each artist seems like the citizen of an unknown fatherland, forgotten to themselves (*une patrie inconnue, oubliée de lui-même*).'²³ To create is to remember the immemorial. Writing, as anamnesis, as *recherche*, is always belated, and always treasonous: it is bound to betray the pure occurrence of the affect that set it in motion. However, only this *recherche* can bear witness to the factuality of that *temps perdu*.

With the framing of 'time lost' according to primal repression, a psychoanalytic reading of the *Recherche* meets the question of the immemorial. It thus reaches the question left in suspense previously: that of the possible reconciliation of the immemorial time of the unconscious and the immemorial time of essences. As I have begun to show in my other contribution to this volume, Kristeva seems to hesitate when it comes to identifying the nature of the Schopenhauerian 'Being' she discerns at the core of the temporality of the *Recherche*. On the one hand, Being would be the unconscious, but she also ventures to hypothesize, beyond the unconscious, an inordinate attempt to escape any subjectivity and reach some state prior to the formation of the psychic apparatus [*s'évader du subjectif*

23 Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, 7 vols, ed. by Jean-Yves Tadié and others (Paris: Gallimard, 1988–90), v: *La prisonnière* (1989), p. 245, my translation. By positing that the singularity of an artist lies in a forgotten 'fatherland' inside the subject unbeknownst to them, Proust seems to describe an immemorial that is not abstract and/or collective but indeed singular.

pour atteindre le prépsychique’].²⁴ Lyotard’s combination of the Freudian motifs of *Durcharbeitung* and *Nachträglichkeit* accounts for two kinds of unconscious: one formed by repressed representations, and the other void of any representational character. Can’t we see, in this ‘beyond’ of the representational unconscious, some kinship with the unconscious affect that Lyotard associates with primal repression?

We saw that, on the other hand, Deleuze does away with the hypothesis of a directionality determined by the workings of the unconscious and considers the revelation of the pure, absolute, immemorial time of essences to be the consecration of an apprenticeship that will ultimately reveal that the immemorial was there from the beginning, enmeshed in all other temporalities that it sustains without hardly ever letting itself be felt, outside of reminiscences and of the signs of art. Yet Lyotard contends that Deleuze and psychoanalysis can be reconciled. In *Heidegger and ‘the jews’*, having formulated the Freudian hypothesis of an unconscious devoid of representational formations, Lyotard explicitly builds on Deleuze’s reading of Proust as he is about to introduce the specificity of *Nachträglichkeit*:

[Deleuze] discovers in *À la recherche du temps perdu* the sort of past that interests us here, a past beyond [*en deçà*] of the forgotten, much closer to the present moment [*l’actuel*] than any past, at the same time that it is incapable of being solicited by voluntary and conscious memory — a past Deleuze says that is not past but always there.

24 Julia Kristeva, ‘Entretien: La Transsubstanciation de Proust: une suspension du refoulement’, in *Marcel Proust, visiteur des psychanalystes*, ed. by Andrée Bauduin and Françoise Coblenc (Paris: PUF, 2003), pp. 63–95 (p. 68).

Whatever Deleuze might think of this, there is in Freud's own approach and tone a way of articulating this paradox of the immemorial.²⁵

And elsewhere he states: "The "signs" that Deleuze, in his *Proust*, comments on so well are these affects, outside of diachrony. Signs that are signed by the "reason" of the associative fabric, the thing, that writing at the same time marks and misses."²⁶ The 'signs' signal towards the *quod* without *quid* of affect, of the immemorial, of the Lacanian 'thing (chose)', that insists 'unbeknownst', the trace of its present absence in representation.

The hypothesis of *recherche* as anamnesis, i.e. as a working through the scenes of secondary repression towards an affect without representation given by primal repression, which insists under representation, time lost under the present, brings together the determinist hypothesis of the unconscious and the teleological hypothesis of the immemorial. The *Recherche* is not oriented towards its origin or its end in a linear fashion, rather it spreads out into the illogical space where beginning and end correspond, where the end motivates, creates the beginning. Time lost is not a time accessible to experience yet its effects are felt concretely: it is what motivates the perpetual search, constantly torn between the two poles of an end, that is an origin, and of an origin, that comes at the end.

25 Lyotard, *Heidegger and 'the jews'*, p. 12, translation modified.

26 Lyotard, 'La Peinture, anamnèse du visible', p. 103, my translation; cf. 'Les "signes" que Deleuze, dans son *Proust*, commente si bien, sont ces affects, hors diachronie. Des signes que signe la "raison" du tissu associatif, la chose, que l'écriture à la fois marque et manque.'

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