

A. Information about the research project in which the post-doc will participate

1. TITLE OF PROJECT

(The title must be descriptive and must apply to the entire duration of the project.)

Intertextuality and the formation of the self in Greco-Roman antiquity

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

(Motivate the proposed project and include how it fits into your current research programme)

The moral and intellectual formation of the self (also known as psychagogy) was an important educational goal in Greco-Roman antiquity. Such formation of the self entailed that the person became spiritually mature by gradually attaining self-insight and an awareness of the moral and metaphysical dimensions of his or her life, which will enable them to act in a controlled, deliberate and conscious manner. The ultimate goal was a happy, tranquil and fulfilled way of life. (See especially P. Hadot 1995 & 2002; I. Hadot 1969 & 1986; also Rabbow 1954; Thom 1995; Sorabji 2000; etc.)

Psychagogy made use of various procedures to attain this goal: daily exercises, including deliberating on and planning one's actions early in the morning and reflection and self-evaluation at the end of the day; regular reminders of basic moral principles throughout the day; contemplation of the limits of the human condition; mutual criticism among friends; meditation on the lives and teachings of important historical figures. Reading and dynamic interaction with texts formed an important part of the latter procedure.

Especially in the later period (i.e. from the Hellenistic period to the end of late antiquity) several Greek, Roman, Jewish and early Christian authors overtly or implicitly used their writings as vehicles to encourage the formation of the self among their readers. Such authors include the Epicurean philosophers Philodemus and Diogenes of Oenoanda, the Stoic philosophers Musonius Rufus, Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, the Platonists Plutarch, Maximus of Tyre, Porphyry and Iamblichus, the Hellenistic Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria, early Christian authors like Clement of Alexandria, as well as various intellectuals like Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Dio of Prussa, Lucian, Galen, and many others.

The aim of many of these authors' works was to bring the readers to reflect upon and thus improve their own existence and way of life. This objective was achieved, among other things, by constant reminders of and references to the works of earlier philosophers and poets, to historical and legendary figures, and to other authors and traditions. Such references and allusions were intended to bring the reader to (re)discover and acquire insight into important values and ideas that were preserved in the cultural tradition, and by reflecting on them, to appropriate and apply such ideas and values in the process of the formation of the self.

Intertextuality thus played a significant role in the authorial and reading strategies of such texts. The dynamics of intertextuality included a broad spectrum of textual devices, ranging from allusions, references, direct and indirect quotations to comparisons, discussions and explicit commentaries of previous authors' texts. It also made use of a diversity of forms such as anecdotes, exempla, biography, parenesis and protreptic. Intertextuality can also be expressed as interdiscursivity, that is, where a text reflects a specific discourse type (e.g. religious or philosophical) of an earlier writing without explicitly referring to a specific author or text; or as intergenericity, where a text makes reference to different types of literary genres.

While both psychagogy and intertextuality have in the recent past often been investigated separately in various ancient texts and traditions, the role of intertextuality in the formation of the self has not been studied in detail. Since the culture of the educated in the Greco-Roman world was primarily a literate culture, the interplay of texts and literary traditions formed an essential part of this culture. Intertextuality therefore had a crucial role to play in the educational process.

Most of my research thus far implicitly or explicitly dealt with aspects of psychagogy and intertextuality in various authors and traditions. This includes studies of Pythagorean texts and traditions (Thom 1995; 1997; 2001; 2002; 2004; 2008; 2013; 2017; in the press), Epicurean texts on frank criticism (Konstan et al. 1998), Stoic texts (Thom 1998; 2000; 2001; 2005; 2006), Peripatetic texts (Thom 2009; 2012; 2014) and early Christian texts (Thom 1998; 2001; 2006; 2007; 2009; 2012; 2014; 2015; 2017; in the press). In my current research I am focusing on the Pythagorean sayings collection known as the *akousmata* or *symbola*. This includes the psychagogic and intertextual use of these sayings by various Greco-Roman authors (including Philo of Alexandria, Plutarch, Clement of Alexandria, Porphyry and Iamblichus). The proposed project will therefore complement my own programme in many respects.

3. HYPOTHESIS TO BE TESTED / PROBLEM TO BE INVESTIGATED

The basic problem to be investigated in the proposed project is the role intertextuality played in the formation of the self (psychagogy) that was promoted in the writings of authors of the Greco-Roman period.

4. AIMS

(Please supply the detailed aims of the research project, in order of priority.)

The overarching aim of the research project is to investigate the interrelationship between intertextuality and psychagogy in authors from the Greco-Roman period. A selection of Greek, Roman or early Christian texts or authors will be chosen for detailed study depending on the research background of the post-doctoral fellow.

The more detailed aims (in sequential order) are the following:

- (a) Construct a theoretical framework for analyzing the intertextuality and psychagogy in ancient texts.
- (b) Identify the intertextual elements (e.g. references, quotations, allusions, discussions, commentaries) in the selected texts as well the function of each of these elements within their immediate context. Determine how they contribute to the author's educational goal.
- (c) Determine how aspects of intertextuality relate to the formation of the self. To what extent does a specific aspect depict or emphasize self-development, self-representation and self-exploration? How does it contribute to a vision of the intellectual and social community? What ideals does it envisage that could be emulated?
- (d) Conceptualize the psychagogy of each of the selected texts and determine how it feeds back into the function of intertextual elements.

Compare the intertextual and psychagogic strategies of the selected texts in terms of differences and similarities.

5. METHODOLOGY AND TIMEFRAME

(Also include possible collaborations.)

The basic methodology of the project is textual analysis and comparison, with an emphasis on the literary elements and conceptual features relating to intertextuality and psychagogy. Such analysis will take place in terms of the theoretical framework developed at the beginning of the project. The aims listed in the previous section entail a reiterative procedure in which a specific text will be analyzed several times, each from a different perspective. The findings of the investigation of individual texts will eventually be compared to identify similarities and differences in the strategies followed by the respective authors.

Because of the reiterative nature of the investigation, it is problematic to formulate a very specific timeframe. The project will ideally be completed over a two-year period because it will allow for more texts to be analyzed and compared, although it will be possible to produce meaningful results at the end of the first year already.

A tentative timeframe for the first year would be the following:

1st – 2nd months: develop theoretical framework

3rd – 4th months: analyze first text; start working on first article

5th – 6th months: analyze second text; finish first article

7th – 8th months: analyze third text; start working on second article

9th – 10th months: analyze fourth text

11th – 12th months: compare results and finish second article

The timeframe for the second year would be similar, except that it would include a more comprehensive summary of the conclusions at the end instead of the theoretical framework at the beginning.