

## INTERIOR DESIGNS Approaches to the Mind in the Greco-Roman World

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The modern word "psychology" is composed of two ancient Greek words: *psyche* and *logos*. In composite words of this type, *logos* means a rational discourse or argument; and *psyche* is a term for one of several kinds of mental equipment the Greeks thought to reside in a human individual. These ancient Greek words included in the modern term psychology, however, are misleading to a certain degree: the perceptions behind the terms, the ancient and modern views of the human mind, are fundamentally different. In my contribution I first want to elucidate what these views of the mind entail, and discuss briefly what kind of analytical questions ensue from the differences between them. The next step is to ask if there was something like an ancient psychology and to see what role the experience of the divine played in ancient views of the mind.

### *Modern and ancient concepts of the mind*

Modern psychology, the systematic discourse about the human mind, consists of numerous different branches. Among the wider audience psychoanalysis – or at least, some psychoanalytical terms such as the unconscious – is probably the most commonly known, although, paradoxically, most psychologists do not consider psychoanalysis to be representative of the field as a whole. What is common, however, to most kinds of modern psychology is the perception of the human mind as an active agent, a faculty which operates according to rules of its own and, to a certain extent, autonomously. Indeed, it has been argued, among others by Foucault, that this concept of the mind itself created psychology as the knowledge of this entity, and, vice versa, that increasing psychological knowledge created and consolidated the psyche as such an agency.<sup>1</sup> I need

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1. I am thinking here in particular of Foucault's contention that, from the late eighteenth century onward, theological and medical discourses defined sexuality as the hidden core of an individual's  
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not elaborate on the emergence of psychology from the late eighteenth century onward, against the background of medical discourses and attempts at mental control on the one hand, and the rise of *Empfindsamkeit*, neo-idealism and Romanticism on the other. I prefer to draw attention to what seem to be the fundamental assumptions of modern psychology: in the first place, that the mind is an entity situated within a person, which, although linked in many ways to the body, operates according to dynamics of its own. The mind is supposed to perceive, create, respond, change and define the experiences of the individual, even to such a degree that we often describe a person's identity in such psychological terms. In the second place, the mechanisms of the mind are held to be peculiar to itself, unlike, for instance, the rule of logic in rational thought or the biological laws of the body.

By contrast, the most prominent activity ascribed to the *psyche* in antiquity is that it could fly. *Psyche*, and similarly its Roman equivalent *anima*, means the soul rather than the mind. In the Homeric epics it contains the breath of life that may leave the body in sleep or in death (Bremmer, 1983: 14-24). What *psyche* looks like is rather vague – visual representations make it resemble its owner on a smaller scale, adorned with wings, but except for occasional flying it does not actually do anything. The mind that modern psychology takes an interest in, the seat of emotions, thoughts, anxieties, drives and the like, was called *animus* in Latin. The Greeks distinguished several kinds of mental entities, notably the *thymos* for temperament, the *phrenes* and *nous* for rational thought, and *menos*, which I reluctantly translate as "strength of personality" (meaning that some people are more excitable and respond with greater vehemence than others). The only active elements are probably the *phrenes* or the *nous*: when one is using one's brain to understand or find out something, the *phrenes* are doing their job. But the *phrenes* can be also receiving, passive, notably of emotions. The *thymos* and *menos* are almost entirely passive. Like the *psyche*, the *thymos* leaves the body at death, but, just like *menos*, when still alive it does hardly anything of its own accord, it just exists. One could say that *thymos* and *menos* together make up someone's disposition, the pattern of emotional responses by which you know yourself and other people know you (Caswell, 1990; Blok 1995: 272-286).

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personality, thus inviting the creation of scientific regimes to reveal these unruly drives in order to domesticate them (Foucault, 1976). Likewise, in antiquity the relationship between sexual desire and other kinds of emotions was considered to be a strong one, as for instance the assumption, common in classical Athens, that the *eroos* of tyrants was excessive, leading to (and thus indicated by) both irresponsible erotic and political behaviour.

The Greek term indicating the place where these mental entities reside, is *splanchna*, the innards. The *splanchna* are the lungs, liver and other organs, in other words substances, or a space inside a person – that depends on the context. The *splanchna* are connected to the outside world by *poroi*, pores, that is, literally, the fords. All that may move the mind – all emotions, experiences, ideas – is regarded as entering from outside into the interior and producing an effect there (Padel, 1992). And conversely, attempts at controlling one's inner life are therefore tantamount to offering resistance against an invasion (Foucault, 1984; Winkler, 1990a; Padel, 1992; Gleason, 1994). The ideal state of the mind is tranquillity, not being moved. Throughout antiquity, then, this is the common view of the human mind: a mainly passive entity inside an individual, liable to impressions from outside the protective shell of the body. This view underlies a great number of beliefs and ideas, ranging from religious images to the ethical philosophies of the classical and Hellenistic-Roman era. In the course of antiquity, some antithetic ideas supplementing or even supplanting the view of the multiple and receptive types of mind with the notion of a single mental agent, make recurrent appearances among intellectuals. Yet the majority of the population never seems to abandon the traditional perceptions of the mind. In so far as Roman authors discuss the faculties of the mind explicitly, they usually do so within a framework defined by Greek thought; hence, Greek discourses will play the main role in my discussion. What all this implies, where emotions are supposed to originate and how the mind is asked to deal with them, I shall discuss shortly.

Before doing so, however, we must observe that the ancient and modern notions of the mind are vastly different: the modern idea of its predominantly autonomous and specific quality versus the ancient idea of its physicality, its receptivity and its conjunction with the physical and outside world. Hence, are the systematics of modern psychology relevant to the ideas of self in the ancient world? Of course, as historians, we always face the conflict between etic and emic understanding, that is, between either perceiving a culture from outside or making sense of it as an insider would, in one way or the other. But in what respects are they compatible? For instance, in the ancient world, a common way of treating disease was by visiting a sanctuary of a healing deity, such as the great sanctuary of Asklepios in Epidauros or the smaller sanctuary of the heros Amphiaraos to the north-east of Athens. And the Amphiareion was not only for healing, but also other problems could be solved there. This happened through a dream, when the divinity entered the suppliant's mind

and explained how the cure could be found, or even effectuating the cure then and there. The countless votive offerings, many showing the part of the body healed by the god, testify to the effectiveness of this procedure. Similar things may still be seen, *mutatis mutandis*, at Lourdes, Houthem, and other places of miracle healing. How to account for these events, in what terms could they be explained? Is it only because we take for granted that nobody believes in Asklepios anymore and that therefore the effect of a psycho-somatic placebo is the best explanation? And what about overall conceptions of human nature? Social scientists in the non-Western world know that to approach other societies with policies based on such Western ideas as economic, profit-making man, may reap disastrous results. Is it useful, or even valid, then, to apply concepts, based on the presupposition of an unconscious, to people who did not see themselves as having that kind of mind at all? We can make a distinction between a *description* of ancient beliefs by means of modern terminology, and a *Verstehen* in the terms of ancient beliefs themselves, in other words between an etic and an emic analysis. However, the problem will certainly be how to match them. In order to clarify at least some discrepancies, I want to sketch the ancient views of the mind in more detail, using the word "psychological" for the range of phenomena included in the modern word.

### *Ancient psychologies*

The ancient perception of the mind is rather ambiguous: one could even say that there are two rival views, one claiming the mind to be of a predominantly material nature, and the other saying that it is rather an empty receptacle. On the one hand, in the materialistic view, the *splanchna* are considered part of the body; they consist of a similar substance and are controlled by the same forces as the body is. These forces are in the first place the four humours, human fluids, that is glandular secretions, which equally regulate the individual's temperament. The four humours themselves are responsive to external forces like climate and internal forces such as the effects of diet. This view of the mind belongs to a holistic notion of a human individual as an organism, whose dry, wet, hot and cold aspects are regulated in accordance with natural laws. These natural laws operate simultaneously in the body and the mind. In fact, there is hardly any perceivable difference between mind and body, they seem to be made of the same matter. Mental issues, including emotional disturbances or dreams or similar psychological phenomena, are thus described in terms of physical material, such as

melancholia being caused by, or even being the same as, an excess of black bile. A large part of ancient medical literature is based on these views (Lloyd, 1983; King, 1998). Indeed, it is not surprising that the material conception of the mind remained predominant in medical discourse, for one of the few ways in which people could treat the mind and the body, that is, influence them, was by influencing the system of the humours.

The other view conceives the human mind as a receptacle, a place which receives impulses. It is located inside the body, somewhere near the diaphragm, but does not seem to be of a material nature. Sometimes it appears to be a hollow cave, sometimes to be something that resonates. In this context, the predominant terms are *phrenes*, *thymos*, *menos* and *splanchna* as mentioned earlier. Since men and women have different kinds of *thymos*, and since one's personality is typified by the kind of responses one's *thymos* usually produces, it is attractive to describe it in terms of a musical instrument with specific resonating chords, like a harp or a lute (as Socrates does in Plato's dialogue *Phaedon* 92 A-C). However, the concomitant metaphor of plucking or touching the instrument to produce effects, would be entirely wrong. The usual words describing the way feelings and thoughts come about all belong to the semantics of flowing and streaming (as a breath, wind or liquid), and occasionally pushing or pressing (the same as streaming, but with more force). It always includes the sense of power, a force coming from outside to inside (Padel, 1992: 78-98).

Where does this force originate? In Homeric epic, all strong impulses are directly infused into human beings by the gods. Aphrodite strikes with the power of sexual love, Ares with the desire to fight and with the frenzy of the battlefield. Zeus may strike with envy, with mental blindness, with sudden anger or with other major mental changes. The list of all Greek divinities and their origins created by Hesiod in his epic-didactic poem *Theogony*, includes numerous impulses which affect the human mind. Hunger, Strife and Eros are forces emanating from the gods and are therefore divine powers themselves. In the visual arts, such powerful impulses are often represented as personifications with wings, such as Sleep, Victory and Eros, because they fly down from heaven into the individual to take possession of his soul (Maaskant, 1990: 139-152). When in the *Iliad* Agamemnon vehemently complains that some god must have struck him with *atè*, mental blindness, in his fatal decision to pursue his ambitious greed and antagonize Achilles, he is not trying to excuse himself. Without denying that the responsibility for his actions is still

entirely his own, he points to the true origin of what must have possessed him. He knows that the gods are not only all-powerful in the visible world, but that they also have designs upon his interior.<sup>2</sup>

The classicist E.R. Dodds was the first one to draw systematic attention to this psychology of Homeric individuals. In his impressive *The Greeks and the Irrational* Dodds (1951) revised the common view of the ancient Greeks as living in the radiant light of reason and as timeless examples to Enlightened Europe. He showed that individuals in the epics describe themselves as being invaded from outside by emotional drives from a divine power (Dodds, 1951: 1-27). Homeric psychology was closely connected to the culture of honour and shame depicted in the epics. In this type of society, all experience is geared to the external, social effects of one's behaviour. Hence, the estimation of oneself is identical to what other people think of you. This is radically different from a guilt-culture, where one ultimately values oneself in terms of one's own conscience, even to the extent of defying social censure. According to Dodds, after Homer many signs indicated that the features of a guilt-culture were slowly developing in ancient Greece. In late archaic and classical literature, feelings of anxiety, fear and guilt were expressed in a way that revealed an increasing internalisation of impulses, which formerly had been situated outside, beyond one's own mind (*Ibid.*: 28-63).

Although the Homeric poet may have magnified the part of the gods in the human mental condition for narrative purposes, clearly this role of the divine fits the overall Greek conception of the psyche. In a study published in 1992, *In and out of the mind. Greek Images of the Tragic Self*, Ruth Padel shows that the so-called Homeric psychology is not, as Dodds argued, limited to the epic world, but is still fully valid in classical tragedy. The terminology for human understanding and emotional impulses has been widened in the classical texts, and many nuanced reflections are expressed by the tragic characters. However, all those terms still reveal that both knowing and feeling are conditions that are received, rather than created by an individual. The many words used for understanding and emotions and for the ways they come about, still indicate the idea of the inner organs (*splanchna* or *phrenes*) being breathed into, infused or fluxed from outside. To modern readers, such words may seem to be metaphors (when we say: the idea strikes me, we do not mean actual striking), but Padel argues that ancient speakers mean such terms literally (Padel, 1992: 33-44). The semantics of the interiority

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2. Homerus (*Iliad*: XIX 78-144; the responsibility of the gods in sending delusions: XIX 87-94; his own responsibility XIX 137-141).

of the mind are applied with great inventiveness in tragedy. Because the mind is inside, dark, passive, receptive and vulnerable, it is strongly associated with the feminine (*Ibid.*: 99-113). In general, the typical mark of femininity is the inability to resist strong emotional pressure, that is, to defend one's inside against the impulses from outside. In Euripides' *Hippolytos*, Aphrodite is unable to get a hold over Hippolytos, so in revenge she knows where to find a weak spot: in a woman, Phaedra, his stepmother. Since women are the ones whose lives and identities are defined by being inside in the *oikos*, tragedy often represents the whole inner life of a family or city by women's actions, such as Clytaimnestra, Electra and Antigone.

By the fifth century, the mechanisms of the mind had become the subject of intellectual debate – a debate that would continue for centuries. Philosophers were interested in questions about the creation of knowledge, and discussed the ethics of self-control. Sophists and theoreticians of rhetoric investigated the ways the mind may be influenced, notably how people's emotions respond to words and visual impressions – for not only the gods, but also men may stir the mind of others. Historians were looking for patterns in the motives that brought men and women to action. In brief: a kind of psychology was emerging (Scholten, 1990). In all thought on the mind and emotions, ancient intellectuals made an, often implicit, distinction between feelings that operate on a normal, low-ebb level, and strong sensations. To the normal range belong the need to eat and drink to stay alive, pleasure in seeing beauty, fear for danger and grief for loss. At this day-to-day level of experience, emotions are seldom considered worthy of special interest. The true objects of inquiry were strong emotions on the one hand, and the possibility to know and influence the mind on the other.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the two main ethical philosophies of hellenistic-Roman times, Stoicism and Epicurism, both regarded the avoidance of strong emotions as the major aim in finding happiness. They recommended self-knowledge as the means par excellence to attain peace of mind.

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3. Aristotle's description of desires (*epithymia*), fittingly included in his *Rhetoric* (1370a), exemplifies this view. According to Aristotle, one class of desires is irrational, that is, natural; they come into existence through the body and the senses (e.g. hunger, thirst, sexual desire). The other class is rational, and comes about by our being convinced: "because there are many things that people wish to see or possess when they have heard about them and are convinced [that they are desirable]" (*Ibid.*: 1370a5). Thus Aristotle takes desire either to originate in physical sensations or to enter people's minds from outside. Conspicuously absent is the notion of the mind as the autonomous origin of emotions and fantasies.

Plato and Aristotle both wrote extensively on the structure of the mind, each giving a particular twist to the more common views. I mention only a few aspects of their works that may clarify their positions *vis-à-vis* each other and in relationship to the more common views. Plato argued why the gods are the origin of knowledge (a.o. in the *Phaedon*) and of the strong emotions (a.o. in the *Phaedros*). Important strong emotions, most of all love, are in fact tied to knowledge, most of all of beauty. The mind is endowed with knowledge before its rebirth in an individual body and at death departs from the body to resume its place among the gods. Impressions effectuated in daily life by the senses are irrelevant to the mind, unless they are sifted, interpreted and put to use in harmony with the absolute standards implanted in the *psyche*. All Plato's thought is founded on his epistemology, or, if you prefer, his conception of the mind. I think it is because Plato situated the main mental faculties in an entity that resided among the gods and went in and out of the body, that he chose the *psyche* to be the central concept. The other concepts, such as *phrenes* and *thymos*, seem to be discarded from philosophical discourse. They are replaced by a terminology of knowing (*episteme*, *dianoia*, etc.) on the one hand, and by a systematic judgment of human experience on the other. Plato's thought is related to the views of the average Greeks (and Romans) by the role he attributes to the gods as the wellspring of mental activities, but his ideas on reincarnation were quite exceptional.

Aristotle's debt to Plato is mainly his use of the word *psyche* for the chief mental entity. In all other respects, he disagrees with his famous teacher, as he usually does, because his epistemology is not a conception of the mind, but a system of logic. His interest is in how things work, rather than in why they do so; as an empiricist (at least in his own view), he limits the area of inquiry to those phenomena that are visible. Consequently, he does not consider the gods a subject liable to scientific inquiry. He just does not discuss the gods, not even in his treatise on dreams, and in his treatise *On the Psyche* he does not discuss the strong emotions either.<sup>4</sup> He explores the ways former critics have tried to make sense of mental conditions, and then proceeds to give his own views, applying his system of logic and classification.

On the one hand, when looking for the origins of psychological phenomena, Aristotle makes the difference between the *psyche* and the

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4. In *Peri Enhyption* (*On Dreams*) Aristotle does not mention the gods at all; in *Peri tès kath' hypnon mantikès* he explicitly rejects the view that the gods are the ones who send dreams, prophetic or not, because lower animals dream too. Dreams are only divine in so far as they belong to nature which is divinely ordained (Aristotle, *On prophecy in sleep*: 463b). On the word *enhyption* in contrast to *oneiron*, see below.



body as small as possible. He defines the mind as a partially passive and a partially active entity. Obviously, the mind is active when it understands something. In this respect, he considers the mind to be independent. But the mind is also passive, in so far as it is part of physical material, and therefore dependent on the actions of the body. From this perspective, he describes the ways in which the "normal" sensations make people live, act, eat, move, etc.; in so doing, he comes close to defining drives, e.g. the "nutritive soul" (*threptikè psyche*) is the mental force that drives people to feel hungry and eat. He discusses the senses as physical mechanisms, and all perceptions as the result of actions of the ears, eyes, and so on. On the other hand, he classifies the kinds of (mental) views involved in producing psychological conditions, such as the dream, hallucination, remembrance, imagination, and their contributions to human understanding. With regard to the imagination (*fantasia*), for instance, a major issue bothering him is that the imagination presents things that are not really there, and that it is usually wrong. (Aristotle, *De Anima*: 428a).

In the treatises on the mind, Aristotle divides the phenomena under scrutiny by the logic of his system into two types, classified according to origin and to kind of movement – briefly, where they come from and where they are going. He thus pulls the mental phenomena in two directions, producing two kinds of knowledge, and somewhere in the middle, where the modern reader would expect a coordinating psyche to be active, there seems to be a void. Aristotle's views are related to those of average Greeks (and Romans) by his ambiguous approach to the mind as both material and immaterial, though with a stronger emphasis on the material side. In science, his thought would be influential for centuries, in particular as regards his logic of classification, and his insistence on visible, physical phenomena. Needless to say that he did not adhere to Plato's idea of an immortal soul. With the body, the *psyche* would die too, for better or for worse.

I have mentioned briefly how the views of both Plato and Aristotle, each in their own way, were partly in line with the so-called average ancient ideas, and partly clearly differed from them. It is tempting to read Aristotle, Cicero or Marcus Aurelius and think one is in touch with the ancient ideas on the soul, but obviously that is not entirely the case. The philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle were received and considered by an increasing number of intellectuals, and the so-called ethical philosophies like Stoicism and Epicurism found an even wider audience.<sup>5</sup>

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5. The various philosophical schools had quite different views on dreams and divination, because of their divergent ideas on the structure of the mind. While Aristotle and Epicurism rejected the  
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Yet, the philosophical estimation of the soul and the tendency to postulate one dominant mental agent, thereby creating a stronger sense of interiority, was limited to an intellectual elite.<sup>6</sup> The gap between the worldviews of this group and the masses, exemplified by the popular anxiety about sophists and the trial of Socrates for his alleged introduction of new gods (his inner voice, *daimonion*), widened from the fifth century onward. To the average Greeks and Romans, the physicality and receptiveness of the *psyche* was beyond any doubt. In some areas of life, the impact of the gods and other powers on the *psyche* was felt to be particularly strong and effective. One such area is the world of magic, the other the meaning of dreams.

### *Popular views of the mind*

Throughout antiquity, from the first instances of literacy onto the early medieval and Byzantine world, magical words have been voiced, written down, sealed and consecrated. The extant numbers of such magical texts, spells, curses and the like run over 1500 examples. They were written on papyrus, on lead, on wood, on stone, and offered to the gods in the temples and other sanctuaries such as caves. These texts testify to the fear, jealousy, hate, desire and other strong emotions of those who wrote them. Common types of spells are curses by litigants to lame the speech of their opponents in court; spells by gladiators to impede their adversaries in the arena; magical powers to make someone fall in love with the writer even to the extent of cursing the beloved in case of failure; curses to ruin competitors in crafts and commerce; and a type which may generally be labelled a prayer for justice, for instance for the return of a stolen object, or revenge on a local scoundrel (Versnel, 1998). Obviously, we are again in the realm of the strong emotions, even if the practitioners of curse tablets are responding to experiences of daily life. In what ways were these spells expected to be effective?

The perception of the *psyche* inherent in these spells is the now familiar receptiveness of the human interior. The speaker (the written text is here an extension and preservation of the spoken word) asks or even compels a

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possibility of prophecy through dreams, the Stoa accepted it, thus having one conviction in common with the philosophically uneducated masses. Likewise Cicero (*De divinatione*), a student of Posidonius and opposed to the Stoa, rejected divination through dreams, while Artemidorus shows traces of Stoicism in his book on dreams (see below) and could quite easily bridge the world of intellectuals and the average client of his craft.

6. On the increasing sense of individuality located in an inner sense of self among the elites of the Roman Empire (Swain, 1997).

god or goddess or *daimon* or other divine power to compel somebody else to do something (or be unable to do something). There are two movements of force here: first from the speaker to the divine power, and next from the divine power to the victim. This force operates in accordance with what I have called the psychology of invasion: one needs a god to effectuate one's designs upon the interior of somebody else. Even if the common verb in this context is "binding" (*katadein*), the important point is that the force comes from outside and the target is unable to resist it. The instrumental divinity is invaded and bound by magical words, and thus compelled to invade and bind the victim. Conversely, if it were not for these – and similar – forces from outside, the mind of the people in question would be at rest. A second, now familiar feature is the quality of the *psyche* as a mixture of physical and emotional elements. The magical words equally affect the victim's mind and body, in fact they are a whole. This holistic view may even be reflected in language; for instance, in several erotic spells, the sexual organs of the woman are called her *psyche* (Gager, 1992: 111). But also the memory of the victim is often the aim of the offensive: spells render litigants powerless in court by making them forget their arguments, and spells force the objects of erotic desire to forget those to whom their hearts originally belonged.

The same idea of the human mind underlies another popular practice in antiquity: the reading of dreams. And precisely a hundred years after Freud's *Die Traumdeutung* it is worthwhile to see what Artemidorus of Ephesus explained in his *Oneirokritikon* (*The interpretation of dreams*) in the second half of the second century AD.<sup>7</sup> Revealing his art (*technè*) for a friend and fellow craftsman, Artemidorus distinguishes two types of dreams. One kind, the *enhyption*, exists only during sleep, it reflects a physical lack or excess (for instance, too little or too much food) or a mental state, for instance hope or fear in response to experience. This kind of dream refers to the present, it is about feelings only, and therefore not interesting. In my terms, the *psyche* here has to do with the normal range of emotions and this part of the self is not worth investigating. The other one, the *oneiros*, is the crucial kind of dream; this kind is concerned with the future. I quote Artemidorus' definition: "The dream is a movement or a multiple moulding of the *psyche*, which signifies good or bad events of the future" (Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*: I.5, own translation).

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7. A fine translation of Artemidorus is Festugière (1975), with clear and concise annotations, but without the Greek text. A Dutch translation is due in 2003, by S. Mooij-Valk, to whom I am also indebted for critical comments on this essay.

This kind of dream lingers after waking up, and is often remembered well. The *oneiros* is a privileged way of acquiring knowledge about oneself, and here Artemidorus quotes a popular etymology, claiming that *oneiros* or *oneiron* derives from *to on eirein* – to speak the truth (Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*: I.4; cf. Homer, *Odyssey*: 11, 137). The dream provides knowledge, not about one's mental interior but about the outside, about things that will happen to oneself. The art of the *Oneirokritikos* is to understand the meaning of the dream images to the individual dreamer. Artemidorus: "All that will be accomplished after a while, be it long or short, the soul predicts by means of particular images that belong to the nature of those things (that are going to happen), which are also called 'elements' because the soul reckons that in the meantime, instructed by reflection, we shall be able to learn the future" (Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*: I.5, own translation).

The images have general meanings which are classified as being from nature (*physis*) or from custom (*nomos*) and which are to be specified for individual cases. The essential starting point is to know the dreamer's social status: one's position in society and the hopes and fear related to that position, are the "elements" that make up a dream. For instance, to dream of being beheaded is a bad sign for people who have parents or children; for the head represents the parents who are the origin of life, and the face represents the children who resemble their parents. For someone who is charged with a capital crime, however, the sign of being beheaded is a positive one: being beheaded can only happen once, and when it has happened in the dream, it won't happen a second time in reality. For people who have invested in capital (*kephalaia*), the sign obviously means the loss of their money. For a slave who has been trusted with the care of the house, the dream means that he will be relieved of his duty, because one cannot entrust something to someone who has no head. And so forth (*Ibid.*: I.43-44). Some "elements" will surprise (or maybe even disappoint) those who are steeped in Freud's views on the matter. Dreams about sex are divided into sex in harmony with nature and sex contrary to nature (*Ibid.*: I.86-98). In the first section, in case of sex of a man with a woman, the woman usually represents the man's profession and possessions; the woman as means of production of children indicates wealth. In the second section, the Oedipal dream of a man having sex with his mother, is a good sign for a craftsman, because one's profession was often called one's mother. It is also a good sign for politicians, because the mother represents the country. It is also a good sign for people who are ill, for Nature is the mother, and so the Oedipal dreamer will recover. But if a man has this

dream when his father is still alive, it is a bad sign because of the jealousy that always springs from sexual rivalry, and when the father is ill, the dream signifies his oncoming death, because an adult son will be the legal patron of his mother after his father has died (*Ibid.*: I.91).

Artemidorus points out that someone may ask a god to send him a dream, to clear up some worrying questions or help in ill-health. But he warns never to burn incense or to use magic spells in such cases, because these compel the god to action (as we saw before). No one, and certainly not a god, will present a gift – a dream – willingly if he is also forced to do so. Instead, one should sacrifice after having received the dream. Moreover, one should not prescribe the god the way in which one wants to be answered; this one should leave entirely to the divinity itself (to send) and to one's own soul (to receive) (*Ibid.*: IV.246-247).

Why are some dreams so strange? According to Artemidorus, in one class of dreams (the *theorematic* dreams, those based on visibility), the images are very similar to the events they represent; e.g. a shipwreck is a shipwreck. In the other class, the *allegorical* class, the images are symbolic, they are not at all like what they represent; a shipwreck may signify illness, or the death of a child. The reason that these dreams differ is that the theorematic dreams will happen very soon, and the allegorical ones much later. This time-lapse is also the means by which to sort both kinds of dreams; you find that you were involved in a theorematic dream about a shipwreck when you hear wood creaking and your feet are getting wet.

Artemidorus is cautious about the origins of dreams. When people have dreams which are clearly a premonition, they usually call them "sent by the gods". He himself will only call them thus in the general, colloquial sense, since he cannot decide whether dreams come from outside, sent by the gods, or that it is a natural propensity of our soul to dream (*Ibid.*: I.16). Similarly, he alludes to mental activity of the soul in the ability to dream itself. The very fact that people dream indicates that apparently the *psyche* has some mantic quality, but there may also be some other cause of dreaming (*Ibid.*: IV.246). In this point of view, we may recognize signs of the gradual change towards the creation of an interiority in the later centuries of antiquity. Still, when it comes to dream interpretation, hardly any sign is ascribed to an autonomous psychological activity. Instead, Artemidorus classifies the elements from custom as either social or individual, using the same rootword *nomos*, meaning law, convention and lifestyle (*Ibid.*: IV.243). In the predominant concerns and ideas of his craft, Artemidorus preserves the traditional views on the human mind

(Price, 1990; Winkler, 1990*b*). The meaning of dreams is determined not by deeply individual, repressed wishes or anxieties but by one's social life, and dreams infuse knowledge not of the past, but of the future into the dreamer's mind.<sup>8</sup>

### *Divine origins*

In antiquity the origin of the *psyche's* commotion was predominantly located outside of, not inside the mind itself. This outside could be either the body, or the social world, or powers beyond human sight. Physicians explained the effects of too much food or sex (or too little of it) on one's state of mind. Philosophers pointed out the corrupting effects of the stupid masses and to superstition as the causes of such disturbances. Rhetoricians developed the art of persuasion, a system to mould the emotions of the audience with winged words. The majority of Greeks and Romans, however, saw the gods and similar forces as the ones who effected strong feelings of desire, fear or courage. The reverence felt for this divine power was expressed in building temples, offering sacrifice, votive statues, prayers for help and poetry. One such eloquent voice is Sappho's: "Eros shook my heart (*phrenes*), like a wind falling on oaks on a mountain" (Campbell, 1990: F. 47).

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### **Summary**

#### *Interior Designs. Approaches to the Mind in the Greco-Roman World*

Modern psychology is based on a conception of the human psyche as a faculty in its own right. Among its qualities is the psyche's natural propensity to operate semi-autonomously, acting according to rules of its own. Such a view of the human psyche as an active mechanism, however, did not exist for the greater part of the Greco-Roman world. The psyche (not to be identified with the soul) was perceived as a passive, receptive element, either materialistic (part of the body) or as an emptiness within the body to be filled by elements from outside. Given the radically distinct idea of the psyche in antiquity, one should ask whether, and if so

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8. This type of dream is so dominant in ancient writings, that Dodds (1951: 102-143) supposes that people in antiquity may have had different experiences of their own mind (compare Socrates' *daimonion*) and may have experienced different kinds of dreams.

how, the conceptual apparatus of modern psychology might be used fruitfully when dealing with ancient mental phenomena. And conversely, one may ask where the qualities and capacities, which modern psychology ascribes to the psyche, were located according to ancient views, and how they were supposed to operate. What was the ancient equivalent of psychology? For the majority of ancient Greeks and Romans, divine intervention was assumed to be responsible for what are now called psychological phenomena. In this context, the divine was not always considered sublime: the designs of the gods on man's interior were often troublesome – even fatal.

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**Key words**

Paradigma, Psyche, Philosophy, Dreams, Magic .