Topoi Revisited: memory and temporality in Sharon Kivland’s ‘Freud on Holiday’ and Evelyn Hofer’s ‘Emerson in Italy’

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Wherever you turn your eyes, every kind of vista, near and distant, confronts you – palaces, ruins, gardens, wildernesses, small houses, stables, triumphal arches, columns – all of them often so close together that they could be sketched on a single sheet of paper. One would need a thousand styluses to write with. What can one do here with a single pen? 1

1. Goethe 1962, 133.
When Goethe first traveled to Rome in 1786, he felt so overwhelmed by the impressions of the “Eternal City” that a palpable anxiety about the vastness and “unknowability” of Rome’s cultural riches seeps from the pages of his journals. “To take in even a small part of everything there is to see here, would take a lifetime”, he writes during a second visit to the city, “or, rather, the return of many human beings learning from each other in turn”. In a similar spirit, the *Topos & Topography* project has been concerned with the accumulation and representation of knowledge on the city of Rome across lifetimes and centuries of visits and visitors through the study of guidebooks, itineraries and travel accounts spanning from antiquity to the present day. My own contributions to the project have focused predominantly on the latter, and how we might use and interpret such documents as they shape journeys to Rome in the twenty-first century.

This paper does not explore a guidebook or itinerary, but analyses two creative re-interpretations of journeys made by historical figures in the past: the works of photographer Evelyn Hofer (1922–2009) and contemporary artist Sharon Kivland (b. 1955) who have, respectively, retraced the travels to Rome of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) through projects titled *Emerson in Italy* (Hofer and Barish 1989) and *Freud on Holiday* (Kivland 2006–2013). In manifold and ingenious ways the projects draw together past and present, self and other, here and there on the urban stage of Rome, creating performances of experience that are grounded in embodied perception as much as they are driven by the imagination; existing and evolving in the artists’ mind as much as they engage with the physical world. Through a close reading of the two projects in this paper, I examine the jumbling layers of presence and experience to uncover some of the traces and erasures of memory that emerge in these works, and explore what a return to Rome in the footsteps of someone else brings to our understanding and imagination of the “Eternal City”.3

*Emerson in Italy*

The project of German-born artist Evelyn Hofer consists of a series of black and white documentary photographs tracing the path of nineteenth-century American author Ralph Waldo Emerson across Italy and into Rome in 1832–1833. The photographs illustrate Evelyn Barish’s travel biography of the eminent Transcendentalist writer, poet and thinker, who undertook a nine-month journey through Europe at the age of twenty-nine in an effort to cure himself of the effects of a series of physical ailments, disillusionment with an unfulfilling career in the Puritan church, and the sudden death of his young wife less than two years into their marriage. Rome, and Italy in

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3. I would like to thank Sharon Kivland and Andreas Pauly for their kind assistance in producing this paper. Much gratitude to both for answering my questions, granting permission for reproduction of the photographs and, to Sharon in particular, for so generously filling in the gaps in my collection. I am also much indebted to Anna Blennow and Stefano Fogelberg Rota for inviting me to their project workshops in Rome.
general, symbolised for Emerson a period of freedom, of discovery, and of enjoyment – a return almost to childhood, which would help him regain his health and footing in the world after the illness and disenchantment he had suffered at home. Barish writes:

[Italy] represented not only freedom and the birthplace of art, but also a land where he could remake himself, learn his true faults and virtues, and find a way to complete the many plays and poems he had begun but not brought to solid life. He aimed to study nature closely, and to come back ‘reborn’, knowing better how to live and how to work – less frantically, less compulsively, more coherently. His fame was worldwide by the time his travel journal was published.

Emerson avoided the use of guides and guidebooks, deliberately wanting to see and discover Rome for himself, but he was deeply inspired by the writings of Goethe, who was still alive at the time of his journey. As one of very few books, Emerson carried the original version of the *Italian Journey* with him, sharing with Goethe the desire to find in Rome an inner peace and calm. In Emerson’s later Romanticist thinking, which set him on a course to become one of the most prominent Transcendentalist philosophers and writers in nineteenth-century American literature, the influences of the German author remain visible and can in many instances be traced back to Emerson’s journey through Italy.

At the time of her collaboration with Barish in 1986–1987, Hofer was an established photographer working and living in New York, well-known for her previous travel book collaborations – *The Stones of Florence* with Mary McCarthy (1959), and the trilogy *London Perceived* (1962), *New York Proclaimed* (1965) and *Dublin: A Portrait* (1967) with V.S. Pritchett – and widely celebrated for her extraordinary portrait photography and dye transfer colour work. In her documentation of Emerson’s journey to Italy, Hofer returned to the travel book format for the last time in her career to illustrate Barish’s biographical text, capturing Rome through its monuments, galleries, sculptures and stones, while framing the city as if seen through Emerson’s eyes. Little has been written about this body of work – *Emerson in Italy* has rarely received mention in discussions of her other travel books – and the photographs remain largely unknown beyond the book itself. But the pictures are no less important to her oeuvre nor less worthy of attention as they convey, possibly more than any others, a certain sense of timelessness with which Hofer was concerned throughout her career.

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8. Davis 2016; McCusker d.u.
10. Ibid.
Freud on Holiday


12. A fifth appendix, Freud’s Views, was published in September 2017 after completion of this paper.
To Freud traveling meant, amongst other things, pleasure, fulfillment, intellectual discovery, a search for origins, therapeutic experience, and time spent with family. He traveled on numerous occasions, despite a pervasive anxiety and phobia of train travel, and did so with a number of different companions, often visiting the same place several times.\footnote{14} Italy was a particularly beloved destination and came to function as a reference point and inspiration for his insights into psychoanalysis. According to psychoanalyst Gerard Haddad, “psychoanalysis and Italy reveal themselves to be inextricably linked” in Freud’s work.\footnote{15} Rome represented the ultimate object of Freud’s desire, with the “Eternal City” surfacing at least four times in his seminal work \textit{The Interpretation of Dreams} (1899). His eventual encounter with the city was thus a wish fulfilled and he described it as “the highpoint” of his life.\footnote{16}

Traveling shaped Freud’s thoughts on the theory of psychoanalysis and he often employed the metaphor of the journey in his work. Abroad, he found the time and inspiration to develop his thoughts and find answers to his questions, often through very specific experiences, such as the forgetting of a proper name, incidences which are discussed at length in his writings.\footnote{17} On his journey(s) “to and through psychoanalysis”, Simmons describes the figure of Freud as a “searching” character, not yet the “father of psychoanalysis” as he would come to be known later:

\begin{quote}
[T]his is not a Freud knowing and known, master and mastered, one who may be cited as a source for knowledge or for the analysis of other texts, or one who can simply be read unproblematically. The Freud confronted here is a reading full of resistances, contradictions, uncertainties, traps, representing a knowledge in which we must struggle to find a place [...].\footnote{18}
\end{quote}

In \textit{Freud on Holiday}, Kivland seeks to find this place by placing herself in Freud’s shoes, exploring and tracing these resistances, contradictions, uncertainties, and traps, creating her own understanding of his theory of psychoanalysis. Consciously and unconsciously blurring the boundaries between Freud’s travel experiences and her own, she makes at once Freud’s mind and her own the object of psychoanalytic study.\footnote{19} Eventually, between those holidays taken and those imagined, she admits that sometimes she does not know herself which really happened.\footnote{20}

The journeys that conflate Kivland’s travels with those of Freud’s are constructed through narrative writing and reproductions of drawings, postcards, family pictures and found photographs in the series of eight publications that might best be described in Steve Pile’s words as a “creative

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reimagining” of Freud’s holidays. In the series, Kivland writes performatively and uses language to reframe and replace what is historical in the contemporary, and what is contemporary in the historical, sacrificing clarity for a confusion of voices that bring into life an interplay of temporalities. The series is witty and whimsical, full of hidden references and double layers, many of which are intelligible only for those who are thoroughly familiar with Freud’s work. Borrowing a phrase from Della Pollock, Kivland’s writing can be said to “[spin] to some extent, on the axis of impossible and/or regressive reference and yet out into new modes of subjectivity and even referentiality”. She uses language “to create what is self – evidently a version of what was, what is, and/or what might be”. The result is a memory game that is partly played out on the stage of Rome, partly elsewhere, making now her own, then Freud’s or his travel companions’ voices heard. In his introduction to Volume II of the series, Craig Saper notes that “Kivland re-enacts, or acts out, an archival research method that allows her to write ‘more unconsciously’; she is trying to find “the unconscious while on vacation”.

Fig 3. Sharon Kivland, *Via Triumphalis, MonteCavo* 2006 © Sharon Kivland

21. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 80.
Tracing footsteps

Different from and more than following an itinerary or guidebook to get to this place or that, or to make the city intelligible, Kivland and Hofer open up an altogether new way of seeing Rome by overlaying past and present in a single gaze that looks simultaneously forwards and backwards in time. The projects are not as much about their subjective experiences of Rome, but about how they project the experiences of the other; the landmarks of their journeys being not the sights of Rome per se, but the sights as seen by Emerson and Freud. The artists thus perform and take on multiple identities as they travel, making their bodies at once female and male, young and old, leader and companion, present and absent. Their minds exist in the present but perceive in the past; as they consciously walk in the footsteps of Emerson and Freud, Hofer and Kivland encounter the city as if it were through a veil of pastness in which chronologies are collapsed. Using Crang and Travlou’s words to describe the effects of this weave of temporalities, “the landscape becomes a juxtaposition of asynchronous moments where space forms a container for different eras producing a depthless world where time as process is erased.”

The reconstruction of Emerson’s journey had been prepared for Hofer by Barish, author of the biography, through the careful study of Emerson’s journals, notebooks and diaries. Hofer’s explicit aim was to capture Rome through the camera lens as it may have been experienced by Emerson, and “to convey the timelessness of that country which Emerson saw in 1833”. Her series of black and white photographs subsequently produced documents the high points of ancient and early-modern Roman culture that resonate with this desire to return to Emerson’s past as it continues to exist in the present: the Appian Way, the Pantheon, the Capitoline Museums, and Michelangelo’s Moses sculpture are a few examples (see figs. 1, 2, and 4).

Kivland, on the other hand, narrates the meticulous planning of her (Freud’s) trips to Rome by studying his letters and journals, and consulting “many rail and ferry timetables” as well as “a number of travel guides, including the famous Baedeker”. “I take pains to stick to the itinerary that is not my own,” she notes, “despite the impulse to stray or indeed, to take shortcuts”. The trips are to be as similar to Freud’s as possible and so the accuracy of dates, accommodation and travel companions are of the highest importance. A hotel that is fully booked or no longer exists, her son’s school holidays that do not correspond, or a distant relationship with her sister-in-law, however, compromise her efforts and a visit to Rome is repeatedly delayed. Eventually it becomes

clear that the years of extensive research, planning and anticipation are the work she produces: anything omitted or missing can be filled in by the imagination.

Rome as portal to the past

Whilst Hofer and Kivland search for Emerson and Freud in Rome, it can be argued that it is ultimately the city that takes centre stage in their performances, becoming at once setting and main character. Rome functions as a portal to the past: we do not just get to know the city through these works, but we get to know Emerson and Freud through Rome. In Patrick Keiller’s film London, the protagonist Robinson is said to believe “that if you looked at [London] hard enough, he could cause the surface of the city to reveal to him the molecular basis of historical events, and in this way he hoped to see into the future”. For Kivland and Hofer, Rome functions in a similar way, but rather than hoping to see into the future their desire might be to exist in a sort of double present; for the city to reveal a contemporaneity of past and present in which they can be both self and historic other, here and now, whilst being there and then.

Rome, as a result, is psychologised: the city bears not only a memory of its own, but becomes identified and equated with those that left their memory traces on its fabric. When Hofer photographs the Hall of Philosophers in the Capitoline Museums, for example, it is not the empty gaze of the sculptural forms that confronts us, but the reflection of Emerson’s gaze upon them, somehow mirrored back to us by the lifelike features of the marble busts (fig. 4). Such a connection between the city and the mind, between (archaeological) materiality and psychoanalysis, was first expressed by Freud in Civilization and its Discontents in which he develops the analogy of the city as a repository of memory. Using Rome as the prime example, Freud describes the layering of material and spatial remains in the historic urban landscape to illustrate the layering of memories in the human mind. Like Rome, he explains, the unconscious is “a psychical entity […] in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest ones”. By metaphorically digging into the past, older layers that lay hidden or may have been repressed beneath newer layers might thus be retrieved and reconstructed, linking the method of psychoanalysis inextricably to the practice of archaeology.

The psychologisation of Rome by Kivland and Hofer in their attempt to unearth the memories of Freud and Emerson relies on this idea that the past can be re-gained or re-experienced

31. Freud 2004 [1930].
33. See among others Simmons 2006; Thomas 2004.
through the re-visiting of place. In Memorylands, Sharon Macdonald describes this notion of the visitable past, stating that:

[P]asts that are not known to those who visit or inhabit certain places can nevertheless be somehow sensed [...] often through forms such as ghostly presences and ideas of haunting. [...] If “memory” is understood as not only cognitive but as embodied or emplaced, such traces may be transmitted through, say, sedimented bodily movements or sculptural or architectural forms. 34

The “ghostly presences” or “hauntings” to which Macdonald refers reveal and manifests themselves in various forms and guises in Emerson in Italy and Freud on Holiday, taking amongst others the shape of visions, sensations, reminiscences, moods, and disturbances. Confronted by the materiality of the urban landscape, whether physically or imaginatively, Kivland and Hofer appear to unlock Rome to release the memory traces of the past, aiming to seize the past, in Walter Benjamin’s

34. Macdonald 2013, 94.
words, "as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognisability, and is never seen again". 35 Such images, in which the past is momentarily recognised in the present and the experiences of the artists converge with those of their predecessors, are captured across both works predominantly through the use of the photographic image and the topos of the dream of Rome.

In the first volume of the series, *Freud Dreams of Rome*, Kivland presents eleven monochrome photographs in place of a literary narrative of her remaking of one of Freud’s visits: “I could trace his Roman holidays, but the rare photographs that follow will have to suffice. Imagine it yourselves, the streets of a city, the streets of a city dreamed, the streets of a city achieved and walked”. 36 The small, low-resolution photographs are stuck loose to the pages of the book – as if found and pasted-in – and depict the city from strange angles and indiscernible places (see figs. 3, 5, 7, and 8). Though a list of plates gives an indication of location – Via Aurelia Antica, Palazzo Ossoli, Ponte Fabricio – it is unclear where the photographs come from or who they might belong to. She calls the photographs rare, but without explaining why. And they are evidently dated, perhaps from around the beginning of the twentieth century, so we might assume that she has not taken them

35. Benjamin 2006 [1940], 390.
herself. Could they be part of Freud’s collection then, or someone else’s – found in a family photo album perhaps?

By contrast, Hofer’s photographs seize the grandeur of Rome in spectacular images of, for example, the ancient Appian Way, flanked by ruins and pine trees (fig. 1), of the tall, desolate structure of the Pantheon set back deep in its own shadows, or the gleaming sculpture of the Dying Gaul, forever frozen on the verge of lethal collapse. Her photographs convey the eternality of the “Eternal City” that echoes Emerson’s desire to encounter in Rome

[...]

Hofer’s images evidently bear this sense of the sublime, of time resisted, immortalising that which in a way had already become immortal. When Andreas Pauly, Hofer’s long-time assistant and keeper of her archive, remarked that in her practice as a photographer Hofer was “after the essence of things”, this is what he must have referred to.

Hofer and Emerson shared such a search for the essential. As a Transcendentalist thinker, Emerson asserted nature as the source for spirituality – the link between the divine (the Creation) and the humane – but nature and culture were not the dichotomy they are often perceived to be today. Transcendentalists encouraged the study of nature to arrive at a deeper religious truth, but also emphasized the beneficial effects of self-cultivation, maintaining that education, self-expression and independent thought would lead to the realisation of greater creative potential and, ultimately, to the improvement of humankind. In Rome, these elements came together for Emerson: one only needs to think of a sculpture that emerges from a raw block of marble at the hands of an artist, or an ancient ruin concealed by grass and overgrowth, to realise that culture is not distinct from nature but arises from it. For Emerson, it was especially the experience of wonder and beauty (wonder at beauty) that connected the two, and it is this essence that Hofer set out to capture.

**Memories ‘in absentia’**

The photographs in both projects serve to create illusions of recollections of Rome, and challenge whose memory or experience they actually represent. The artists’ efforts to recognise traces of Freud and Emerson in the materiality of the city as they remake and document their journeys brings to mind Aristotle’s concept of *anagnorisis*, or recognition, close to Benjamin’s imagination

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38. McCusker d.u., 44.
Fig. 6 Evelyn Hofer, *Hand of the Colossus of Constantine*, Rome 1986 © Estate of Evelyn Hofer
of a past that can be seized as a recognisable image. In a recent paper titled ‘Returning to where we have never been’, Alfredo Gonzalez-Ruibal employs the concept of anagnorisis to explain the role of recognition in archaeological practice, noting that anagnorisis “implies a reactivation of the traces of the past in the present”. It is a reactivation that brings about a transformation in knowledge, which can occur not only with people of the past but also with inanimate things (apsyche) and which produces, in Vincent Geoghegan’s words, “a creative shock, where an element from the past jolts consciousness out of joint and thereby helps in the creation of novelty”.

Kivland and Hofer could be said to experience and represent this type of recognition in a way that is also akin to the notion of memories ‘in absentia’: “the memories a person has for a place or time he or she has never been”. Flaubert, for example, was inflicted by such memories during his first trip to Athens, looking desperately (and unsuccessfully) for the recognition of a particular image of the city – a sort of déjà vu – which he had pre-figured in his mind but which of course did not exist in reality. Goethe too experienced a discrepancy between imagination from memory and encountered reality, writing upon his first visit to Rome: “Wherever I walk, I come upon familiar objects in an unfamiliar world; everything is just as I imagined it, yet everything is new”.

For Kivland and Hofer, rather than the projection of a generic imagination of Rome derived from their own cultural references, their memories ‘in absentia’ are those of a specific person, and their anagnorisis is thus twofold: it is at once a desire to recognise a person and a place – a person through a place. They aim to conjure with their photographs not only the past presence of Freud and Emerson in a specific spot or location, but to recognise a particular image or view, as if to recall a memory of that place which is not their own but belongs to the historic other, channeling in this way Freud’s and Emerson’s unconscious through their own presence in the city.

Mirrors of memory

It is well known that Freud’s studio and personal library was a repository of images and objects often collected on his travels, and that the visual thoroughly informed his theory of psychoanalysis. He considered the unconscious mind a “storage place for representations of any kind” and very closely interlinked memory with vision. Dreaming and remembering, he argued, first and foremost occur through the recollection of visual images. Emerson too had a strong, almost

43. Ibid.
44. Goethe 1962, 129.
enlightened perception of the power of the senses, and of sight in particular. He placed an extraordinary emphasis on the visual in the construction of knowledge and in his own experiences of the world, something that becomes evident in the detailed descriptions of his travels. The importance Emerson attributed to visual cognition was very much ahead of his time (stating in one of his later journals that “our age is ocular”), especially when realising that at the time of Emerson’s travels through Europe the medium of photography had not yet been invented.47

Writing on Freud’s relationship with visual culture, Mary Bergstein notes that photographs around the turn of the twentieth century were frequently perceived as “mirrors of memory”: “If psychoanalysis was a methodology for seeing into the past and collapsing time, so was photography”.48 Kivland’s eleven photographs in Freud Dreams of Rome can be understood to function in this way. More than representations of the city, they resemble memories or dream images. They capture Rome as a place that brings to the surface the “hidden activities” of the mind, documenting not the main sights as one might expect but instead strange corners, dark alleyways and dead ends.49

The photographs stand in for Freud’s imagination of the city as an unreal place, “made up of his fears, wishes, scraps of memory from the previous day”.50 Although Kivland does not explain this in her series, the images are cropped photographs taken from guidebooks to Rome contemporary to Freud’s six visits between 1901 and 1923.51 They overlay the narrative of Freud’s journey with Kivland’s own,52 unsettling the various temporalities at play and bringing into focus questions around truth and evidentiary value of the photographic medium. As Susan Sontag maintains in her seminal work On Photography, “photographs really are experience captured, and the camera is the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood”.53 Kivland and Hofer, however, appear to employ the camera in the exact opposite way: their photographs are agents of the unconscious, “taking on the metaphorical guise of memories and daydreams”.54

In psychoanalysis, dream and memory are inextricably linked, not only because they draw on the same repository of images, but because consciously or unconsciously repressed memories also often emerge through dreams.55 Dreams and memories, in fact, might easily be mistaken for one another, and “the slippage between memory and remembered dream can be analogous to, and

47. Richardson 1984.
50. Domobaal d.u.
51. Domobaal d.u.
55. Ibid.
expressed by, the photographic medium”.\(^{56}\) In this respect, the city of Rome is not only equated with the unconscious, but also enters into the unconscious in the works of Kivland and Hofer. Rome nestled itself, for example, in the unconscious mind of Emerson, erupting at night when he was asleep.\(^{57}\) His travel journals reveal that he was deeply impressed by the magnificence of the art and archaeology he encountered in Rome, despite his initial Puritan reservations about the artistic riches of the Roman Catholic institutions. In a letter to his brother Charles in April 1833, Emerson writes: “I lie down at night enriched by the contemplation of great objects. It [Rome] is a grand town, & works mightily upon the senses and upon the soul. It fashions my dreams even, & all night I visit Vaticans.”\(^{58}\) Later on again he discloses to his diary that “Rome fashions my dreams. All night I wander amidst statues & fountains, and last night was introduced to Lord Byron!”\(^{59}\)

Hofer’s photographs at times directly visualise Emerson’s dream visions of Rome, captioning, for example, a photograph of The Room of Emperors in the Capitoline Museum with texts from

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his journals as quoted above, playing on this “easy slippage” between memory and remembered dream. She renders Rome as an almost otherworldly place in her pictures, elevating shapes, textures and surfaces from the everyday to the sublime through a use of light and dark that illuminates objects against dark backgrounds. “[E]nvisioned in a state of timelessness as if in the memory bank of the mind’s eye”, the sculptures and monuments resemble ghostly presences typical of twentieth-century photographs of ancient sculpture, “involved with a melancholic retrieval of the past and therefore display the ghostly, revenant quality of things that are simultaneously present and lost forever”.

**Dreams of departures**

Freud dreamt of Rome four times before his first visit to the city in September 1901 with his brother Alexander. In the first dream, Freud departs Rome without having ever arrived, in the second Rome is covered in a thick mist, in the third Rome disappoints, and in the fourth Rome is a different city altogether. His dreams expressed a longing, even obsession, with Rome which he self-analysed to be “deeply neurotic”. The only way to keep this neurosis under control was by studying the topography of Rome in lieu of an actual visit, the yearning for which became ever more tormenting, he told his friend Wilhelm Fliess in 1899. Kivland writes that “[Freud’s] desire to go to Rome, the desire he dreams, both symbolises and conceals other strong desires, which he pursues passionately and single-mindedly, while doubting, as he doubts he may reach Athens or Rome, their eventual realisation”. In the end, Freud does of course arrive in Rome, at which point he experiences a great sense of relief, having fulfilled his desire and finally able to shed the anxiety that came with his long-delayed first visit to the city. In a letter to his wife, headed “midday, opposite the Pantheon”, he expresses this sense of liberation, by exclaiming “this is what I have been [unnecessarily] afraid of for years!”

In the following two decades, Freud visited Rome repeatedly, if not regularly, until his sixth and last visit in 1923 at which point he had been diagnosed with cancer. Kivland’s own departure for Rome, however, remains uncertain through most of *Freud on Holiday*, no matter how elaborate the plans or detailed her itinerary, how precise the research or specific the accounts. Freud’s first acquaintance with Rome occurred in his dreams, haunted by a city that continued to elude him,

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60. Bergstein 2010, 131.
64. Ibid.
and Kivland is similarly affected, channeling Freud's neurosis perhaps. But her dreaming occurs wide-awake, and she takes care to emphasize that she is not a “somnambulist”. Her visions of Rome might be understood as daydreams, perhaps, of the armchair traveling kind, as they allow her to wander in mind if not in body. “Dreams construct the way I walk about cities”, she declares, and her narrative “follows the structure of dream or a dream. There are impasses. There are points at which I turn back, discouraged, tired, or inhibited”.

Crossing the realms of reality and imagination, the physical and the psychic, the works of Kivland and Hofer thus connect the psychoanalytic with the psychogeographic: eliciting memories, dreams and sensations by moving between the layers of history and letting “the city streets serve as a mnemonic system, bringing images of the past into the present”. For Kivland especially, Rome haunts not just through memories and dreams but through her own body:

> There is also the physical effort of each holiday, accompanied by some excitement, of course [...]. Not only do I attempt to speak for another or others (for the voices are many, not solely Freud’s, and often, I admit, either I have forgotten or do not know who is speaking through me), but also I follow in their footsteps, trying to match my step and pace with theirs, and often – very often – retracing my path.69

She adopts Freud’s moods and states of mind – anxiety, lassitude, excitement, fatigue, a feeling of melancholy, for example – and “borrows” the voices of him and others to speak through her, commenting on the weather, food and hotels. On holiday, Kivland is able to get rid of “a moodiness” to which not only she, but also Freud is subject, whilst an anxiety about missing trains “leads to absurdly early arrivals at stations and an excessive checking of rail tickets.”

_Disturbances of memory_

Traces of memory thus surface in Kivland’s and Hofer’s reconstructions of experience predominantly through image-work (anagnorisis and “memories in absentia”) that conflates their experiences with those of Freud and Emerson in both calculated and unexpected ways. But there is a twist. When Freud describes the city of Rome as a palimpsest analogous to the workings of the mind in _Civilization and its Discontents_, he eventually claims that no two things can exist in one place at the same time – “the result would be unimaginable, indeed absurd”. And indeed, the artists experience disturbances as they are confronted with the discrepancies between the real and the imagined, unsettling the desired recognisability of the past. Just as Flaubert’s Athens was not in reality as prefigured in his imagination, Kivland’s and Hofer’s efforts to retrace Freud and Emerson are compromised by the impossibility to map the past onto the present.

Hofer eliminated all elements of contemporary existence from her carefully staged photographs in order to find that “timelessness” of Rome on Emerson’s behalf: no phone boxes, lamp poles or street signs are visible, she even covered up cars with black cloth to make them disappear into the shade. Kivland, on the other hand, is confronted with that which has already disappeared – a hotel that has closed or is fully booked, for example – and she makes errors which include the forgetting of a proper name, taking an erroneous path, failing to make the right acquaintances, or confusing the chronology of events. In the two works, photographs account for both trace and erasure: as images and as objects, they link the past to the present and in them, to use Elizabeth Edwards’ words, “we see fragments of space and time reproduced for infinity”. As fragments, however, they compress time in space, and disguise themselves as memories: “They become surrogate memory, and their silences structure forgetting.”

76. Ibid.
Topoi revisited

In the third volume of her series Kivland repeats a statement made by Freud in 1910: “hyst" can- not escape from the past, but ‘suffer from reminiscences’. Reminiscence produces reconstruc- tion, intrinsic to the work of psychoanalysis, and both are subject to transference”.77 Walter Ben- jamin also writes on the subject of reminiscences which underlie much of his work in A Berlin Chronicle. “Reminiscences, even extensive ones, do not always amount to an autobiography. […] For even if months and years appear here, it is in the form they have in the moment of recollec- tion. This strange form – it may be called fleeting or eternal – is in neither case the stuff that life is made of”.78 Both explanations help to better understand the projects of Hofer and Kivland for (although not “hyst"s”) both artists have willingly “suffered” from such reminiscences in their reconstructions of Emerson’s and Freud’s journeys to Rome. Through their reconstructions, we do not receive an autobiographical account of their journeys to Rome or an immediate re-telling of Freud’s and Emerson’s travels, nor do they produce a topographical interpretation of the city, which travel accounts or journals often tend to do. Instead, they illustrate what the transference of experience – Goethe’s “many human beings learning from each other in turn” – might mean in the case of Rome, the “Eternal City”.

It has been demonstrated that this transference occurs predominantly through the workings of memory, transmitted between the traveling artists and their two predecessors in a number of different shapes and forms. Traces of the past are brought to life through the topography and fabric of the city, with the stones of Rome speaking of pasts that are “recognised” by Kivland and Hofer but were never seen before. Memories surface in the form of image-work: dream visions and ambiguous photographs blur the distinctions between that which is remembered and that which is conjured up by the imagination, confusing the memories of one traveler with the repres- entations made by the other. And finally, mnemonic experiences are channeled through the use of language and the artists’ bodies, at times relying on an uninterrupted continuity between the past and present, at other times disturbed by disappearance or absence.

The exploration of Emerson’s and Freud’s travels to Rome led Kivland and Hofer to re-visit not only places in common (in the topographic sense of the word: topoi) but also common places (topoi): themes that resonate between the authors/artists and further beyond, with travel literature and representations of Rome in general. One of these themes is the idea of Rome as a place of origin, of (historic) beginnings, and therefore as a therapeutic destination; an idea that is manifest in Freud’s and Emerson’s shared longing to arrive in the city of their dreams, but also in their common wish to resolve in Rome internal struggles with life and work. For both men, Rome

78. Benjamin 2006, 612.
represented a place of escape and of return: a city in which to disappear and lose oneself, where
to get rid of old anxieties and start afresh, whilst on another level Rome meant a reckoning with
ghosts and burdens of the past, an effort to mature and regain oneself in both an intellectual and
emotional sense that left deep and long-lasting influences on their theories and philosophies.

The ubiquitous presence of the past in Rome furthermore combines to the perception of
the city as a portal to the past; as the “center of the center”. Rome has been imagined as a place
in which all times co-exist and in which no traces of the past truly disappear, somehow stored,
contained or writ upon the landscape. The city as such is understood to bear a certain timelessness,
eternality or essence that reverberates through the works of Emerson and Hofer, Freud
and Kivland. As Goethe noted: “It is history, above all, that one reads quite differently here from
anywhere else in the world. Everywhere else one starts from the outside and works inward; here
it seems to be the other way around. All history is encamped about us and all history sets forth
again from us. This does not apply only to Roman history, but to the history of the whole world.”

Finally, we have encountered the idea of Rome as a metaphor for the psyche. Equated with
the structure of memory, and embodying the link between archaeology and psychoanalysis, the pa-
limpsest of Rome represents “the molecular basis” of events and experiences of the past.

The persistence of memory that surfaces in Hofer’s and Kivland’s projects thus cuts right
through the dividing line between individual and collective memory, making the already thin
membrane between the two even more porous and penetrable. Topoi are pulled from the city’s
collective imagination and absorbed into individual memories, whilst personal experiences grow
into the city’s collective memory. Rome contains the memories of all its visitors, but its own
memory is shaped and rewritten in the process, ultimately amounting to more than the sum of
its parts. In the works of Kivland and Hofer, the interaction between individual and collective
memory is mutually constituent and one morphs into the other, easily forgetting what came first
or who followed. The projects have proven to “jolt consciousness out of joint”, but consciousness
is also put back together, differently, to create a new perception able to encompass a multiplicity of
memories and narratives that make pasts present and presents past. When Freud proclaimed that
no two things could exist in one place at the same time he may have overlooked the power of the
imagination. For what perhaps cannot exist in material reality, Kivland and Hofer make possible
in the mind.

Bibliography


