IV.

The Wisdom of Daniel: On the Interpretation of Dreams

> Many dreames are made out by sagacious exposition from the signature of their subjects; carrying their interpretation in their fundamentall sence & mysterie of similitude, whereby hee that understands upon what naturall fundamentall every notionall dependeth, may by sumbolicall adaptation hold a readie way to read the characters of Morpheus.
>
> —Thomas Browne, 'On Dreams', pp. 230—233.

> But here it must be noted, that it is common for Persons in Dreams to be presented with various Figures, Forms, and Shapes of material things belonging unto the Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Kingdoms, which do signifie, or often times fore shew or denote Prosperity, Adversity, Health, Sickness, the Death of themselves or Friends…
>
> —Thomas Tryon, *A Treatise of Dreams & Visions*, pp. 180—181

As phenomena, we have seen dreams explained as the products of a psychic structure, as the wastage of the sleeping body, the mirror of thoughts or the intrusion of foreign powers malignant or divine. But dreams also appear as discrete and particular events, as a 'happening' which sometimes had a particular meaning that could be related to these categories, but which might also have a more particular meaning to those who experienced them. Many cultures have maintained a fascination with the hieroglyphic nature of dreams, have shared a conviction that their content is not explicit but abstruse, and pursued techniques for deciphering and decoding their images. The forerunners to Freudian interpretive principles of projecting, splitting and condensing or of Jungian imaginative archetypes tend to have their roots in ancient systems of divination, or other sources of sacred signs and poetic devises. Beyond these crypto-symbolic responses to dream images, there exist a multitude of possible responses to their aesthetic and phenomenal qualities, not to mention the wider debate over the significance of dreams as a personal or public event which we explored in chapter two.

In the past, historians have provided fascinating insights into the way in which early modern individuals experienced, recorded and sometimes interpreted their dreams. Of previous attempts to engage with the interpretation of early modern dreams, the most thorough and successful probably remains Nigel Smith's analysis of the biblical and mystical imagery in the printed pamphlets of radical prophets, popular astrologers and converts to independent congregations.[1] Peter Burke, Nigel Smith and Dianne Watt apply schematic approaches to the cultural and visual symbolism of visions and dreams, identifying common sources and trends that situate their significance to the dreamer and their audiences.[2] Attempts at dream interpretation by Patricia Crawford, Mary Campbell and Reid Barbour are insightful, but rely primarily on a modern interpretive gaze to compensate for a lack of reflective detail in the 'secondary elaboration' of their subjects.[3] In *Solomon's Secret Arts*, Paul Monod reveals how Samuel Jeake the younger dreamt and interpreted his dreams through the stock of astrological signs and their relative inclinations.[4] My own work focuses not on personal records of dreams and their readings, but on texts which furnished a theoretical justification for practices of dream interpretation, or presented examples of dream-readings in order to demonstrate their application to a practitioner. Assessment of the methods employed and the mentality brought to bear in such instances, however, is sporadic and would benefit from further development. The skills used to interpret dreams need to be explained with reference to other interpretive paradigms of the period, or else they risk appearing unduly arbitrary. The authority of works like the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus Daldianus, a dictionary of dream symbols brought anachronistically out of its cultural time and place in the 2nd century, needs to be explained. It should be explained how these methods were rationalized, and why they might be plausible to the critical minds of the time, or otherwise criticized and contested.

The cultural resources available for framing an approach to the art of interpreting and discerning dreams were much wider than symbol books like the *Oneirocritica*. I have argued that the philosophical, theological and medical models explored in this thesis constituted the most powerful interpretive frameworks applied to dreams and dreamers in the seventeenth century, and reflected the intellectual concerns of the era. Embedded within these models are principles which give explicit or implicit rules for interpreting individual dreams by their content. These principles were often rooted in ideas about

[1] Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, pp. 227—340.

[2] Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History*, pp. 23—42; Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed*, pp. 73—103, 227—340; pp. Watt, *Secretaries of God*, pp. 118—154.

[3] Crawford, 'Women's Dreams in Early Modern England', pp. 91—103; Campbell, 'Dreaming, Motion, Meaning', pp. 15—30; Barbour, *Literature and Religious Culture*, pp. 91—117.

[4] Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, p. 76.

reading, interpretation and cognition which were much wider and far reaching than books of dream symbols. These included but were not limited to exegetical interpretations of Scripture (including the literal, tropological, allegorical and anagogic), the practices of rhetoric and logic, and philosophical theories of Peripatetic physics, hermetic sympathies, astrological motions, noetic contemplation and mathematical formulas. The storehouses of this knowledge were even more vast, encompassing not just the study of scripture and nature but liturgical and sacramental imagery, classical literature in the form of mythography, allegorical, pastoral and elegiac poetry, ancient hieroglyphics, and proverbial and adagical wisdom.

I identify approaches to dream interpretation through studies of the mentality that immersed early modern individuals in these multiple sources of meaning, the 'deep structures' of early modern hermeneutic theory which William B. Ashworth called the 'emblematic world view'.[5] This mentality rested on the assumption that there existed little or no distinction between the spiritual and moral meanings ascribed to objects and the fact of their physical properties and existence, an assumption which allowed early moderns to generate transcendent meanings from natural objects and embed these meanings in the metaphysical structures explored in previous chapters. This 'emblematic' or 'symbolist' mentality, as described by Ashworth, M.D. Chenu and Peter Harrison, evolved through patristic, medieval and renaissance intellectual life as an attempt to unite theological and philosophical interpretations of the world.[6] The seventeenth century is a time that paradoxically witnessed the reification of this way of seeing at the same time as it saw its disruption and eventual decline in England. The former trend was exemplified in the vogue for emblems and emblem books, while the latter is evident in criticism of the application of moral and metaphorical knowledge to nature, and critical responses to typological knowledge in the late century.[7] Harrison traces the decline of the emblematic world view to an earlier point in the Reformation, when Protestantism's repudiation of sacramental theology, and its stripping back of exegetical techniques to affirm only literal and typological interpretations of scripture, contributed to a view of the world in which technical and instrumental approaches to natural philosophy were gaining increasing dominance.[8] Ashworth has also suggested that the rise of antiquarian histories and Europe's colonial encounter was crucial because it confronted philosophers with a new

[5] Ashworth, 'Natural History and the Emblematic World View', pp. 303—332

[6] Ibid.; M.D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 99—145; Harrison, *The Rise of Natural Science*, pp. 11—63.

[7] Harrison, *The Rise of Natural Science*, pp. 64—160; Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty*, pp. 227—266.

[8] Harrison, *The Rise of Natural Science*, pp. 64—160.

world that was bereft of the layers of literary and moral descriptions that saturated European perceptions of its own natural world.[9]

In the following sections I will track the influence of these trends on early modern dream interpretation, observing how emblematic symbolism was invoked to explain the meaningful nature of dream signs. I observe the foundations of the symbolist mentality in the axiological dialectics of Greek thought and in the cultural and educative practices of Renaissance learning, and suggests how these and other principles of natural philosophy informed common rules for interpreting the images and narratives of dreams. Schemes for the discernment of natural, demonic and divine dreams are explored from within the formulas of Catholic and Protestant theology and occult systems of magic. From a variety of texts explored in this thesis, I sketch a general framework for the interpretation of dreams in early modern intellectual culture. This proceeded from the basis, established in chapter two, that natural and divine species of vision could be productively compared based upon sensory criteria. There was an expectation that genuinely divine visions would fulfil or supersede the norms of natural vision, as contrasted with the chaos and degeneration of natural dreams. This standard of clear and intelligible vision was related to the order of thoughts in the mind, which reflected their origins within or outside of the cosmic order. The order of thought or mental concepts in dreams—expressed through images rather than language—was proved first through experience, but in the second instance by their intelligibility to the soul's understanding. This consisted in an ability to perceive the underlying logic that dream signs represented, whether this knowledge came by enlightenment or through discursive arts of interpretation. The ultimate proof of their origins and their putative truth was the passions which a dream or vision generated, since the value of perceived knowledge was its ability to move the spiritual will rather than the carnal appetites. The theory of dream interpretation depended not only upon the logic by which dream symbols were generated and operated, but how their mental impressions affected the cognitive powers of the soul.

The Emblematic World View and its Decline

The symbolic system of thought which informed European views of the natural world and its religious and philosophical significance has often been described by historians principally through its alien sentiments about what constituted 'knowledge worth knowing'. The late seventeenth century experienced a watershed with the rising regard for texts of natural history and experimental

[9] Ashworth, 'Natural History and the Emblematic World View', pp. 318—324.

demonstration which restricted their account of animals and natural objects to purely anatomical and material properties. Prior to this, it was conventional and expected that textbooks and encyclopaedias designed to inform and educate would encompass a vast amount of additional knowledge which would be considered to occupy another intellectual space in our own day, that of the humanities. Depending on the length and sophistication of the work, an encyclopaedic entry could include every name a creature was known by, 'Hononymous and Synonymous words', natural similitudes, lists of sympathies and antipathies, references and representations in literature, mythology, antiquities, hieroglyphic forms, emblems and devices, morals, fables, epigrammes and adages, and scriptural exegesis.[10] To know anything about the natural world was to know the totality of its associations and connections in the cosmic order, and thereby to perceive its overall *significance* in God's purposeful creation. Interpretive values were not mere human constructions imposed on a disinterested physical world, but woven into the fabric of the physical world. Physical attributes and properties existed for the purpose of expressing spiritual meanings, and hermeneutic methods of 'reading' metaphors, analogies, and homologies into natural phenomena were not artistic constructions but legitimate tools of intellectual enquiry.[11]

This view of the world rested on certain metaphysical and epistemological assumptions. The first was that matter and spirit were connatural: things were simultaneously physical and spiritual. This was more than a structural principle, the Aristotelian idea that spirit gives form to matter. It expressed the originally Platonic principle that spiritual things existed in the realm of ultimate ideas, the highest virtues and values. Material existence therefore mirrored and embodied transcendent truths, and these truths were attributes of God. The second was that the truths embodied by the natural world were not singular but multi-vocal – they were part of a greater whole which expressed many truths, and did so by virtue of their interrelation, their interaction and their capacity for dynamic change. The properties of a natural object were like the facets of a single jewel, which mirrored and reflected other nodes in the cosmic web, and which endlessly refracted the overall image and animating light of God. The third assumption was that there was a hierarchical order in creation, so that certain objects mirrored and expressed spiritual ideas more clearly than others. This doctrine, the chain of being, was similarly reproduced throughout the cosmic order. It dictated a hierarchy of created things, ascending from inanimate things to plants, to animals, to humans, and then to the angels and God himself. It differentiated corrupt and noble forms and properties in nature.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ashworth, 'Natural History and the Emblematic World View'; Harrison, pp. 34—56.

It also governed the expression of knowledge, so that linguistic expression was often assumed superior to the communicative power of images.[12]

The final key assumption was that spiritual truth was hidden in the patterns of scripture and the patterns of nature, and that the sum of humanity's knowledge reflected its limited understanding of both. Harrison argued that the major episteme shifts in the western intellectual tradition from late antiquity to the seventeenth century, were based in no small part on changing attitudes to how the symbolic language of the bible was assumed to be rooted in the physical world, and thus how God, Nature and Scripture reflected each other. In the early Christian world, the church's hermeneutic work was primarily 'vertical' in its references: the symbols of scripture and the objects of nature were explained primarily in terms of the spiritual truths which they represented.[13] As the intellectual traditions of the medieval church grew in sophistication, and gained increasing access to the recovered texts of antiquity, ambitions grew to map the intricate interrelationship of the natural world, in the hope that comprehending its order would bring spiritual clarity and restore man's own harmonious relationship with the world. This engendered the study of 'horizontal' references—the sum of the vast network of similitudes, associations, allegories and representations which we have described as the 'emblematical' view of nature.[14] This way of seeing the world began to decline only after the Reformation. Harrison identifies the Protestant determination to reduce interpretation of scripture to its 'literal' sense, and its anxiety to off-set the corrupting influence of human fancy, as key driving forces behind the tendency of Protestant thinkers to 'instrumentalize' nature, to increasingly interpret the bible through historical and chronological rather than symbolic schemas, and to adopt the mechanical and mathematical views of nature propounded by Bacon and the Cartesians.[15]

The gradual erosion of the emblematic world view over the course of the sixteenth century occurred as new approaches to the study of the natural world became increasingly articulate. Divine purpose was sought in nature, but the search increasingly moved away from seeing the world as a system and a network of signs.[16] In a reversal of the growing density of the symbolic world over the medieval period, the symbolic and analogical language of scripture became increasingly stripped down and isolated. Though they still played a role in transmitting intimations of the divine to the human mind, this scriptural

[12] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition*, pp. 234—273; Cocking, *Imagination: A Study*, pp. 1—89; Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 99—145; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 31—79.

[13] Harrison, *The Rise of Natural Science*, pp. 11—33.

[14] Ibid., pp. 34—63.

[15] Ibid., pp. 64—265.

[16] Harrison, *The Rise of Natural Science*, pp. 64—204.

language was no longer reflected generally in the order of nature. Poetic, allegorical and analogical logic was still used to detect God's intentions and ends in nature, but this did not amount to the same sharing of essences and sympathetic connections assumed to exist in medieval and Renaissance culture.[17] The metaphorical value of scripture was reframed according to its utility as a method of communication, rather than an expression of natures. Study of the Bible in Protestant England increasingly focused on its literal and historical sense, with the 'types' and 'antitypes' of Scripture being read as historical manifestations of God's providential purpose.[18] Most of the dream symbols and the metaphysical principles they relied upon were rooted in the peripatetic and Neoplatonic view of nature: the underlying logic that drove them, consequently, was contested. This did not, however, mean that that the emblematic view of the world had died out. Though it no longer dominated the intellectual scene, many continued to talk of similitudes and their occult powers. And while the semiotic and symbolic values that underpinned many techniques of dream interpretation were being challenged, discussions in philosophy of mind based around the mimetic, vitalistic or kinetic forces which shaped the impressions of the senses, imagination and intellectual mind, were still of central importance.

Visual and Cognitive Order in the Perception of Dreams

Opinion was always divided on the implications of the idea that physical and spiritual reality were connatural, and how divine power and knowledge were mediated in such a universe. The belief that the physical and material world were parallel supported the idea that material forms and practices were a gateway to perceiving the divine. However this world of essences was also hierarchical. The material world was crucially marred by imperfection and corruption, and many believed it acted as an impediment and a distraction from the higher truths. It was possible to disagree over which methods were most legitimate or effective for extracting knowledge from such a world.[19] The Greek philosophers were divided over whether the highest form of knowledge could be achieved through discursive or theurgic methods.[20] The same tensions were apparent in Christian thought and religion, where the virtue of sacramental participation was pitted against fears that the laity did not understand the Gospels, and that false belief misplaced worship from God onto nature. Peripatetic scholars and mystical contemplatives recreated the divisions

[17] Ibi.d, pp. 161—204.
[18] Ibid., pp. 107—120.
[19] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp.52—53; Cocking, *Imagination: A Study*, pp.90—100, 141—167; Dyrness, *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture*, pp. 16—48.
[20] I.e., intellectual or religious. See Edward Moore, 'Neoplatonism', Ver. May 2, 2005, on *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, [http://www.iep.utm.edu/neoplato/#SH3b, accessed 12 Nov 2013].

between discursive, theurgic and apothatic forms of knowing in the medieval Church. This was seen in the divisions between the Neoplatonic mysticism of the Pseudo-Dionysius and Bonaventure, whose teaching inspired the Franciscan order, and those like Aquinas, who rejected core tenets of Neoplatonism and asserted the sufficiency of man's reason to apprehend his place within God's creation.[21] This problem continued to play itself out within Protestant religion, even after its repudiation of sacramental theology and materialistic forms of worship, in the continued struggles over the depth and extent of Church reform, the liberty of religious conscience, and in differing attitudes toward the use of the imagination in prayer and meditation.

These epistemological concerns, which often involved intricate and sophisticated discussions about how human beings perceived and understood the world, had a direct bearing on the way in which the images or 'objects' of dreams were thought to relate to the rest of human knowledge, and either defy or signify higher meanings. Their visual nature embodied some of the central ambiguities of the symbolic and hierarchical world view. Aristotelian philosophy dictated that the mind was dependent upon the images presented by the senses for the spiritual forms that subsequently formed the matter of thought.[22] The thoughts of the mind, too, were often grounded in the representations and images of the imagination. In arts of memory, utilised by the learned to store and retrieve knowledge in an efficient manner, thoughts were encoded in visual forms or emblems.[23] In Locke's later epistemology, which rejected speculation on the existence of occult 'spiritual forms', the equivalence between imaginative phantasms and the matter constitutive of thought may have been even greater, so there was little distinction between the operations of imagination, memory and intellect.[24]

At times, mental images appeared to offer routes to knowledge that were beyond the immediate grasp of the intellect. The belief that reason was the highest road to attaining knowledge was countered by the view that human reason was incapable of grasping divine truths. This made it necessary for God to communicate such truths by way of metaphor and analogy, with the symbolic language of scripture and the prophetic writings it encoded as the principal example of this. Francis Bacon noted that 'in matters of Faith and Religion, we raise our Imagination above our Reason; which is the cause why Religion

[21] Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition*, pp. 234—273.
[22] Ayers, 'The Cognitive Faculties', p. 954—961.
[23] Frances Yates, *The Art of Memory*, (Chicago, 1966); Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, (trans.) Stephen Clucas, (Chicago, 2000), pp. 1—80; Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, pp. 31—51.
[24] Ayers, *Locke: Epistemology and Ontology*, pp. 44—48.

sought ever access to the mind by similitude, types, parables, visions, dreams'.[25] The idea that images might mediate higher truths was particularly prevalent within Platonic, Neoplatonic and mystical belief systems, where the imaginative and mental world was elided with the realm of 'celestial' forms and beings, which occupied a higher point in the cosmic structure than terrestrial forms. Thinkers like Aquinas and Casaubon asserted the superiority of discursive reason against such contemplative models of knowledge.[26] But the very fact that the Bible itself was full of symbolic language explained why it was necessary to defend the possibility of visual mediation in dreams, and why elements of Neoplatonic thought remained relevant to Protestant thinkers like John Smith. Smith called prophetic revelation as revealed in Scripture an 'Analogical way' by which 'the knowledge of Divine Truth may also be revealed to us'.[27] For Protestants, Scriptural figures and analogies were not naturally allegorical so much as a direct form of substitution or code for the mind of God, which was 'debasing it self to assume our rude conceptions', and 'content, when it comes into the world, to wear our mantles, to learn our language, to conform it self as it were to our dress and fashions'[28]. As sensible and analogical images, prophecy might present hell 'as a great valley of fire like that of *Hinnom',* heaven ' as a place of continual *banqueting'* or God 'as *riding upon the wings of the Wind, riding upon the Clouds, sitting in Heaven,* and the like'.[29] For Protestants who founded their ideas on the idea that the sense of Scripture was literal and not primarily poetic and allegorical, these instances of visual and symbolic coding were termed 'accommodation'.[30]

Others believed that visual symbols might communicate spiritual ideas immediately to the understanding, and could in fact constitute a pre-linguistic communication that was superior to conventional linguistic expression.[31] Images thus had the power to express and make manifest ideas which were spiritual and intellectual. The artistic culture of the Renaissance engaged with the idea that nature could be imitated in such a way as to express more clearly the spiritual realities that lay beneath it. The Tuscan painter Cennino Cennini (ca. 1370 – ca. 1440) expressed the purpose of the artist as being ' to discover things not seen, hiding themselves under the shadow of natural objects, and to fix them with the hand, presenting to plain sight what does not actually exist'.[32]

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[25] Francis Bacon, *The tvvoo bookes of Francis Bacon, of the proficience and aduancement of learning, diuine and humane* (London, 1605), p. 47.

[26] Casaubon, *Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme*, pp. 128—129.

[27] Smith, *Select Discourses*, 170.

[28] Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 172.

[29] Smith, *Select Discourses*, pp. 174—175.

[30] Harrison, *The Rise of Natural Science*, pp. 129—137.

[31] Ashworth, 'Natural History and the Emblematic World View', p. 307.

[32] Cennini, Cennino, *The craftsman's handbook: the Italian "l libro dell'arte",* (trans.) Daniel V. Thompson, (New York Dover, 1954), p. 1.

As the arts of sculpture and painting were related to the ideal of 'picturing' reality but also transcending it, so too there developed a symbolic culture of the 'emblem', a reified form of pictoral representation which absorbed many visual motifs—including allegorical figures, hieroglyphic and heraldic symbolism, elements of portraiture and decorative art and printing—but was increasingly considered a didactic kind of form within which the power of similitudes was manifested.

In seventeenth-century England emblematic images spread through the publishing of 'emblem books', and were presented as a tool of moral and spiritual reflection. The didactic potential of emblems drew upon the traditions of Christian meditation which evolved from the mystical and Neoplatonist traditions of the medieval church. Their multi-vocal forms acted upon by the sensible, imaginative and intellectual powers of the soul, and penetrating these layers of meaning, raised the perceptions of the soul toward heaven.[33] Similar ideas related studies in ancient arts of memory consolidation to the pursuit of a universal system for uniting human knowledge and comprehending the divine order, which might take the form of a distinctive system of organization, a 'universal' hieroglyph, or an Adamic language whose characters resembled simply what they were supposed to represent.[34] Emblems were often identified as precisely the kind of symbolic form which would be stored in a mnemonic system.[35] The popularity and intellectual significance of the emblem was displayed in claims that God himself had designed parts of creation in the form of an emblem (or *impresa*), and the tendency to present key biblical episodes as emblematic—including, as we shall see, the images of divine dreams.[36]

Notions about the relationship of images and ideas such as these meant that the structural and organisational characteristics of dreams could be related to order in the processes of human cognition. It was notable that discussions about the origins of natural, demonic and divine dreams often referred to their qualities as expressing disorder or order in the realm of cognition. The preacher Richard Allestree said that in dreams 'Ideas are not always well connected, there is no chain or thred of fancies, and the thoughts are not joynted regular and even' but instead there was 'breaches and disorder in them still, the Images of sleep being like Nebuchadnezzar's, made of such things as do not well unite'.[37] Nashe called dreams a 'figure of the first Chaos whereout the world was extraught' in which 'cogitations runne on heapes like men to part a fray,

[33] Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, pp. 160—232.
[34] Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory*, pp. 97—194;
[35] Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, pp. 48—51.
[36] Ibid., pp. 151—152; 168—177.
[37] Richard Allestree, *Forty sermons whereof twenty one are now first publish'd* (London, 1684), p. 26.

where euerie one strikes his next fellow'.[38] Locke believed them to be 'all *made up of the waking Man's Ideas*, though, for the most part, oddly put together', and in a way 'little conformable to the Perfection and Order of a rational Being'.[39] In his Neoplatonic account Philip Goodwin distinguished between dreams in which '*Reason acts* irregularly, intricately, inconsistently, fluctuating and roving up and down, that things hang (as we say) like ropes of sand', and those where '*Reason* acts more regularly, and manages matters more methodically, so that sometimes Men may finde as effectuall use of Reason in their sleep as when wide awake.'[40] In Goodwin's typology, demonic dreams were associated with the former, and the divine with the latter. In humanity's vain dreams there was '*drunken changes of things, nothing solid or serious, nothing fixed or firm, but empty shadows of things scattered, that dispersing pass away.'*[41] Demonic dreams were 'full of inconsistencies, lubricities, slippery, severed and unsetled, rushings in and rollings about, Reason so roving from one thing to another, that the minde makes miserable non-sence'.[42] In contrast to both, divine dreams would

> make a more orderly entrance, and leave a more legible Impress: Thoughts herein as adhering one to another, so declaring one of another. As bringing in things more leisurely, so making of things more intelligible, more evident and easie to be understood.[43]

These descriptions pertained to the quality of thoughts during sleep, but it is evident that when dreams were described in this way, it was implicit either that the images themselves were being presented as manifestations of thought, as 'visible conceits', or else that their visual order and pattern provided the foundation for rational judgment. The presence of a visual order in these representations is signalled when commentators turn to the dominant symbolic and artistic forms of their culture in order to express their quality. Aquinas stated that the different degrees of prophetic vision could be distinguished 'according to the expressiveness of the imaginary signs', which included the analogical and metaphorical figures of 'the seven full ears of corn' and 'the burning of the city under the figure of a boiling cauldron' in the visions of Joseph and Jeremiah respectively.[44] John Smith called prophetic inspiration 'this glassing of Divine things by Hieroglyphicks and Emblems in the Fansie'.[45] Philip

[38] Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night*, di. 12.
[39] Locke, *Essay on Human Understanding*, p. 42.
[40] Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 5—6.
[41] Ibid.,, p. 156.
[42] Ibid., p. 43.
[43] Ibid., p 43—44
[44] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* II.II, Q.174, Art. 3.
[45] Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 182.

Goodwin believed that the images of dreams reflected the divine potential in man, and as such, necessarily reflected God back to him:

> In an Image there is not onely a resemblance, Analogie or similitude of one thing to another, but there is a Deduction, derivation, impression of that similitude upon the one, from the other, with relation thereunto. Now as man that hath Dreames in him; so there be Dreames in man, upon which is such an Impresse of the similitude of God, such cleer Characters of Gods Image Imprinted, as proves them to proceed from God.[46]

In Beale's treatise the symbolic dreams of the Pharoah's butler, Jacob's wrestling match with the angel (which he judged to have taken place in a dream), Paul's vision of the Macedonian, and Peter's vision of the blanket descending from heaven were all called an 'Embleme' which bore an 'individuall marke of pertinency' and sometimes a 'latent' sense that required spiritual interpretation.[47] Amyraut claimed that the images of divine dreams were 'so admirably composed, that they seem to be the result of a very intelligent Cause'.[48] This was evident because natural dreams were neither:

> so emblematical on the one side, or so regular on the other, as to present, in their very constitutions, Symbols consisting of so many parts, which answer one another with so great proportion.[49]

John Owen described how the prophet Ezekial, received 'a *Vision* by way of Representation unto his Mind of a Glorious Fabrick of a *Temple,* to instruct the Church in the Spiritual Glory and Beauty of Gospel-Worship'.[50] This temple appeared to reflect the highest imaginable aspirations of Renaissance architectural theory, with its emphasis on rationalized spaces and forms which imitated the perfection of the divine order, as well as the mythological belief that structures described in the Old Testament were built according to God's command and expressed spiritual truths in their measurements, proportions and form.[51] Owen claimed that it was 'utterly impossible for the Mind of Man to *conceive* and retain at once all the *Harmonious Structure, Dimensions,* and Laws of the Fabrick represented' in Ezekial's vision, so that its origins and memorability could only be a divine effect.[52]

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[46] Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 318—319.
[47] Beale, 'Treatise on the Art of Interpreting Dreams', 25/19, 17b—18a in HP.
[48] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, p. 62.
[49] Ibid., p. 90.
[50] Owen, *Pneumatologia*, p. 109.
[51] Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, pp. 160—167; Jim Bennett and Scott Mandelbrote, *The Garden, the Ark, the Tower, the Temple: The Biblical Metaphors of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 9—11.
[52] Ibid.

Divine dreams were discerned then by their ability to fulfil, often in fact to surpass, the teleological function of the human organism, so that its perceptive and cognitive faculties functioned at heightened capacity. In the Thomistic formulation, they were a direct contrast to the confused perceptions and elided judgments in natural dreams, since divine motions stimulated the inner senses and provided ordered and intelligible perceptions upon which the mind could reliably work. Consciousness was created when the soul was taken up into a supernatural reality. For the Neoplatonist, spiritual dreams came about when the turbulent motions of the mind and body were suppressed, freeing the soul's native spiritual perceptions. When these states of higher vision were achieved, they were commonly contrasted to natural dreams by a superabundance of vitalistic energy, from which their supernatural origins could be deduced. This energy was described principally in terms of illumination, energy and motion. John Smith derived a hierarchy of prophetic dream types from Jewish scholars which was based on how strongly the imaginative and intellectual faculties were moved by a divine force. It was 'the strength of its impression and the forcibleness of its operation' that enabled the prophet to discern a 'Prophetical dream'.[53] Sensory phenomena in dreams were imbued with power which imparted 'a strong evidence of their Original along with them, whereby they might be able to distinguish them both from any hallucination.'[54] Thus God's voice, 'accompanied by 'Thunder and Earthquake or some great Clashing', and equivalent sensual signs, constituted sensory evidence of the spiritual illumination that 'entred upon the Mind as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.'[55] The emblems of divine dreams, said Amyraut were not only 'distinct and articulate', but also 'vely, clear, deeply impress'd upon the imagination'.[56] God's vitalistic presence in a dream brought clarity and illumination to its figures. This was associated both with the clarity of the imaginative vision, but also with the illumination of the soul's intellectual faculties. Goodwin said that a majority of dreams were 'of a darke *nature:* so vailed and covered, as they commonly require an Interpreter', while in demonic dreams 'thoughts throng in and thrust out with violence and force, so that thereby reason is oft darkened, brain distempered and powers disturbed'.[57] Likewise, Amyraut called demonic dreams 'perplex'd and intricate', but found that dreams related in Scripture were 'not only clear, but full of light, whether we consider them whole, or in their parts'.[58]

[53] Smith, *Select Discourses*, pp. 203—209, quoted p. 208.
[54] Ibid., p. 206.
[55] Ibid., p. 207, 204.
[56] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture* p. 90.
[57] Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, di.8, p. 43.
[58] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, p. 63.

This vitalism was notable for tell-tale effects on the cognitive as well as the perceptual faculties, and accorded with the mimetic nature of early modern epistemology, that knowledge consisted in successfully mirroring the form, order and motion of divine essences. The authority and stability of that knowledge was signalled by the power of consolidation that it wrought on the memory. Natural dreams were famously difficult to recall, a fact commonly attributed to their status as weak echoes of waking impressions, or to the corrupting effects of the body on memory. By contrast, divine dreams were notable for leaving, as Goodwin had said 'a more legible Impress', an effect seemingly connected both to their logical pattern and vitalistic force. Their memorability aided their intellectual interpretation: 'If some things at first seem intricate,' Goodwin said, 'yet the longer the mind dilates thereon, the more it understands… and the more it apprehends of Gods mind thereby.'[59] William Perkins claimed a sleeping trance was necessary to prophetic vision, because it gave the mind best opportunity 'to attend and marke, to know and vnderstand', and because this singular attention was conducive to 'imprint deeper in memorie things reuealed'.[60] Amyraut noted that 'natural dreams do make so little impression upon our Spirits, that for the most part, we do not remember them when we are awake; whereas the Divine are firmly fix'd in our memory'.[61] Defending the prophetic credentials of Christopher Kotterus and Christina Poniatowska, Comenius noted they 'could remember to a word (before they were committed to writing) what they had seen and heard, if asked a thousand times, not changing a very tittle'.[62] This state of hypostatic knowledge formed the basis for the epistemic certainty of the prophet, a notion to which we shall return in the last section when we explore the effects of dreams on the dreamer's agency.

The notion of a hierarchy of prophetic and visionary experience in dreams was a persistent feature in medieval scholarship, and had its origins in the Neoplatonic sources on dreams which they adopted and interpreted.[63] The evidence shows that this notion continued to inform the assumptions of Protestant writers in seventeenth-century England. Even as the dominance of Aristotelian philosophy came to a decisive end, discussions of the perceptual and cognitive qualities of dreams continued to define them against a normative conception of human vision. A divine dream was in part miraculous precisely because it recreated, and possibly even enhanced, the norms associated with vision, in what was the ordinarily chaotic circumstances of a dream. If dreams were at this point being thought in terms of cognitive rather perceptive space,

[59] Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 44.
[60] Perkins, *Lectures upon the first three chapters of Revelation* (1605), p. 73.
[61] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, p. 63.
[62] Comenius, *A Generall Table of Europe*, p. 190.
[63] Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* , pp. 17—34, 83—112.

then it is notable that the intervention of a prophetic dream recreated the perceptual dynamic. On the other hand, Goodwin's endorsement of divine dreams as a feature of the sanctified imagination problematizes such a distinction in a world where every-day thought was an essential reflection or 'similitude' of a divine or demonic influence. The presence of visual forms in the mind was said to support the cognitive acts of perception and of judgment, and it was the divine agent that invested dreams with the power to stimulate those motions. The vitalistic force which implanted these images was not, however, sufficient to describe how they were received, perceived and understood by the soul.

The Interpretation of Dreams

Dreams had their various interpretations whether or not their origins were divine. The visual forms of dreams (known variously as impression, phantasms, similitudes, *species*) were mental objects, but possessed the same multi-vocal nature as the material forms they copied. They were subject to the same methods of interpretation, and were generated, moved and manipulated by many of the same causal forces assumed to operate in nature. In the first chapter, we saw that natural dreams could be conceived of as basically elemental in their nature, expressing the qualities and properties of the bodily humours, and impregnated by other natural accidents, including the thick airs of the climate and the celestial irradiations of the stars. In these instances, the signs and symbols of dreams were caused by an occult power of sympathy between these natural substances and the images suspended in the imagination or stored in the memory. At other times, the images of dreams appear to have been projected and conjured by the imagination according to the reactive and attractive powers of the appetites, which involved a spiritual but bodily power of the soul. In contemplative or intellectual dreams, the power of the imagination might be directed by reason in drawing upon images from the memory. Supernatural intelligences, demonic, celestial or angelic, similarly possessed the power to manipulate any impression, phantasm or similitude pre-existing in the body. The only force in nature which could implant totally original and never-before seen forms or 'species' was God himself.[64]

Understanding of dreams could be achieved either by inspiration or by human arts. In the former case, the divine motions which impressed and illuminated the imagination also, to varying degrees, illuminated the soul's power of reason so that it was able to penetrate the visionary forms and see their spiritual meaning. John Smith observed from his Jewish sources that in the lowest

[64] Aquinas, II.II, Q.173, Art. 2.

degree of prophecy the imaginative power was stronger, disturbing the rational senses so that they saw only '*Parables, Similitudes and Allegories, in a dark and obscure manner*' and perceive *'not a Literal but Allegorical truth contained in them'.*[65] In the second degree of prophecy the strength of the imaginative and rational powers would 'equally balance one another'.[66] In the third the rational power was stronger, and 'the Minde of the Prophet is able to strip those things that are represented to it in the glass of Phansie of all their materiality and sensible nature, and apprehend them more distinctly in their own naked Essence'.[67] This meant that his prophetic expositions would '*prove distinct and clear, and free from all obscuritie, having a literal truth in them'.*[68] Higher than all of these was prophecy of the 'gradus Mosaicus', in which 'all *Imagination* ceaseth, & the Representation of Truth descends not so low as the Imaginative part, but is made in the highest stage of Reason and Understanding'. The idea that the meaning of divine dreams would be clear and transparent was common in Christian literature on their discernment and interpretation. It was obviously a concomitant of the idea that divine dreams had a rational order and clear force, accompanied here by the sense that they possessed a clear thrust and an apparent meaning. William Perkins claimed that divine dreams 'be alwaies either plaine and manifest, or if they be obscure, yet they haue a most euident interpretation annexed vnto them'.[69] As demonic dreams were obscure, 'the interpretation of them is ambiguous and vncertaine', because Satan's limited powers of prediction constrained him 'to giue doubtfull answers by dreames'.[70] Nigel Smith notes how Arise Evans called his visions 'so plaine… they need no interpretation'; and that Tryon described dreams composed of 'Forms and Figures represented, with the Interpretations thereof'. As Philip Goodwin said, divine dreams were 'more intelligible, more evident and easie to be understood'. Higher visions penetrated the symbolic veil of nature, granting the soul divine insight into their meanings, and also obviating the need for flawed human arts of interpretation. The meaning of holy dreams was revealed to Joseph and David rather than discerned. Interpretations were sometimes conferred within the dream by a divine voice or a figure which fulfilled the role of interpreter or guide, such as the angelic figures in Daniel's dreams and John's revelations. This signified that human reason was receptive of divine intelligence, exercising no autonomous perspective, but that which it was granted.

That the origin of a dream was plainly divine was attributed to several factors by seventeenth-century theologians. Most of these were related to the

[65] Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 179.

[66] Smith does not elaborate on how this would affect the perception or interpretation of the prophet. Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 180.

[67] Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 180.

[68] Ibid., p. 180.

[69] Perkins, *Damned Art of Witchcraft*, p.101.

[70] Ibid., p. 101.

knowledge that the dream conferred, which was supernatural, and thus beyond the power of natural and demonic dreams to represent successfully. Perkins argued that divine dreams 'haue alwaies had their preeminence aboue others', because they concerned 'the weightiest matters in the world; as the comming and exhibiting of the Messias, the changes and alterations of Kingdomes, the reueiling of Antichrist, & the state of the Church of God'.[71] Diabolical dreams were 'not of so waightie matters, nor so hard to foretell'.[72] It was possible to establish if the message of a dream was genuinely divine because it would accord with the conventions of church doctrine, since a dream from God 'is alwaies agreeable to his reuealed will', without any deviation 'in whole or in part'. Natural dreams tended to be 'agreeable to mans corruption, which is repugnant vnto Gods will'.[73] These prescriptions signaled the conformity of divine dreams to revealed religion and morality. Amyraut, however, stressed the miraculous nature of the signs in a divine dream, which he believed to be above man's own inventive capacity, and represented things 'so far above that which natural causes are accustomed to do, that it would be too great an impertinence to impute it to them'. Philip Goodwin followed the method of discerning differences 'as the *Learned* lay down between *true* Miracles and *false'.*[74] By this account:

> *true* Dreames in a direct *line* lead to the glorification of *God* in the good of men, and to the edification of men, in the matters of *God.* But *false* Dreames, their *drift* is, to draw the Souls of men aside to such acts as are dishonourable to *God,* disagreeing to his Word, and disadvantagious towards mens eternall good.[75]

The ideal that dreams should bear a worthy meaning even penetrated into the realm of secular manners. The *Galateo*, a Spanish courtier's handbook, warned that 'we must not trouble men with so base and absurde matter as dreames bee: especially suche foolyshe things, as most tymes men haue'.[76] An exception was to be made for dreams full of 'deepe knowledge and vndersta[n]ding', which were not the preserve of common men.[77]

Illumination was usually a means to interpretation only within the context of a prophetic ecstasy. If the intellect was not wholly illuminated, or the origins of the dream was not immediately from God, then interpretation had to proceed

[71] Ibid., p. 100—101.
[72] Ibid., p. 101.
[73] Ibid., 102—103
[74] Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, p. 47.
[75] Ibid., pp. 47—48.
[76] Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo of Maister Iohn Della Casa, Archebishop of Beneuenta*, (London, 1576), pp. 33—32.
[77] Della Casa, *Galateo*, pp. 33—32

by way of human art and wisdom, as in those lowest degrees of prophecy described by Jewish philosophers. Chapter two high-lighted that attempts to extract supernatural truths from nature was always controversial. People also searched for different kinds of knowledge in dreams. Physicians who restricted their divinatory speculations to the natural causes of diseases, for instance, were looked upon without concern by the Church: this was a lawful form of deduction and conjecture. Those, however, who sought knowledge from dreams beyond the immediate significance of bodily passions, usually in relation to the future, practised a form of divination which was condemned in much Protestant moral literature. As chapter two suggests, this did not prevent many from pursuing what they deemed to be legitimate studies of the signifying power of dreams. The art of interpretation was applied to the materials of Scripture by millenialists seeking to understand the end times, theosophists perceived the divine through metaphors, analogies and emblematic visions, while puritan experientialists and philosophers dabbling in the occult sought experimental knowledge outside of the moral proscriptions which they saw as aligned with discredited Aristotelian philosophy.

One of the most common contexts in which to interpret dreams was medicine, and in examining the practices of physicians, and later the occult oneirocritic, we observe how dreams were thought to be caused by physical laws in Aristotelian physics or occult theories of magic. In Aristotle's physics, the world was composed from prime matter, which was conditioned and differentiated by a set of qualities, the binary opposites of hot/cold and dry/moist. Their combinations produced the four elements of earth, water, air and fire. All material things were variously composed of these four basic substances, so that the world was made of 'mixed substances'. All things in the cosmos thus composed 'wholes' created from opposing qualities and elements. These substances were subject to four different kinds of change: substantial, qualitative, quantitative and locomotive. The most complex of these were changes of substance and quality (sometimes referred to as corruption and generation) and changes of place (locomotive, which gave basic laws of motion). Changes of substance and quality were best described as a relationship of potentiality to actuality: all things, as mixed substances, contained within themselves the 'potential' to convert into an opposing form or quality, which would then be 'manifest' or 'actual'. Changes of place were dictated by Aristotle's conclusion that all like elements and qualities were naturally attracted to each other. The world itself was composed of natural 'places' for earth, water, air and fire. The falling of a stone, the flowing of water, or the rising of steam were not caused by a notion of density: instead, the ordinary motion of mixed substances tended to bring them back to this natural place,

while unnatural motion was caused when things were moved out of their natural place.[78]

While the logic of divination from dream images can often appear arbitrary when simply asserted, it is important to understand that physicians who prognosticated on their 'similitudes' or 'resemblances' were attempting to relate the dynamics of their images to these fundamental natural laws. Dream signs were caused by the humours, which as substances were defined by the four qualities, and by a quantitative equilibrium and natural place in the body: ill health resulted from changes of substance (corruption), imbalance in the humours (surfeit and deficit), and by violent motions and agitations. Lemnius claimed that health could be forecasted by sensing the disposition of the body and its dominant humours, because the 'the causes and original beginninges' of changes in health 'proceede oute of the body', and were 'wythin the compasse and reason of thinges naturall'.[79] Thomas Hill claimed that dreams would 'signifye euill, when the spirites and heate renewed in the sleepe transpose them vpon those euill humors, whiche before rested, for asmuch as then through these the lyke vapours be eleuated and stirred vppe, and these by their ill nature, cause men to feare'.[80]

Medical dreams therefore reflected the present state of these humours, and by this their potential for changes in the body and in health. Galen had said that the mind in dreams could sense the body 'weighed down by an excess of humours', causing the soul to experience vexation, or it could be 'light and unsuperflous' so that it dreamt of flying or running.[81] Lemnius stated that a dream of 'dvuinge ouer head and eares in Water, or to be in Bathes & [R]aynes' might signify an effusion of phlegmatic humour (defined by the qualities of wet and cold), which might 'fall out of the head' into 'their necke, Iawes, vocall Arterye and Lunges'. Related images of 'Hayle, Snow, Yse, storme & Rayne' could signify whether the humour was 'thicke and grosse' or 'thinne and liquide'.[82] Hill noted that:

> dreaminge to walke by narrow places, declarethe a sicknesse to come of the lunges or lightes, because he is prohibited and letted to breathe or drawe necessarye or congruente ayre, and the reason wherfore is, because their passages and wayes be stopped[83]

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[78] Grant, *Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages*, pp. 55—62; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, pp. 31—68.

[79] Lemnius, *The Touchstone of Complexions*, p. 120.

[80] Hill, *The most pleasaunt arte of the interpretation of dreames,* p. 38.

[81] Galen, 'On Diagnosis in Dreams', (trans.) Lee Pearcy, [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucgajpd/medicina%20antiqua/tr_GalDreams.html, accessed 12 May 13].

[82] Lemnius, *The Touchstone of Complexion*, p. 112—113.

[83] Hill, *The most pleasaunt arte of the interpretation of dreames,* p.39.

Conditions of quality, and changes of quantity and place were the most common things to be read into the properties and motions witnessed in dreams. One of the most powerful and common equivalence was between the body and natural forms in dreams which signified a state of generation as opposed to corruption, the predominance of noble and therefore healthy forms and qualities. The physician James Hart described an ideal dream reverie in which:

> to runne apace, and to see the earth plaine and smooth, well manured, planted with pleasant and fruit full trees, and bearing good store of fruit: as also to see rivers and fountaines running their accustomed course, and the accustomed quantity of water, this doth also signifie sound health; and that both meat and drinke and all excretions keepe a due symmetry and proportion.[84]

By contrast, bodily illness and disease displayed themselves in scenes that included poor qualities, lack of equilibrium and displaced order. There might be 'rough and uneven earth', which indicated 'some corruption in the flesh'; leaves falling from trees indicating 'hurt from humiditie and moisture'; while rivers overflowing signified overabundance of blood, and troubled seas, 'disease in the belly'.[85] The allegorical content of dreams was not limited to other natural signs, but could also include human actors, behaviours, and even signs which were clearly forms of human culture, expanding the symbolic significance of order to the social world. Armed men near rivers or monstrous apparitions pointed to 'great disease or madness'.[86] It was good to 'dreame people apparelled in white and comely clothes', but 'portendeth no good' to see anyone naked. A good dream reflected the orderly patterns of human life: 'to see with a cleere and sharpe sight such things as are done upon earth… portendeth health'.[87] Lemnius also claimed that healthy dreams displayed 'onely the labours, exercises and deuyses of the daye, and the needefull cares for the dailye mayntenaunce of this life'.[88] In the world of health, extraordinary visions were ominous because they portended changes in the natural order of the body.

Belief in the occult laws of nature extended the connections between dreams and natural causes in the body to those in the wider world. Beyond changes of substance, quality and place, occult metaphysics posited the existence of 'sympathies' and 'antipathies', fundamental forces of attraction and repulsion which operated on objects according to their similitude or contrariety. Through astrological theory, occult divination encompassed not just the terrestrial but the celestial sphere, from which powers and virtues were believed to be

[84] Hart, *Diet of the Diseased*, p. 339.
[85] Ibid., p. 339.
[86] Ibid., p. 340.
[87] Ibid., p. 339.
[88] Lemnius, *The Touchstone of Complexions*, p. 95.

transmitted through the ether and the air to influence the course of nature, the behaviour of individuals, and the fate of societies. Accordingly, the analogical and metaphorical images of dreams which revealed the influences of these celestial agents grew to encompass individual fortune, not just in sickness and health, but all of one's social relations and life circumstances. Thomas Walkington called those dreams 'Fatall or portentous' which were 'prognosticous of either good or badde successe'.[89] In many cases, these divinatory dreams appeared to draw analogical or homological connections between natural laws and the course of human fate, emotional, material and social. Thomas Hill's reading of the fateful meanings of a dream seems like an echo of Hart's medical diagnosis:

> [I]in all dremes the more good cyrcu[m]stances there are like as whe[n] they seeme to be in a pleasa[n]t, fayre, good lye, greene, and fruit fu[ll]place, or in a Churche, or before [a] frende, and so of the others, so muche the certainer shalbe the interpretation vpon, prosperitye, and contrarye wyse vppon infortu~nacye: lyke as to dreame that he seeth himselfe in a barren place, desert, or rude, or rough wyth stone, or troublesom, pronosticateth euill.[90]

A manuscript of occult lore, similarly, drew a general law from the Pharoah's biblical dream of the lean and fat oxen in Genesis 41:17-20: 'Concerning Joseph's oxen this tenet will be verified that so often you dream of an Ox, so often the year may be judged, for the nature the Ox is of, the like the year will prove.'[91] Joseph had interpreted the fortunes of the harvests, but in the manuscript the oxen predicted a man's poverty, marriage and death. Generally, however, the grounds on which connections of a similitude and analogy could be drawn were wide and rarely immediately apparent to a modern interpreter. This was because in the 'emblematic' conception of nature, any shared property of substance, quality, form, of natural place, or indeed any powers, virtues, relationships or behaviours arising from them, were grounds for making an objective and possibly occultic connection between two things. In a world of opposites, indeed, objects could be connected by principle of opposition to any of these things. Gail Kern Paster asserts that many contemporaries established great equivalence between the identity, action and passion of different objects on the basis of their shared natures, such that, for instance, the passion and form of melancholy could be drawn out into 'animals, musical instruments and sewage ditches', as a 'sensible feature of the natural world'.[92]Dreams therefore

[89] Thomas Walkington, *The Opticke Glass of Humours*, (London, 1607), p. 74.
[90] Hill, *The most pleasaunt arte of the interpretation of dreames*, di. 39.
[91] Adam McClean, A Treatise on Angel Magic, (San Francisco, 2006), p. 147.
[92] Gail Kern Paster, 'Melancholy Cats, Lugged Bears and Early Modern Cosmology: Reading Shakespeare's Psychological Materialism across the Species Barrier' in Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds), *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia, 2004), p. 120—121.

encompassed, as Hart's diagnostic dreams did, variables of social experience, custom and display, and presented themselves in all manner of symbols, as parables, allegories or 'emblems'. Hill wrote that dreams of women with covered heads and black garments signified intent of deception, which 'booth the kynde of them & also the coloure of the garments perswadeth so to be'; dreams of harlots signified 'deception or variances', which were 'two propertyes of them [their nature and character]'.[93] Walkington observed:

> These also are fatall dreames, as when we dreame of Eagles flying ouer our heade, it portends infortunatenes: to dreame of mariages, dauncing and banquetting foretels some of our kinsfolkes are departed; to dreame of siluer, sorrow, if thou hast it gi|uen thy selfe: of gold, good fortune; to loose an axill tooth or an eye, the death of some speciall friend: to dreame of bloody teeth, the death of the dreamer: to weep in sleepe, ioy: to contemplate ones face in the water, and to see the dead, long life: to ha~dle lead, some mela~cholick disease: to see a Hare, death: to dream of chickins and birds, commonly ill lucke[94]

Amyraut observed that dreams were usually interpreted according to their resemblances or similitude, but sometimes by a law of contraries. It was commonly stated that to dream of a marriage predicted a coming funeral. As a sceptic, Thomas Nashe recognised the practice of interpreting by similitudes and contraries, and ridiculed them both, asking 'what sense is there that the yoalke of an egge should signifie gold[?]' or that 'euery thing must bee interpreted backward as Witches say their Pater-noster, good being the character of bad, and bad of good[?]'[95] In the case of contraries, it was as if, he said, 'men comming from a Play should conclude, Well we haue seene a Commedie to day, and therefore there cannot choose but be a Tragedie to morrow'.[96] Nashe perceived such laws to be arbitrary, and yet his invocation of witches is a telling clue to the logic which did underlie such reasoning. Though less frequently invoked than similitude, essentialist opposition between forms and qualities could also bring out operational changes in nature, and in occult theory this displayed itself in the power of 'antipathies' which strived to separate from each other. There are thus two ways in which dreams images might 'logically' display contraries: through sensitivity to present conditions which contained within themselves the potential for a binary reversal, or a representation which was stirred up by the operation of an antipathic connection.

Nashe is an obvious case of a critic who rejected the extent of the occult connections which others claimed existed between things in the natural world.

[93] Hill, *The most pleasaunt arte of the interpretation of dreames*, di. 40
[94] Walkington, *Opticke Glass of Humours*, 75
[95] Nashe, *Terrors of the Night*, di. 15.
[96] Ibid.

He seemed to place more rigid limits on the representational power of mental images than other contemporaries. A clear instance is when he criticizes superstitious 'mumping beldams' [sic] who would 'verie soberly affirme, that if one at supper eate birds, he should dreame of flying; if fish, of swimming; if venison of hunting, and so for the rest'. It was as if, he said 'those birds, fish, and venison beeing dead and disgested, did flie, swim and hold their chase in their braynes'.[97] Yet it is difficult to distinguish just where sobriety begins and superstition ends in Nashe's arch satire. He readily affirmed the medical theory of diagnosis by dreams, and yet how distinct was the principle that waterfalls expressed phlegm from the idea that flying expressed bird's flesh? It appeared to be case of kind and degree – in contrast to the broad attribution of identities by analogy which Paster detects in early modern culture, Nashe evidently limited such causation to immediate transmission, since he believed that 'inflammations of our liuer, or stomack transforme our imaginations to their analagie and likenesse'.[98]

The natural power of dream signs, like other occult effects, was not agreed but contested in early modern culture as a whole. Leading minds of the new philosophy often reserved harsh criticism for the occult and the emblematic approach to nature, from Francis Bacon to Robert Boyle (1627–1691) and Thomas Sprat (*bap.* 1635, *d.* 1713).[99] William Perkins criticised the arts of astrology by claiming that celestial causes were too remote to be accurately discerned, or to have a determinate effect either on nature or the will.[100] Others attributed occult effects or predictions in dreams to demonic counterfeits intended to lay snares for the soul. Sir John Melton (d.1640) warned against believing in the 'negromancers' who by the assistance of evil spirits could 'cause vs [to] dream of gold, or siluer, & we chance to find it instantly, to affirme with many old women that all dreames are true, for this is but a tricke of the deuill to bring vs into superstition'.[101] Nashe's attitude toward occult effects and virtues mirrored that of sceptics who resisted the idea that resemblance and similitude conferred physical and operational properties. This is evident in his critique of

[97] Ibid., di. 20.

[98] Ibid., di. 20.

[99] Harrison, *The Rise of Natural Science*, p. 193—204; Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty*, pp. 236—239; Vickers, 'Analogy versus Identity: The Rejection of Occult Symbolism, 1580-1680' in Brian Vickers (ed.) *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 95—164.

[100] William Perkins, *An abridgement of the whole body of divinity* (London, 1654), pp. 69—74: 'This Art can not arise from experience, because the same position of all Stars never happen twice, and if they did, yet there could be no observation made of them, because the influencies of the Stars are all confusedly mixt, both in the Air, and in the Earth, even as if all herbs were mingled together in one Vessel.' For more on religious controversy over astrology as an occult science, see Bernard Capp, *English Almanacs 1500-1800: Astrology and the Popular Press* (London, 1979), pp. 131—179; Don Cameron Allen, *The Star-Crossed Renaissance: The quarrel about astrology and its influence in England* (London, 1966); and in the wider Renaissance, Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: The Zodiac of Life* (London, 1983).

[101] Sir Thomas Melton, *Astrologaster, or, The figure-caster* (London, 1620), p. 67.

the 'imposture' of physiognomy and psalmistry. Though the body was 'wrythen and pleyted' according to 'euerie ones labor or exercise' he believed that in searching 'for the minde or disposition, we can no more looke into through [the palm], than wee can into a looking Glasse through the woodden case thereof.'[102] Amyraut was happy to draw upon the wisdom of dream interpretation as he found it in his sources, but asserted 'these dreams, which we cannot reasonably impute either to natural causes, or to meer chance, yet do they not exceed the power of Angels to convey.'[103]

For the practitioners of divination, there was no doubt that it was an art proven through experience and observation. Thomas Hill compared diviners to poets, 'named naturall prophetes'; they had to detect how a dream could 'passe by a small similitude of any matter vnto another lyke'.[104] Close reading of Hill's treatise is easily frustrated by poor spelling and atrocious syntax, but it is clear that he related the predictive potential of dreams to Aristotle's theories of cause and change, reflecting as he did on the nature of simple and mixed substances, and the subtle interactions of elements and forces in nature. Hill claimed the pragmatic skill of the diviner was of equal stature to that of the 'learned Phisitio[n]s, sk[i]lfull warriours, weary husbandemen, and polytycke Captains' who practised their own forms of prognostic conjecture.[105] The astrologer Richard Saunders claimed that dream divination was an act of 'Prudence' that tested the scope and capacity of the intellect. He applied the framework of *phronesis* in Aristotelian ethics, an act of practical wisdom which he defined in terms of its natural function, its object, and its final end, or ultimate excellence, which was both the glory of God and the private benefit of man.[106] Claims about the instinctive and experiential power of the soul to practise divination usually depended on the depth of one's exposure and experience in the art, and to the training of his memory. Only by such experience, Hill claimed, could one intuitively discern the natural relationship between signs and causes, according to one's spiritual capacity. Agrippa and Casaubon credited prognostic talent to particularly experienced and prodigious powers of natural memory, while Saunders advocated for mnemonic devices as an aid to learning in an appendix to his divinatory works.[107] Agrippa drew this theory of interpretation from the works of Synesius, a Christian Neoplatonist of the 4th century, who commanded that 'every one should observe his Dreams, and their events, and such like

[102] Nashe, *The most pleasaunt arte of the interpretation of dreames*, di. 20.
[103] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, p. 23.
[104] Hill, *The most pleasaunt arte of the interpretation of dreames*, di.12—13.
[105] Ibid., di. 5.
[106] Saunder, *Physognomie and Chiromancie,* p. 213—215.
[107] Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*, pp. 131—132; Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme*, p. 31—36; Saunders, *Physognomie and Chiromancie,* di. 173—176.

rules' with the intention to 'commit to memory all things that are seen, and accidents that befall, as well in sleep, as watching'.[108]

Observation of dreams was most often legitimated as an art by locating it within the practices of astrology, which maintained its reputation amongst a large section of the educated elite until the late 1650s, and with popular audiences for a longer time.[109] Agrippa claimed that the significance of dreams for public events could only be known by reference to astrological calculation, the construction of a horary chart and correlation with other emergent natural signs. By tracking the position of celestial bodies relative to the earth's climate, astrology revealed the disposition and angles of the rays which infused their virtues into natural objects, including those which caused dreams or enhanced understanding of them. Astrology was a map of the forces of nature, in which every particular occurrence, such as a dream, had to be measured against other propitious and signs and forecasts in order to understand their provenance and meaning.[110] Thus, by understanding the celestial causes of dreams, astrologers could interpret their signs and conjecture on the possible course of future events.[111] The amateur astrologer Samuel Jeake, interpreted a dream of November 1678 which included figures of the sun, horses, horsemen and the signs of zodiac; 'I was signified by the Sun because he was Lord of the ascendant in my Nativity', which 'portended that I should never be in a Place of Honor or Authority over others'.[112] Dream divination was often placed under the heading of 'physiognomy of dreams' and bundled together with discussion of physiognomy, chiromancy and metoscopie in divinatory manuals.[113] In Richard Saunder's book of divination, dream images were given different interpretations for different complexions in different lunar phases or astrological houses, and were also attributed to different characters of dreamer through the art of geomancy.[114] The ethereal effusions of dreams were treated as one more 'surface' in which the soul and its stars inscribed their virtues and

[108] Ibid., p. 132.

[109] Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge 1989), pp. 19—44; Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, pp. 53—81; Ann Geneva, *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind: William Lilly and the Language of the Stars* (Manchester, 1995).

[110] Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*—for divination by dreams see pp. 131—132; with astrological figures, pp. 323—325.

[111] Maggi, *In the Company of Demons,* pp. 74—82; Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, pp. 51—59, Cocking, *Imagination: A Study*, pp. 61—64.

[112] Michael Hunter and Annabel Gregory (eds.), *An Astrological Diary of the Seventeenth Century: Samuel Jeake of Rye, 1652-1699* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 143—5, quoted in Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, p. 78.

[113] Saunders, *Physiognomie and Chiromancie*, pp. 201—236; J.S., *The true fortune-teller, or, Guide to knowledge Discovering the whole art of chyromancy, physiognomy, metoposcopy, and astrology*, (London, 1698), pp. 100—122.

[114] Saunders, *Physiognomie and Chiromancie*, pp. 201—236 for humoural and astrological interpretations; pp. 31—37 for the combination of geomancy and chiromantic techniques.

effects, where they could be observed as a subject for the projections and speculations of judicial astrologers.

While diviners concentrated on discerning the origins of dream signs, others focused upon means of understanding their relationship with nature so that they could promote the necessary conditions to receive significant dreams. Practitioners of natural magic sought to map the connections between the terrestrial and celestial realms, and to create practices of ritual magic by which they could transfer celestial and divine forms of power to the mind. This gave them the means to achieve by human arts what theologians claimed could be conferred only by God and angels. The great tables of similitudes and correspondences recorded in Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* and Aicha's *Magical Calendar* included signs, sigils and emblems related to the virtue of interpreting dreams, the power of prophecy, and to the numerous spirits believed to have the power of inspiring dreams. These tables therefore furnished occult means of causing dreams, while at the same time describing a vast universe of signs which might conceivably be used to interpret them.[115] One of the clearest examples is the 'Seal of Daniel', which in one manuscript was said to confer the virtue of interpreting dreams, and the 'Seal of Jeremiah', which conferred that of prophecy.[116] In at least one source, one of the seals from this table was used as the fundamental basis of an evocation ritual, as the 'table of practice' on which it was performed.[117] Agrippa's books included talismans which could be used to attract divine dreams in magical rituals, or to confer upon the mind the power to correctly understand them.[118] The aim of such dreams was usually to gain more occult knowledge, usually through contact with spirits, and usually either knowledge of the future or of further occult signs and powers.[119] The search for magical knowledge in the forms of books, figures and characters, contact with spirits or unspecified secrets often found expression in the dreams of men like

[115] These charts were organised according to ascending numerical scale, where different elements and parts of the cosmos were aligned in an unfolding symmetry of resemblances and ascending ontological essences. Not only were the lower and higher terms of these charts in direct relationship, and therefore capable of representing each other, but many furnished explicit symbols, emblems and characters as part of the chain. See Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*, pp. 167—343; Johan Babtista Grosschedel von Aicha, *The Magical Calendar*, (ed.) Adam McClean (Grand Rapids, MI, 1994).

[116] The assignment of virtues to these seals is a unique feature of BL manuscript Harl. 3420, 40v-41r, which otherwise draws Agrippa's occult tables and copies much of the *Magical Calendar*. Source: http://www.esotericarchives.com/mc/index.html, accessed 14 Nov 2013].

[117] See Sl.3825, fol 116v, [transcription source: http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/theurgia.htm, accessed 14 Nov 2013].

[118] Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*, pp. 314—316 especially; for dreams caused by magical images see pp. 241—242, 300—301, 308.

[119] For examples see Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman – Astrologer, Alchemist, Physician* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 54—5, 58—60

John Dee, Simon Forman, William Lilly and Elias Ashmole.[120] Similarly, seventeenth-century alchemists, searching for the philosopher's stone, often believed it would confer spiritual powers and virtues. In its most noble form, that of the 'angelical' stone, it would confer the power to converse with angels, often in the form of divine dreams and visions.[121]

Contact with spirits was often believed to be the pre-eminent means of gaining privileged access to divine knowledge. This was true in Jewish theology, in which God always acted through intermediaries, and in the majority of occult texts.[122] They were the primary vehicles of inspiration throughout Agrippa's work, and also the primary means by which the soul was elevated and morally formed in Thomas Tryon's mysticism. Spirits formed intimate connections to the soul through the same occult forces of similitude that united the creatures and objects of the natural world. The *Occult Philosophy* claimed that the soul was attended by as many as three companion spirits or 'genii', which formed and guided his psychic life according to his natural fate, the station and profession he assumed, and in the ways of religious enlightenment.[123] In the higher forms of magic described by Agrippa, access to divine knowledge clearly relies on achieving a state of moral worthiness, reflected in the state of the passionate mind, the purity and cleanliness of the body, and the performance of charitable and worshipful duties.[124] As in all occult operations, the logic behind these ideas relied on the principal that man in the perfection of his powers and capacities was a direct similitude of the divine, the image of God, and could take on more divine powers and attributes as he refined himself into this image.[125] For a magician like Agrippa, alignment with God included alignment with nature and with the heavens, which explained the preponderance of magical arts and operations by which he could synchronise his physical state, mental powers, language, even his every posture and gesture to mirror their parts and natures.

Tryon similarly spoke of spirits as intimate familiars, who were attracted by thoughts, passions and acts which reflected their own nature, and also influenced the soul in its thoughts. 'Angels and Genij have power only in their own respective principles,' wrote Tryon, 'and mankind cannot draw neer, nor have any Communication with them, nor they with him, except he immerseth

[120] See Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, pp. 58—59, 192—193; Levin, *Dreaming the Renaissance*, pp. 55—60: Ashmole wrote that when the stars were right Lilly's dreams 'may signify some truth, and chiefly may concern things of old' to do with all the branches of knowledge. Lilly believed Ashmole was 'so strong in the nativity he has a restless fancy, and therefore dreams of sublime and high matters'.

[121] Monod, *Solomon's Secret Arts*, pp. 99—100.

[122] Smith, *Select Discourses,* pp. 210—219.

[123] Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*, pp. 408—412

[124] Ibid., pp. 345—556, esp. pp. 492—554.

[125] Ibid., pp. 457—464.

his will and desires into their principle.'[126] Evil spirits would lead the soul into depravity, while meditation on the thoughts of angels in dreams would develop the soul's virtue. Tryon nowhere endorsed ritual magic, but made prescriptions for reforming the mind, the passions and the body in order to fit the whole nature of man to receive divine visions. Many of these mirrored, and may have been partly drawn from Agrippa's ideas about the higher kind of metaphysical magic:

> and those that with an Holy Humility do Aspire to this Sublime Knowledge, *Viz.* of God, Nature, and Themselves, ought by all means to be in good earnest, and Zealous for Cleanness and Innocent Living; for Abstinence, Sobriety and Temperence do wonderfully fortifie the Observers thereof, against the Assaults and Temptations of Evil Spirits and Angels, and make the Body Lightsom, Pleasant and Healthy, thereby enlarging all its Functions, and also Prepares the Soul for Celestial Irradiations, rendring it more fit to become the Temple of God, and Associate of Holy Powers; those Pure Abstemious Vertues do in a wonderful, but secret manner attract the good Angels and Spirits[127]

Occultists, mystics and theologians all had interests in discerning the nature of spirits when these appeared to manifest themselves in dreams. When this occurred, they applied methods which had been propounded for discerning the identity of spirits as they manifested in the physical world. Physical manifestations of angels and demons were believed to occur in the Bible, and were commonly accepted, before the growth of sceptical philosophy, to explain the majority of supernatural visitations and pagan religious experiences throughout history. The sensual bodies which spirits assumed by manipulating the physical elements were equivalent in their morphology to the similitudes they appeared under in dreams. Like the other natural emblems, which displayed qualities and forms of corruption and generation, of natural or unnatural place, magnitude or motion, these 'dream-bodies' displayed their identity and position in the cosmic order. Dream-images were inherently truth-telling by this standard:

> Now as the extern Signature of all material Bodies is an intelligible Character, or Index of the internal Spirit or Vertue, so separated Souls, when they assume aierial Bodies, or represent themselves in Dreams, do it in Shapes and Figures Analogous to the state they are in, and that Principle which bears sway over them.[128]

Ironically, since man was the highest creature of the visible creation, the measure of a spirit's divinity was usually related to the humanity of his

[126] Tryon, *Dreams & Visions*, p.96.
[127] Tryon, *Dreams & Visions*, pp. 101—102.
[128] Ibid., p. 123.

appearance. Tryon quoted Trithemius, who said that divine angels would manifest a human form that denoted 'their perpetual Youth, Beauty and Vigour' which all beings in 'their First, Glorious, and Happy estate' retained.[129] This form would be masculine—the female body, assumed to be the male's natural inferior, was 'an emblem of weakness', and unsuited to the essence of angels.[130]

Nevertheless, it was a Scriptural truth that 'Angels of darkness might transform themselves into Angels of light', casting such appearances into doubt.[131] Amyraut believed, however, that such artifices were by necessity imperfect, and hence discernible to a truly pious interpreter. He believed here was an infallible mark or character, 'some Image, which must appear visible, which might symbolically represent the Angelical Nature'.[132] This symbol was imbued with quality of light or luminescence, 'something particular in [the image's] lustre and Majesty'.[133] It's voice, too, would possess 'something in the tone, and in the nature of its articulation extraordinarily Majestick'.[134] These marks, displaying themselves through the forms of the dream, were distinct and perceivable, though often not expressible except by their 'superior' or 'excellent' nature. They could not be imitated by a demon. This claim can be compared to a sequence in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which Satan's mixed passions 'dimm'd' and 'disfigur'd' his angelic countenance, betraying him in manner that could not befall a 'Spirit of happie sort'.[135] Amyraut next pointed to lore stating that the devil's nature was always betrayed in his physical manifestations, by stray characteristics such as clawed fingers.[136] These betraying characteristics were always related to animal-like and bestial forms, always applied as the binary opposite to the humane nature. Tryon claimed that angels appearing in the height of masculine perfection were clean-shaven, because hair growth was a form of bodily excrement – any bearded angel was thus a demonic apparition.[137] Forms suitable to represent debased essences of demons thus tended either to be chimeras, blending human forms with animal features and characteristics, or were wholly animal. In Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy* and Thomas Tryon's *Treatise*, both evil spirits, whether angels or the souls of the

[129] Ibid., p. 124.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture,* p. 71.
[132] Ibid., p. 75.
[133] Ibid., p. 77.
[134] Ibid., p. 77.
[135] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IV. l. 114—128.
[136] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, pp. 72—73.
[137] Tryon, *Dreams & Visions*, p. 124. For a similar assertions see Samuel Hartlib to John Worthington (20 August 1661), MS copies at University Library, Cambridge (Baker's MSS. Mm 1.40, pp. 193-238), & British Library, Add. MSS 32498, in 'The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington' ed. J. Crossley. Vol. I. (Chetham Society Vol. XIII: Manchester, 1847). pp. 356—365 recorded in HP.

dead, would manifest themselves variously in the form of 'a Dog, Cat, Bear, Lion, Fox, Tyger, Bull, Goat, or other savage Beasts'.[138]

Scriptural figures, medical theory, astrology, the magical signatures of the occult universe, the discernment of spirits—all of these bodies of literature and learning provided material for the symbolic interpretation of dreams, and a rationale for relating them to the movements of God, the passionate body and mind, of the terrestrial world, the celestial heavens, the interventions of spirits. Exploring these different arts and techniques has served to explain how they were believed to fit into the emblematic world view. They made the claim that the detection of symbols, similitudes, analogies, metaphors and allegories was part of the study of nature. They also furnished the stock-piled wisdom of the ages, so that tomes of such symbols—the Bible, medical texts, astrological tomes, dream dictionaries and manuals, and occult books of secrets—were read as the perspicacious wisdom of past masters who had possessed the high degree of wisdom to perceive these partially objective relationships between symbols and natural causes. The endlessly reflective character of the emblematic universe, however, means that these sources in no way exhausted the symbolic and cultural resources that could be brought to bear on the interpretation of dreams. While the origins of dreams and the knowledge they were claimed to access might be hidden, secret, abstruse, our analysis of dream interpretation practices shows that they were not arcane, esoteric or in any way alien to the mentality of the times.

The training which Thomas Hill and Cornelius Agrippa recommended for learning the meaning of dream signs corresponds easily with the moral, literary and metaphysical modes of interpretation which were absorbed generally by the educated in the early modern period. It was focused on broadening experience through furnishing and expanding the memory, and applying this knowledge to ones' observations of the natural world. This was accomplished through educational texts, rhetorical handbooks, collections of adages, parables and apothegms which systemized and made accessible the symbolic and hermeneutic resources of the period, and through personal aids like the keeping of a common-place book, in which records of dream symbols have also been discovered. Michael Bath observes the close relationship between the composition and organization of these books and the promotion of mnemonic techniques in schools and learned culture.[139] Their contents could often be ordered according to principals of similarity and antithesis, and concentrated information around categories and themes which allowed them to be remembered and deployed in argument. Mnemonic systems themselves joined

[138] Tryon, *Dreams & Visions*, pp. 199.
[139] Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, pp. 28—56; see also on educational culture Clark, pp. 55—56.

visual forms to these schemes, so that images were explicitly put to work encoding knowledge and a system for retrieving and employing it. Through impressing natural objects and their meanings in the memory, 'Invention, Memory and Judgment' – the operations of the intellect – would all be enhanced.[140] When this knowledge was applied to world, students were often instructed to proceed by constructing argument on the basis of allegorisations, based upon the symbols they observed in the world around them.[141]

The dream interpreter's books joined this universe of symbolic and 'emblematic' material, where they could be drawn upon by the wider society, and likewise, he contextualised such works within a much more expansive symbolic universe. We know this, because we can observe instances in which dream interpreters looked beyond these sources in their attempts to gloss a particular image or similitude of a dream. We know that a theologian like Joseph Mede referred to dream-signs from the *Oneirocriticon* of Achmet as authoritative even as he sought to interpret Revelation.[142] On the other side, Joseph Hall drew on one of Artemidorus' dream figures to embellish a sermon rather than interpret a dream.[143] This use of ancient dream interpreters by a millenarian theologian and an English Restoration preacher shows us that despite controversy over the nature of dreams and origins, the assumption that there were some dreams worthy of interpretation, and that these drew upon the symbolic values of the natural world, was of a general credence in the seventeenth century.

Earlier we observed a distinction between meaning that was perceived in dreams by illumination, and by way of human learning. The practices of early modern education and cognitive theory demonstrate how the effects of illumination—heightened intellectual judgment, intuitive understanding of signs, perfected memory—were depicting heightened states of cognitive functions, abilities which were trained in the common course of life, and which dream interpreters sought to apply to their natural signs. In the world of the occult the two realms tended to merge together, as interpretive practise granted divine insight, increased moral worthiness, and fitted the mind for higher elevations. By implication, expanding one's knowledge of the divine

[140] Obadiah Walker, *Of Education, Especially of Young Gentlemen*, (Oxford, 1673), p. , quoted in Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, p. 124—163.

[141] Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, p. 31—51.

[142] Joseph Mede, *The key of the Revelation, searched and demonstrated out of the naturall and proper charecters of the visions* (London, 1643), pp. 64—68.

[143] Joseph Hall, *The balm of Gilead, or, Comforts for the distressed, both morall and divine most fit for these woful times* (London, 1650), pp. 267—268. Hall's use of Artemidorus to observe that 'to dream of children, imports cares to follow' seems to have been picked up by Richard Allestree in *The art of patience and balm of Gilead* (London, 1694), p. 113. Reference is to 'Artimedor *de insomniis*, Lib. 1. Cap. 6.'

opened the mind to its influence, just as Goodwin's reader would find himself communing with God if he reformed his dreams. Emblematic symbols were employed in a textual form as spurs for spiritual meditation, in which their ability to signify aspects of the divine were thought to elevate the mind toward them. This made it natural to identify them with the images of dreams, and with a culture of knowledge which tied the occult significations of natural experience to the higher mysteries of God.

Dreams, Passions and Certain Knowledge

The clear and intuitive knowledge thought to be conferred in prophetic illuminations of the mind was the ultimate goal not just of the prophet, but of those who sought to find the highest forms of secular knowledge as well. Comenius hoped that by correctly ordering the evidence of sense, reason and scripture, all assertions might be adjudicated by a single rule, that '*If any thing be not evident enough with its own perspicuity, let it be taken as not said at all*.'[144] Henry More claimed that ideas should be tried by 'either the *Common notions* that all men in their wits agree upon, or the *Evidence of outward Sense*, or else a *cleer and distinct Deduction from these*'.[145] A number of scholars have suggested that Descartes' *Meditations*, which were designed to teach one how to achieve 'clear and distinct perceptions', were inspired by Jesuit meditation practices, and interpretive techniques which he applied to his own ecstatic dreams in the *Olympias*.[146] The philosophical method of the *Meditations* thus represented an innovative compounding of meditative practise and phyrronistic scepticism, in which he threw into doubt the reality of his sensory perception. The fact that Descartes' 'clear and distinct perception' emerged from stripping away the presentations of the senses and the occlusions of the imagination has been deemed in part paradoxical in light of the apparently 'enthusiastic' origins of Descartes' calling. Descartes' mechanical philosophy and his epistemological method would reject entirely the emblematic basis of thought, but he still shared its goals. Attempts to effectively organize learning and knowledge, and to establish an absolute method for determining its outlines, aimed at comprehension of the divine, and hence to achieve the same kind of certainty that God conferred in prophetic visions and dreams.

The goal of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the meditative practices which Descartes learned from the Jesuits, was to make decisive decisions or 'elections' based

[144] Comenius, *Natural Philosophie Reformed*, di. 21.
[145] Henry More, *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, pp. 53—54.
[146] Anthony Grafton, 'Traditions of Conversion: Descartes and his Demon' in Christina Gillis and Jill Stauffer (eds), *Doreen B. Townsend Centre Occasional Papers*, No. 22 (2000), pp. 1—32.

upon the 'consolations' or 'discouragements' that one received in imaginative and spiritual reflection on the state of the soul and on the nativity, passion and resurrection of Christ. It was an introspective tool for producing knowledge about the self in relation to the divine, and modelled in great part on mystical disciplines intended to achieve the 'ascent of the soul' by stripping away attachment to carnal objects, wrong opinions and desires, and false conceptions of the divine.[147] Emblem books, as Michael Bath demonstrates, often represented this spiritual journey, and were thus intended as meditative aids in its pursuit.[148] Phillip Goodwin, pursuing his vision of divine dreams as graces that edified the spirituality of the dreamer, observed that 'Such Dreames as are the mountings of the mind and as make the mind to mount, 'tis manifest their spring-head is in Heaven.'[149] Thomas Browne, in discussing the potential of dreams for self-knowledge, used language that appears to recall the *Exercises*:

> Men act in sleepe with some conformity unto their awaked senses, & consolations or discoureagments may bee drawne from dreames, which intimately tell us ourselves.[150]

By grace of gradually being conformed to the will to God, the Ignatian meditator became capable of making a certain election as a result of his conversion.[151] The same ideas about remaking the image of the soul in the image of God, and thereby achieving union with his will, and being actuated by it, described the state of union in Agrippa and in Boehme. If the order of divine nature was conferred on the mind in dreams through a state of 'clear and distinct' perceptions, then the ultimate proof of their divinity lay in their ability to produce actions that accorded with the character and providential purpose of God.

It was thus the case that moral knowledge gained from dreams presented the clearest evidence to dreamers, and that the moral actions of dreamers were typically described as the clearest sign of their status as a true or false prophet. William Perkins observed that the end of all divine dreams was to 'further religion… and to maintaine true doctrine', while the devil aimed at 'subuersion of true religion & the worship of God', which he would displace with 'Idolatrie and superstition'.[152] Like the bodies of angels which appeared falsely as an angel of light, a false prophet 'brings his dreame, and

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[147] Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises: Extended Annotated Edition*, (trans.) Elder Mullan (Electronic Ed, 2012).

[148] Bath, *Speaking Pictures*

[149] Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames*, pp. 319—320.

[150] Brown, 'On Dreams', pp. 230—233.

[151] Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, loc. 1145—1216, 11850—2061.

[152] Perkins, *The Damned Art of Witchcraft*, p. 103.

vtters it, yea and confirmeth it by a wonder; but marke his ende: It was to draw men to Apostacie'.[153] It was these visible ends which betrayed the truth of their nature, and which Philip Goodwin mapped out so thoroughly in his typology of deluded, filthy, vain, troubled and pious dreamers. Henry More similarly looked to exclude 'any man [who] shall pretend to the discovery of a Truth by inspiration that is of no good use or consequence to the Church of God'. He gave account of the histories of false prophets by paying attention to their licentiousness deeds, and to their atheistic beliefs, which he attributed to their drowning in melancholic passions.

The movements, perturbations and energies of the passions were the subject of intellectual reflection, and bestowed knowledge on those who took care to observe their directions. Thomas Adams warned that for the sinner laboring under the judgment of God and his own conscience, self-knowledge was inescapable:

> As in that great plague on Egipt, all the waters in their Riuers, Streames, Ponds, Pooles, Vessels were changed into blood, so shall it be in the conscience of the Murderer: his eyes shall behold no other colour but red, as if the ayre were of a sanguine dye: his visions in the night shall bee all blood; his dreames sprinkling blood on his face…[154]

So, Perkins said, the wicked man 'will not take notice of his enormities by the light of the Law; yet euen by his owne dreames in the night, his wickednes shall be in part discouered'.[155] John Smith found the difference between divine and natural dreams evident, and those who failed to discern them culpable: 'the false might, if they would have laid aside their own fond self-conceit, have known as easilie that God sent them not.'[156] In the quite different context of his mystical dreams, with their goal of gnostic union with the divine, Thomas Tryon nevertheless placed passionate knowledge at the center of the experience. Through its spiritual senses, the soul would 'really enjoy pleasure or pain, according to that principle that predominates therein'. A soul which generated evil dreams would find 'it apprehends it self to be in real danger of drowning, falling, killing, being run through with Knives, Swords, and the like', while in good dreams it would enjoy 'a more compleat and unmixed pleasure and delight, than is possible for any person to enjoy when awake'.[157] These experiences represented not only self-knowledge, but a form of gnostic prophecy, as 'the Soul, From the very same principle after death does proceed, and is generated either his Joy or Sorrow

[153] Ibid., p. 103.
[154] Adams, *The deuills banket* , pp. 59—60.
[155] Perkins, *The Damned Art of Witchcraft*, p. 96.
[156] Smith, *Select Discourses*, p. 207.
[157] Tryon, *Dreams & Visions*, pp. 59—60.

according to the degree and nature of that Form'.[158] Tryon claimed that the soul often jolted the body awake when the bliss or the terror of its nocturnal visions became too great, a refuge which it would lose after death.[159]

Outside of moral knowledge, there was the judgment of providence itself. So it was that John Cook claimed, 'when the Imagination is so extraordinarily powerful, and that the party dreaming is confidently perswaded that it will come to passe it commonly proves accordingly'.[160] Amyraut was concerned to know not just how how prophets and godly men were morally enriched, but confident enough to act upon contingent and circumstantial knowledge in dreams – to know that they were truly provident and not accidents or illusions. God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac must have carried some certain mark, 'being so contrary to his natural affections, and having the appearance of a barbarous and unparallel'd cruelty'.[161] The certainty of Joseph that Herod threatened Jesus did not admit the doubts that should attend natural dreams.[162] The only explanation was that the dream was compelling in a manner that was absolute, rational and divine.[163] The answer to this lay, as we have seen in this chapter and in chapter two, in comparisons of the sensory quality of dreams, and the effects which they produced in the faculties. In this chapter, we have examined in greater detail how precisely these effects were understood to express themselves in the particulars of a dream experience. Amyraut admitted that men may be certain of divine dream simply by virtue of illumination itself, since God could produce an 'extraordinary determination of his understanding'. However, Amyraut believed that proof also lay naturally within the objects of vision themselves, and that it was the dialectical comparison between natural and divine dreams which produced, as we have said, a decisive movement of the mind.[164]

After a natural dream, Amyraut claimed, we 'make an attentive reflexion thereupon, and carefully examine and consider them in all their circumstances'. This usually discovered them to be 'vanities', 'and so we free our selves from that disquietness they had before caus'd'.[165] If this did not suffice, 'we compare them with those true and real operations, which our senses produce in us waking', which revealed them to move the

[158] Tryon, *Dreams & Visions*, p. 63.
[159] Ibid., p. 64, 65.
[160] Cook, *A True Relation of Mr. John Cook's*, p. 14.
[161] Amyraut, *Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, p. 56.
[162] Ibid., pp. 58—59.
[163] Ibid., p. 81.
[164] Ibid., p. 80—83.
[165] Ibid., pp. 64—65.

emotions no more than a dramatic play at a theatre.[166] For those who experienced divine dreams the experience was 'directly contrary':

> they were more fully perswaded of their Divinity, then we are of the reality of the operation of our senses, when waking they exercise themselves upon their respective objects.[167]

Since God also enlightened the faculties of judgment, it too was 'more excellent and more exact in its judgments then tis possible for the common sense to be'. The knowledge derived from such dreams was thus 'proportionably more perfect, and the perswasion of the divinity of these dreams more certain and more undoubted'.[168] And it was the dreadful form, order and magnitude of the dream images, presenting themselves *above* rather than *out* of the order of nature, which put men like the patriarchs and the secular kings and princes of the Bible into passions of 'Reverance, Admiration and Amazement'.[169]

The act of interpreting dreams forms one particularly distinctive strand in early modern hermeneutic practice, the practices which structured the religious examinations by which the individual was compelled to measure himself against the world in its transcendent dimensions, and elevate himself by the act of moral election. The rationale of discernment was that cultivation of the mind resulted in this spiritual and therefore metaphysical movement. In order to achieve truthful discernment, a mechanism and a process was required by which the condition of the natural self could be juxtaposed against the divine. This juxtaposition, as a sorting, categorising and deciphering of divine forms was an intellectual operation on paper, but an instinctual and autonomic one in human experience. In contemplative and meditative theory, the mind tracked its position relative to divine objects of cognizance via the affective movements of 'consolations' and 'discouragements', which brought the mind eventually to a moment of crisis, the point at which the continuity of its state could not be endured, and the disturbance of the spirit necessitated a more fundamental change in the direction and pattern of its movements – what Ignatius Loyola termed an 'election'.[170] Amyraut demonstrates how this theory was applied to the extraordinary phenomena of prophetic inspiration in dreams. His analysis

[166] Ibid., pp. 65.
[167] Ibid., p. 66.
[168] Ibid., p. 68.
[169] Ibid., p. 100.
[170] 'The first time is, when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will, that without doubting, or being able to doubt… The second, when enough light and knowledge is received by experience of consolations and desolations, and by the experience of the discernment of various spirits… the third time is quiet, when one considers, first, or what man is bor… and desiring this chooses as means a life or state within the limits of the Church.' – Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, loc. 1145—1216.

integrated the different phenomenal aspects of dreams which we have examined to explain how they produced the conditions necessary for acting upon the sensory differences observed between natural and divine dreams. Divine dreams, like mystical contemplation, elevated the soul through scales of sensory and sensual sensation, to intelligible understanding, and ultimately to spiritual meaning. In this highest scale of cognitive activity, the soul did not just perceive and know, but the will was actuated and moved toward the divine. It experienced the feelings of love, of certainty and of faith.[171] The phenomenal and rational reality of the dream intuitively demanded belief, and instinctively compelled action.

Conclusions

Chapter Four shifted our focus to look more closely at the subject of dream interpretation as a philosophical art, applied to the phenomenology and the symbolic meanings of individual dreams. It moved us beyond categories and taxonomies employed as part of an analytical schema for classifying different kinds of dreams, and instead sought to make distinctions between different practices for 'reading' them, applied either to its phenomenological qualities in in the mind, or to the semiotic meanings of their objects. It argued for the rationality of dream interpretation from within this world-view, with different perspectives on the legitimacy of dream interpretation predicated mostly upon different attitudes to the claims of occult philosophy and natural magic. In the early seventeenth century, learned discourse on dreams in the realm of medicine tended to be restricted to the natural sympathies and correspondences between dreams and the body. However, this diagnostic function itself was a gateway to the more occult theory of dreams, replete as they were with iconistic and emblematic imagery. The restricted but occasionally allusive discourse of physicians and divines existed in a cultural space which bordered with notions that images acted as a gateway to higher meanings. That these notions penetrated into wider Protestant thought is demonstrated by Joseph Mede's use of Achmet in his *Clavis Apocalyptica*, and Amyraut's co-option of occult dream mechanisms to explain the significance of angelic and providential dreams – analogical and metaphorical languages retained their utility if they could be claimed to have been designed by God. The emblematic mentality therefore maintained some traction alongside theological accounts which established the sacred or profane character of dreams by comparing their contents and phenomenology to the teleological hierarchies of natural Aristotelian vision and the contemplative ascents of

[171] James, *Passion and Action*, pp. 234-236; 'Reason, the passions, and the good life', pp.1358—1361; 'The Passions in Metaphysics and the Theory of Action', pp. 935—954; Bath, *Speaking Pictures*, pp. 162—168.

Neoplatonism, even if they rejected the occult approaches which utilised the sympathetic power inherent in hieroglyphs, sigils and magical images in astrology and natural magic.

The relevance of 'emblematic' visual culture extended beyond the date of 1650, even if they were losing their relevance in studies of the natural world. Emblem books maintained their association with religious devotion and meditational practice, and were considered a valid concept through which to discuss the dream in the late 1650s and 1676. John Smith's *Select Discourses* expressed the symbolic power of dreams as a dialogue of condescension or accommodation that existed specifically between God and man, without any necessary roots in the mystical substrate of nature—nevertheless, these figures were still described as 'Hieroglyphicks and Emblems in the Fansie'. The decline of emblematic and symbolic reading was therefore a gradual process, a slow breaking down of the wider associations which such forms retained in the past, and in certain sections of society into the latter decades of the seventeenth-century.

The most obvious impact of intellectual change in the seventeenth century would be the collapse of emblematic views of nature with the advance of the mechanical philosophy, which reduced the philosophical significance of creatures and objects to their material natures and functions. Without the peripatetic view of nature, similitudes, metaphors and analogies could no longer describe identity and relationship according to principles of corruption and generation, changes of place or unnatural motion. Instead, mechanical accounts of their phenomenology reduced them to impressions that collided in matter, or traced out of physical marks in the bodily memory. Even those approaches which still situated themselves in occult metaphysics did not necessarily share the sacramental view of nature which dominated the philosophical mind-set prior to the Reformation. However, the vitalistic principles of vision which animated the cognitive faculties, and stimulated the carnal and spiritual components of will, retained their relevance in the work of Smith, Goodwin and Amyraut. The 'perfections' of the signs sensed in divine dreams, and of the cognitive senses and movements which they inspired in the spirit, were taken to impart a certainty and plausibility to divine dreams which explained and authorised the actions of their recipients, and set them apart from the deficient fantasies of enthusiasts. Discursive analyses like that of Amyraut made explicit ontological realities which already informed the powerful moral instincts of the soul, realities which governed the movements of willpower (the intellectual appetite) as surely as those of the carnal lusts. Moral certainty, the foundation of virtuous and providential action, was a possession of inspired and enlightened souls, a holistic experience encapsulated by the visionary discourse. Concepts of 'clear and distinct' perceptions, 'divine perfections' or 'marks of distinction', were of this holistic and aesthetic nature.