Louise L. Lambrichs: trauma, dream and narrative

The novels of Louise Lambrichs are brilliant but troubling psychological dramas focusing on the traumas that inhabit the family romance: incest, sterility, the death of those we love and the terrible legacy of mourning. Bringing together themes of loss and recompense, Lambrichs’s novels trace with infinite delicacy the reactions of those who suffer and seek obsessively for comfort and understanding. But equally they perform a subtle and often chilling evocation of the secrets, lies and crimes that bind a family together and create a pattern of behaviour that can motivate or cripple subsequent generations. Louise Lambrichs’s œuvre comprises five novels but also a number of factual or biographical works on medical issues such as cancer, dyslexia and sterility. These concerns are reflected in her novels which often deal with the pain of having, losing and desiring children, and indeed the two novels I shall be discussing here, *Journal d’Hannah* and *A ton image*, conform to this pattern.1 *Journal d’Hannah* concerns a woman forced to abort a much-wanted second child and subsequently rendered sterile, while *A ton image* deals with the issues of cloning and incest. However, the fascination of Lambrichs’s novels lies less with the medical issues than in the psychological perspective she adopts. Her work persistently explores the creative possibilities inherent in our psychic resources – the way that unconscious mental life conjures up both convoluted resolutions and swift, brutally annihilating breakdowns in the aftermath of traumatic experience. Memory and dream dominate Lambrichs’s work as she explores the mind’s ability to reorder and retell damaging experience.

The telling of stories is always central to her novels and for Lambrichs, when narrative fails or proves insufficient, dreams provide powerful and significant stories too. The links between narrative and the dream will
provide the focus of my analysis on Lambrichs’s work, in which I will suggest that dreams function as densely signifying microcosmic narratives. Dreams are related to memory, and to traumatic memory in particular, in the way that they offer a form of symbolic expression to events that would otherwise remain beyond the power of narrative to represent. In retrospect, the protagonist’s first-person narrative in Lambrichs’s texts often turns out to have performed a slow and exacting elaboration of the intense but confusing message which the dream conveys. My aim, then, in this analysis, is to consider the interplay between dream and narrative in the long process of rehabilitation and expiation performed by the narrators of Lambrichs’s novels in their endeavour to survive trauma.

The most striking exploration of dreams to be found in Lambrichs’s texts comes in *Journal d’Hannah*, which recounts in diary form the story of a Jewish woman forced to abort her much-wanted second child by her husband who is fighting in the Resistance. The operation leaves her sterile and traumatised, but the child she has lost lives on in an intense and vivid dream life. These dreams develop into a kind of parallel existence for Hannah, a phantasy life in which her aborted child grows and ages in real time. It is a life which denies loss and mourning, for in these dreams not only Louise, the baby she lost, but also her family, deported during the war, are restored to her. This is then, quite literally, a haunting novel that unites the personal tragedy of a lost child with the historical tragedy of genocide. In both private and public cases of trauma the problem of memory is paramount. In her diary Hannah asks ‘Comment faire pour ne pas oublier sans vivre hanté par le souvenir?’ (p. 201) (How to manage not to forget without living on haunted by memory?), and this enquiry provides a hidden guiding principle to the text, a principle that is rarely articulated, but is blatantly manifest in the workings of her dream life. Hannah embarks on a series of dreams a couple of months after her abortion that will continue for some twenty years. She gives birth to a baby girl, Louise, who will develop in perfect conjunction with temporal reality: ‘je m’apercevais que mon rêve la représentait à l’âge exact qu’elle aurait eu, si elle avait vécu’ (p. 60) (I realised that my dream showed her at the precise age she would have been, if she had lived). But more than this the dreams themselves have a narrative quality to them that is astonishing. Hannah writes: ‘les images que je vois sont si vraies, si logiquement assemblées, si conformes à la représentation habituelle du monde réel, que j’ai l’impression d’assister à un spectacle où un autre que moi, qui simplement porte le même nom, Hannah, s’occupe d’élever une petite fille, Louise’ (p. 61) (the images are so real, so logically
put together, so true to the usual picture of real life, that I have the impression of watching a drama where someone other than me, who simply shares my name, Hannah, is busy bringing up a little girl, Louise). These are dreams, then, because they take place at night, while she is asleep, but not dreams in the usual understanding of the term.

Dreams are not narratives in the conventional sense; they do not generally tell coherent stories or generate readily understandable significance. Instead they tend to play havoc with our notions of cause and effect, rework and reformulate relations of space and time, and push back the boundaries of representation in their excessive use of symbolism and metaphor. Dreams are to reality what particularly obscure modern poetry is to the novel; they are playful improvisation with a dash of karaoke, instead of the sober method acting of everyday life. Dreams are performative in the Butlerian sense of the word; they bring something into being, enact something, and this process is taken to its logical excess in Journal d’Hannah. Freud suggested that dreams were the dramatisation of an idea: ‘But this feature of dream-life can only be fully understood if we further recognise that in dreams . . . we appear not to think but to experience’. And the ideas that we experience in our dreams are essentially derived from the translation of reality as a whole into a field of emotive forces. The longing, the wishing, the fearing, underlying our everyday behaviour becomes the stuff of our dreams, but recontextualised in odd and unsettling ways. The emotional punch of Journal d’Hannah lies in the unspoken recognition that Hannah’s loss is too unbearable to accept and is instead transformed into the hallucinatory experience of her dream life with Louise.

Freud’s essential premise in The Interpretation of Dreams was that dreams are exercises in wish-fulfilment, but that wishes are disguised and distorted so that the dreamer’s sleep should remain untroubled. While The Interpretation of Dreams was written almost before the birth of psychoanalysis proper, dream analysis has subsequently become intrinsic to clinical practice. The hope remains that unravelling the complex web of associations and symbols will lead back to the unconscious wishes lying behind a patient’s neurosis. Melanie Klein understood dreams as being made from the stuff of unconscious phantasy. To borrow Hanna Segal’s definition: ‘a phantasy is an unconscious wish, worked on by logical thought so as to give rise to a disguised expression and imaginary fulfilment of the original wish’. Klein watched young children at play and noted the extent to which phantasies dominated the child’s game and guided his or her perception. She came to believe that phantasy is with us
from the earliest moments of subjectivity (in opposition to Freud who
believed that fantasies came much later in life and then only intermittently),
and that there can be no desire without an imaginary picturing of its fulfil-
ment, and no form of hunger that is not experienced mentally as torture or
persecution. Wishes are insistent, demanding but ambivalent creatures,
urging us on to the joys of their satisfaction, but reminding us always of the
terror underlying absence or loss. Wish-fulfilment phantasies defend us
against the unpalatable thought of not having while continually reminding
us that our fragile mental balance requires such excessive defence.

This ambivalence is openly apparent in the Lambrichs text. To begin
with, pleasure and comfort characterise Hannah’s dreams, along with their
curious lifelike quality. But as the journal progresses her struggle to regain
control over her life reflects her investment in the dream existence. Periods
of profound stress are also periods of intense dreams, and the desire to stop
dreaming about Louise always accompanies the desire to ‘return’ to her
family. Hannah’s ambivalent response to her dreams goes beyond the
ambivalence of wish-fulfillment to reflect a more profound schism in the
structure of her life. Hannah’s dream life marks the start of a period of
extreme instability, fraught with psychic traumas, near breakdowns, perse-
cuctions and paranoia, and recounted with odd breaks and lacunae. In com-
parison her dreams are impossibly coherent, linear and representational. It
would seem that, in this text, dream and reality have changed places,
dreams providing a compensatory narrative to combat the nightmare of
Hannah’s existence. But the pleasure of these dreams is nevertheless trans-
gressive and forbidden. They are too real, transcending the rules of dream-
work and becoming alarming in their own right. And while they represent
a recompense for an unbearable loss, that recompense cannot be recon-
ciled with reality. The recompense takes place, precisely, in another life, an
alternative, not a complement to the one she inhabits.

One reason why this dream life is so complex in its motivation involves
the excessive mourning that surrounds Hannah’s lost fertility. As a covert
accompaniment to the narrative of her aborted child, Hannah mourns the
loss of her Jewish identity and the death of her family members. In the
dream landscape she creates, her father, mother and sister share her life
with Louise. The guilt of the survivor inhibits her mourning work, translated
into other forms of implied, understated, but crippling guilt: guilt at
having denied her Jewishness in order to avoid deportation, and guilt at
having ‘murdered’ her baby as she puts it, in order to avoid detection. This
private atrocity renders her, in her own eyes, complicit with those who
murdered her family. Occasionally the relationship between war trauma and abortion trauma is made painfully explicit: ‘Moi je ne peux pas. Ni faire des enfants. Ni oublier la guerre. Peut-être en effet, cela va-t-il de pair’ (p. 107) (As for me, I can’t. Have children. Or forget the war. Perhaps in effect the two go hand in hand). ‘Moi je ne peux pas’, she states, and it is the ‘cannot-ness’ here that is so striking and so unconquerable. The convoluted interrelation of loss, guilt, anger and anxiety proves impossible to overcome or assimilate in any meaningful way. In order to continue at all in the face of such loss, Hannah needs a neurotic solution in the form of a symbol, created to carry the weight of her trauma; that symbol is Louise.

I will return to this concept of symbol formation in more detail below, but the function of a psychic symbol is beautifully illustrated within the text itself. Hannah recounts a nightmare in which she is bouncing a ball against a wall with her friend Elizabeth, who has just betrayed her in real life. She knows that if she drops the ball she will be deported to the concentration camp by Elizabeth, but she has just sustained an injury to her hand and will bleed to death unless she can attend to it. ‘J’ai le choix entre deux morts’ (I have the choice between two deaths) Hannah recounts, and at this precise moment Louise arrives and takes her place in the game. This scenario offers a neat figurative representation of her psychic life, caught between two deaths: the death of her Jewish identity represented by the fear of the concentration camp, and the death of her maternal identity, represented by the cut that will cause her to bleed to death. The fact that what she most fears has already happened – she is sterile and a Gentile – is psychically irrelevant. Her unconscious mind is unable to accept the finality of her loss and she is simply caught between these deaths, facing the prospect of radical breakdown represented in the dream by her inability to play the game any more. Into this stalemated situation comes Louise who will play on for her. Her investment in Louise does not solve the problem of these two deaths, but it provides a viable alternative to breakdown in the face of trauma which cannot be assimilated.

So, although Hannah’s dreams may appear superficially to be paradise dreams, their motivation stems from extreme anxiety. Implicitly, the story of this curious dream life is really the story of a psychic breakdown, the processes of which I will now attempt to uncover. The psychoanalysts van der Kolk and van der Hart make a distinction between traumatic memory and narrative memory.6 Narrative memory functions like a kind of personal soap opera, in that every little scene we experience is assigned a meaning because we recognise it as part of an ongoing plot. The mind is continually
sifting experience to fit into existing categories, as well as seeking new ways of putting things together. This kind of memory is wholly flexible, but also perhaps, unreliable, somewhat distant from the events that inspired it. Traumatic memory, by contrast, concerns horrific, terrifying events that cannot be tamed into general narratives. Under these circumstances the memory enters psychic space as an insistent image that cannot be possessed because it cannot be mentally digested, broken down into understandable parts and assimilated. The memory therefore loses none of its lived reality and returns to consciousness as if it were happening all over again. At this point there is, I believe, an important link to be made between the memory of trauma and the dream life that Hannah experiences in the novel. This link involves the process of symbolisation.

Symbolisation is the basic process in the creation of phantasies, which are, as I discussed earlier, the means by which the mind copes with desires and fears. There is a necessary distinction between what we can hold in our minds and what we experience in reality, just as the contents of our stomachs are not identical to the food that we eat; in both cases transformation takes place and symbolisation is the main way that mental digestion occurs. In *Dream, Phantasy and Art*, the psychoanalyst Hanna Segal makes an opposition between two forms of symbolisation, one healthy and one neurotic, that echoes the distinction between memory categories by van der Kolk and van der Hart. Segal opposes the healthy *symbolic representation*, where the symbol represents the object but is not experienced as the same thing, to the neurotic *symbolic equation* where a mental symbol is so identified with the object symbolised that the two are equated. Segal argues that symbolisation is essential in the work of mourning, where the mind deals with loss by creating a symbol in place of the object, which can then be mentally internalised. Symbols do not deny loss, but rather actively work to overcome it by offering a valid psychic recompense for the lost object. Segal argues that: ‘It is only if the dead person can be felt as symbolically introjected and the internal object is symbolic of the lost person that internal reparation, necessary to overcome mourning, can be achieved’ (*Dream, Phantasy and Art*, pp. 37–8). However, when symbol formation goes wrong, that symbol is experienced concretely, that is to say, not as a representation of the lost object, but as the object itself. I think that Lambrichs’s text offers a possible perspective on this kind of pathological mourning. It can be understood as a kind of mental indigestion whereby the introjected symbol resists the mind’s attempt to break it down and remains instead autonomous, separate, solid. Hannah introjects her lost
baby in her process of mourning, but the nature of the baby’s loss, bound up as it is with the loss of her family and her personal guilt, make this such an overdetermined symbol that a hitch occurs in the mourning. Louise and her family live on inside Hannah, that is the symbolic recompense, but they live an autonomous existence, a life experienced as ‘real’, which is the neurotic solution.

That this neurotic solution should be accomplished through dreams is interesting for a number of reasons. Freud’s premise that all dreaming was covert wish-fulfilment ran aground when it hit the anxiety or trauma dream: he could find no satisfactory explanation for it. As I argued earlier, Hannah’s dreams, although fulfilling wishes to some degree, are actually closer to anxiety dreams in structure and motivation. Trevor Pateman argues that: ‘An anxiety dream is a failed dream – a dream which fails to symbolize the anxiety-creating wishes which it represents in such a way that the dreamer can sleep on without waking’. Hannah’s dreams reflect this argument to a certain degree, but any failure of symbolic achievement in Hannah’s dreams is offset by their persistence. The twenty-year span of her dream life would imply that some kind of mental work was nevertheless underway. In his essay ‘The psychological function of dreams’ James L. Foss hage presents a useful summary of current theory, arguing that instead of wish-fulfilment: ‘new models of dream formation . . . have emphasized the function of integration, synthesis and mastery’. In other words, dreams have a significant role to play in maintaining, and also repairing, the healthy psychic structures of the mind. We can understand the dream as a space in which the mind’s creativity comes into juxtaposition with both trivial details of the day and the excessively significant emotive forces of the unconscious. In this crucible, symbolisation takes place, promoting the process of healthy mental digestion, albeit in a haphazard if ingenious fashion. While the dreams represented in Lambrichs’s texts certainly seem to aim for this reparative function, the texts themselves show this process to be long, imperfect and perhaps endless without the help of narrative. I stated at the beginning of this analysis that I would argue that the dreams in Lambrichs’s texts constitute condensed stories that need a narrative reworking and interpretation in order to perform successfully their restorative function. This point is clearly illustrated by reference to the dream that stands at the heart of Lambrichs’s later novel, *A ton image*.

*A ton image* tells the chilling tale of Jean Letertre, an obstetrician desperate to escape the incestuous crimes of his childhood. Seduced by his retarded younger sister the night before he leaves for medical studies in...
Paris, he discovers that she has been repeatedly abused by his father. Like Oedipus before him, he attempts to leave these sins as far behind him as possible, little knowing that he is unwittingly moving towards a dramatic confrontation with them in the future. In Paris he meets an older woman who has lost her husband and sons in a car crash. They marry and, when Françoise turns out to be sterile, he secretly arranges for her to clone a child. Jean adores his daughter, France, but her existence fills him with fear; fear for her future well-being, fear that Françoise will find out she is a clone (she does eventually and commits suicide), and an unknown, primal fear that stems from his own childhood. Their story ends in tragedy when France, developing unusually fast for her age, seduces him (she is after all fulfilling her destiny as a replica of Françoise, she is not his biological daughter) and full of anger, shame and guilt, Jean kills her. This complex and mesmerising novel is a long disquisition on love, desire and the vulnerability of parents. It is an exploration of traumatic memory and the ambivalence of sin, a sophisticated enquiry into issues of cloning, genetic inheritance and repetition, but most significantly here it is a hymn to the power of the dream. ‘J’avais aimé, rêvé et tout perdu, j’avais à la fois réalisé et tué mon rêve’ (p. 365) (I had loved, dreamed, and lost everything; I had both brought my dream to life and killed it) Jean declares at the end, and the dream refers to the way France troubled the borderline between fantasy and reality, as well as the dream of a happy childhood unscarred by incest which Jean had dreamed for himself, as well as for France. Actual dreams are a recurrent feature of the text, and one dream which stands at its centre provides a key prophetic moment. In this dream Jean enters a hall full of mirrors and people where a clown guides them through a series of games. Jean cheats by using a pack of cards he has in his pocket, but pleasure at winning is offset by fear of being found out. In the final game the clown displays letters on an overhead projector, but rather than spelling out ‘clown’, as they should, the word ‘clone’ appears. Jean fears the worst but the clown blames the machine, the people leave and Jean is injected with truth serum.

Many details in this scenario offer transformed representations of key elements in the text; the hall of mirrors signifies the reflection and reproduction of cloning, ‘using his own cards’ signifies the insider knowledge he took advantage of to create France, and the fact that he has to build a house of cards in one game points to the fragility of his domestic situation. The figure of the clown mirrors Jean’s position, emphasising disguise and illusion and the masking of his identity (‘Ce que j’étais vraiment, ce que je suis, je ne l’ai partagé avec personne’ (p. 366) (The truth of who I was, who I am,
I have never shared with anybody). Although it is necessary for him to create a new, successful persona, he longs to take off the mask to reveal and understand himself. Above all the dream’s emotive field is one of deceit. Transgression and guilt colour the dream and motivate its twists and turns, but equally they capture the mood of Jean’s narrative as a whole. Jean is writing the narrative retrospectively as he waits in prison for his trial (although the reader does not know his crime until the end), but what his narrative resists above all is hindsight:

*lire l’histoire à rebours, l’interpréter à la lumière de la fin, désormais connue, est-il légitime? Si la lecture qui en résulte est cohérente et ainsi plus satisfaisante pour l’esprit, elle trahit à mes yeux ce qui fait le prix de l’existence, cette part d’inconnu et de hasard, cette incroyable succession de croisées de chemin où, chaque fois, on a cru librement choisir sa direction.* (p. 47)

(Is it permissible to read the story backwards, to interpret it in the light of the conclusion, now that it is known? If the reading that results is coherent and therefore more intellectually satisfying, it fails to represent what I see as the price of existence: the part played by chance and the unknown, that unbelievable series of crossroads where, every time, we thought we chose our way freely.)

The importance of the borderline between chance and predetermination is represented in the dream by the series of games Jean plays and his cheating. But the meaning attached to chance is bound up covertly, significantly with France; as a clone her biological future, her health and mental well-being are entirely unpredictable, and the narrative continually hints that she is at risk in this respect. The bitter irony resides in her perfect predictability as the exact replica of her mother. She will come to desire Jean and bring about their downfall.

This too is inscribed in the dream but, appropriately and tellingly, in a tiny detail; the tapestries on the walls depict a hunting scene where the hunters are men and the prey women. But all is not as it seems: ‘je me rendis compte que le danger venait moins des hommes, qui tenaient leurs fusils comme des stylos, que des femmes qui, toutes, dissimulaient dans une main la lame brillante et aiguisée d’un poignard de poche’ (p. 217) (I realised that the danger came less from the men, who held their guns like pens, but from the women, whose hands contained hidden the brilliant, sharpened blades of pocket knives). Although Jean is ostensibly the criminal, he has been a victim of the overwhelming desires of the women he has...
loved; his sister’s desire for him, France’s desire for him and Françoise’s desire for a child. Jean’s real crime has been an inability to oppose their wills – this craven lassitude stems from his childhood: ‘avec une implacable constance j’avais dans cette maison choisi la soumission comme une solution de facilité’ (p. 39) (with unshakeable consistency I had chosen submission as the easiest option in that household). But what I suggest is most interesting about the scene on the tapestries is precisely the sudden switch that accompanies its interpretation. The picture is not what it seems; women are the aggressors, just as Jean’s crime is not what it seems; he is not France’s father but her creator. The abrupt volte-face of interpretation becomes a guiding principle of the narrative overall; where we expect harm to come to France from an external source, it is Jean who loves her who is her murderer; where we are afraid Jean will be caught out for conducting the experiment, the court of justice dismisses the claims that France is cloned as ridiculous. The impossibility of anticipation orders this narrative as it orders any dream narrative, but equally the consequences of Jean’s actions are perfectly logical with hindsight, or at least with a second glance, a look that sees differently, that assembles the elements of his narrative from a different perspective. And of course dream interpretation behaves in exactly this way, seeking a latent content from a manifest one. Shoshana Felman in her work What Does a Woman Want? tells how she ‘learned how dreams are indeed, concretely and materially, the royal road to the unconscious, how they were susceptible of telling us about our own autobiography another story than the one we knew or had believed to be our own’.10

Dreams, then, offer a way to experience our difference within, our internal and hidden otherness that nevertheless has a profound impact on our lives. Dreams act out the conflictual motivations that both dominate and cripple our psyches, but of course, the dream as an experience is confusing and complex. It requires recounting and interpreting if it is to be of psychic value, and Jean’s dream exemplifies this. It gains its significance from the narrative context in which it is situated and plays its part in the psychoanalytic scenario that the text enacts. Jean writes his narrative for his defence lawyer: ‘Comme si le seul fait d’avoir un lecteur autre que moi-même donnait enfin du sens à mon entreprise’ (p. 29) (As if the mere fact of having a reader other than myself gave some sense to my venture). Jean’s dream dramatises the cleavage he feels between his role as instigator of criminal actions, transgressing the rules of chance, and his sense of being an impotent spectator in his existence, prey to fear of disclosure precisely because
he has tried to control and deny fate. What he finally comes to terms with is the inescapable repetition and circularity of the family romance. Like Oedipus before him, he has tried and failed to evade his family destiny, and like Oedipus, he has been punished for attempting to play God.

If telling his narrative does not manage to elucidate and reduce the mysterious power of the family romance, Jean does at least end his tale both reconciled to it and making a final attempt to exert his will. He bequeaths some of his DNA to his defence lawyer in the hope that she will mother his clone. This is a narrative cure of sorts, but a more striking cure is effected in *Journal d’Hannah*. Hannah’s dream life continues for many years until, suddenly, Louise falls ill. Hannah is afraid not only of losing her phantasised daughter but of being unable to survive the loss. At this moment she makes the link to narrative, realising that she has been writing her journal in order to trace the contours of her subjectivity, in order to be in communication with herself. As she writes this she is unconfident in narrative’s ability to rescue her, arguing that: ‘L’écriture n’est pas une béquille. Elle aussi n’existe qu’à condition d’être une vie en plus. Comme Louise’ (p. 226) (Writing is not a crutch. It also exists on condition of being an extra life. Like Louise). This is a fascinating equation, investing autonomy in the text that is emotionally equivalent to Louise’s autonomy, that is to say, excessive, alarming, luxurious, compensatory. And indeed what happens next is that narrative does rescue her. Visiting a doctor she has never seen before she tells him the story of Louise, a story she has never told before (just as Jean has never before told the ‘truth’ of his tale), and this simple, if painful, expedient ends her dream life. I suggest that the dream life has fulfilled its purpose at this point, hence the weakness of Louise. It has provided a neurotic solution to carry Hannah over an impossibly difficult period of mourning, but now Hannah is finally ready to move on. The account of the narrative is described as: ‘une espèce de vomissement entrecoupé de larmes, comme si tout mon corps participait à l’expulsion de ce rêve impossible’ (p. 239) (a kind of vomiting, interspersed with tears, as if my whole body were involved in expelling this impossible dream). The terrible and wonderful secret is finally given up as a kind of vomiting, a symbolic expulsion of that mental indigestion, but equally a symbolic transformation from a concrete internalised sign to the more fluid and flexible representations of narrative. After all, Hannah has made the equation herself: narrative, like Louise is ‘une vie de plus’. Louise and her lost family can live on, but elsewhere.

In the final analysis, these two texts highlight the paradoxes that structure the workings of the psyche, the way that the mind creates complex and
clever solutions in times of impossible conflict, and also the way that those solutions are often partial, neurotic and fraught. The dream exemplifies this contradiction perfectly, being at once a creative and masterful dramatization of psychic disorder, and a troubling, haunting revelation of irreconcilable difference within. Dreams can provide powerful recompense in the face of loss and clever encapsulations of psychic dilemmas. However, they are incomplete without their interpretation in narrative. This is possibly why dreams fascinate so: they demand explanation as their essential counterpart. Both narratives point to the limits of the mind’s creative power in the face of trauma. The events of the Holocaust, for instance, continue to prove resistant to any form of symbolisation. Yet, in the final analysis, creativity holds our best hope of mental health, not just in the mind’s spectacular resources, nor in the infinite possibilities of narrative, but in the process of transformation between the two. Lambrichs’s work urges us to consider the alchemy of metamorphosis that takes place between inner and outer worlds, between experience and its internalisation, and between differing forms of symbolic representation, to discover to what extent we can truly possess our many lives.

Notes


7. Freud believed that traumatic dreams were a retrospective wish to master unpleasant stimulus by developing the anxiety which caused the neurosis. This led to his deduction of the repetition compulsion. For a more detailed reading of this, see...

