'Am I not my selfe at that time?' : Sleep, dreams, and selfhood in early modern England

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'Am I not my selfe at that time?'

Sleep, Dreams, and Selfhood in Early Modern England

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I, Niall Boyce, hereby declare that this thesis, presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is the result of my own work.

Abstract

In the early modern period, dreams were a potential source of knowledge, but also a moment of inward anarchy when the senses delivered scrambled messages and the faculty of fantasy toppled that of reason. How was this dreaming self, with its bizarre actions and experiences, reconciled with waking life? This thesis uses evidence from domestic environments, diaries, pamphlets, and plays at the turn of the seventeenth century in England to explore sleeping and dreaming, and asks how these contributed to—and disrupted—the sense of an inner self at a point of major cultural and religious transition, as well as material alteration in sleeping practices. Taking a historicist and medical humanities approach, this thesis proposes that the dream-self was made sense of not through inward exploration of personal biography, or suppressed wants and desires, but rather through containment in greater superstructures of the divine, the influence of the stars, and the written and printed page. Moreover, the activation of the mental faculty of fantasy that typically occurred during the act of dreaming might also have been experienced and exploited in the playhouse, employing self-disruption to positive, creative effect.

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Conventions

Dates are as recorded, but the year is taken to begin 1 January; with regard to Chapter 2, it should be noted that Simon Forman also treated this date as the beginning of the year. Original spelling has been retained. Book and pamphlet titles are rendered in title case. In transcriptions, unless otherwise stated, italics indicate missing letters; I have not expanded abbreviations and contractions such as 'wt' or 'wth' to 'w*i*th', 'yt' to 'th*a*t', or 'ye' to 'the'. Throughout this thesis, dates are given for first performance, and are taken from Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–ongoing) unless otherwise stated.

Introduction: Self, consciousness, and self-consciousness in early modern England

> Am I not my selfe at that time, O Lord my God? And is there yet so much difference betwixt my selfe and my selfe, in that moment wherein I passe from waking to sleeping, or returne from sleeping vnto waking?
>
> Augustine, *Confessions*[1]

> It is certain, that *Socrates* asleep, and *Socrates* awake, is not the same Person; but his Soul when he sleeps, and *Socrates* the Man consisting of Body and Soul when he is waking, are two Persons[.]
>
> John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*[2]

What happens to the self when waking consciousness is suspended? Is the daytime self still present, albeit altered almost beyond recognition, or does someone quite different take over? While, as outlined in this opening chapter, questions of identity and selfhood are particularly pertinent in the period covered by this thesis—from the 1580s to the late 1630s—the complex relationship between dreams and the self is a comparatively understudied aspect of early modern culture.[3] This thesis uses a variety of texts, from private notebooks, to pamphlets, to stage plays, to explore how the process of dreaming affected the experience of the self, and

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[1] Augustine, *Confessions*, transl. by William Watts (London: 1631), sigs. Ff5ʳ–Ff5ᵛ.

[2] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: 1690), sig. F4ᵛ.

[3] The reasons for focusing on this period are detailed below; in brief, these years are a rich source of material in English that relate to issues of inwardness and other intrapsychic phenomena.

how the gap between sleeping and waking selves could be bridged and explored through practices such as astrology, writing, and theatrical performance. This analysis facilitates the rediscovery of pre-Freudian ways of thinking about dreams and their relation to the self which have previously been overshadowed by Freudian approaches to early modern texts. The fragmented pictures of the mind and self that emerge are important to our understanding of inward life in early modern England. Furthermore, although modern-day application is not the main focus of this investigation, early modern thinking about dreams—and indeed selfhood—is relevant to twenty-first-century scientific conceptualisation of these subjects.[4]

The material for this thesis has been chosen to reflect a variety of early modern approaches, with the caveat that—given the social structures of early modern England, and how these have affected the production and survival of the written and printed word—these texts represent the work of men with some degree of education, and established professional identities. The astrological physician Simon Forman (1552–1611) recorded his own dreams and those of his patients, writing (and possibly rewriting) descriptions of floods, flight, a tryst with the Queen, an encounter with God, and the acquisition of powerful and mysterious books. Both horary charts and prose accounts were used to connect Forman's waking and sleeping lives. Thomas Dekker (*c.* 1572–1632), fresh out of seven years in the Bridewell prison, melded his incarcerated and dreaming selves in a rich, confusing, polyphonic narrative of a journey to Heaven and Hell in the pamphlet *Dekker his Dreame* (1620). In the theatre, meanwhile, the protagonists of dramas *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595) and *The Antipodes* (1638) confused dreaming and waking life, undergoing radical alterations of character and motivation. Sleeping and dreaming at the turn of the seventeenth century in

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[4] The relevance of early modern ideas about the mind and self to modern neuroscientific research is discussed in the Conclusion of this thesis.

England were, in short, potent disruptors of the self, with consequences that might be disturbing, confusing, hilarious, and above all creative.

That the early modern period saw the conceptual, and even the experiential, development of selfhood was one of the founding articles of Renaissance studies, and an idea that proved both influential and enduring as the field developed. In setting out his argument in *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt made use of a sleep- and dream-focused metaphor:

> In the Middle Ages both sides of human consciousness—that which was turned within as that which was turned without—lay dreaming or half awake beneath a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, illusion and childish prepossession, through which the world and history were seen clad in strange hues. Man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation—only through some general category.[5]

Putting aside the supportability or otherwise of Burckhardt's thesis (which is analysed below), the author's use of the language of consciousness, unconsciousness, and dreaming in this passage reveals his own assumptions about the nature of selfhood. Burckhardt states that the birth of the early modern self was akin to waking from a 'dreaming or half awake' state; that is, the process was a shift from oblivion to awareness. However, he also implies that this was not a simple matter of opening one's eyes and perceiving one's surroundings. 'Man', in Burckhardt's words, needed to become 'conscious of himself' as more than 'a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation'. The formation of the early modern self was, according to Burckhardt, not only a shift from unconsciousness to consciousness, from 'faith,

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[5] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, transl. by S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 98 [first published as *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860)].

illusion and childish prepossession' to cool, objective reason.[6] It was the development of *self-consciousness*, of the recognition of the self as a single and discrete unit with its own unique biography, desires, self-ownership, and agency.[7] Fundamental to Burckhardt's metaphor is the premise that sleep and dreams are disruptive to the experience of selfhood; only with waking does the true self—and true self-consciousness—emerge. While the function of Burckhardt's statement is to illustrate his point rather than to set out a coherent theory of the nature of selfhood, his wording nevertheless reveals assumptions about a fundamental opposition between the dreaming and waking selves, essentially relegating the former to the status of a disposable entity that is antagonistic to waking rationality.

One purpose of this thesis is to explore the distinction between early modern and modern-day conceptions of the self, as revealed in personal and cultural responses towards dreaming. To carry out such an analysis requires acknowledgement of how modern-day ideas about selfhood and dreaming have been shaped by the past century's dominant framework encompassing both subjects, namely Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) was published forty years after Burckhardt's *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*; while Freud's perspective in some respects agrees with Burckhardt's view of the modern individual as a being bounded and defined by their unique biography and inward mental and emotional life, there is also a significant disjunction between the two. It is a disjunction that is of significance to this thesis's exploration of the relationship between dreams and early modern selfhood.

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[6] Burckhardt equates dreams with unreason elsewhere in the book: he comments that Pius II was 'an honourable exception' to a general pattern of superstition, including 'the interpretation of dreams'; he later contrasts 'the hysterical dreams of the northern witch' with the more pragmatic approach of her Italian counterpart. Burckhardt, p. 324; p. 336.

[7] Modern consciousness science defines several distinct—if overlapping—aspects of consciousness: conscious level (from coma to vivid awareness); conscious content (the perceptual phenomena that constitute one's inner universe); and conscious self ('the specific experience of being you'). See Anil Seth, *Being You: A New Science of Consciousness* (London: Faber, 2021), pp. 30–1.

Like Burckhardt, Freud acknowledged the apparent antagonism between the dreaming individual and the conscious self; unlike Burckhardt, however, he believed that there was not a permanent disconnect between sleeping and waking selves, but a hidden connection. Freud set out to anatomise this connection. While noting that 'the finished dream seems to us something alien', he claimed that 'a dream can be interpolated into the psychical chain which, starting from a pathological idea, can be traced backwards in the memory.'[8] No matter that a dream might appear bizarre, confusing, so strange to the patient as bear no relation to their waking life; through application of the psychoanalytic method, the dream could be decoded and contextualised, and the self framed as a coherent entity that incorporated the states of both sleep and wakefulness. The shock of Freudianism in twentieth-century Europe was perhaps not so much the revelation that the unconscious existed, as the fact that this apparently alien being was clearly and demonstrably a meaningful component of the individual's intrapsychic world, even though they might be bemused, distressed, or even repelled by their dreams. Furthermore, the unconscious was, via dreams and the work of the psychoanalyst, capable of meaningful communication with the rational daytime self. This relationship between sleeping and waking selves was, Freud posited, an enduring historical truth:

> Cases where a dream caused some commander to undertake a great enterprise whose
> success changed the course of history only present a new problem if we treat the
> dream as an alien force in contrast to other, more familiar psychical powers; but no
> longer if we regard the dream as a form of expression for impulses which are

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[8] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, transl. by Joyce Crick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 42; p. 81 [first published as *Die Traumdeutung* (Leipzig & Vienna: Franz Deuticke, 1900)].

hampered by resistance by day, but are able to draw reinforcements from deep sources of excitation by night.[9]

Thus, while Burckhardt expressed the view that to move from literal or metaphorical sleep to wakefulness was also to move from a diminished to a complete form of selfhood, Freud claimed that dreaming and waking were, effectively, versions of the same self that simply differed in expression and appearance. With the psychoanalyst's skill in decoding the dream's manifest content and fitting it into the individual's unique pattern of memories, wants, and desires, the sleeping, dreaming self could be re-integrated with the waking self.

If the late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century English thought that their sleeping and dreaming selves could not be made compatible with their waking selves, or felt little need to do so, this would mark a significant difference between selfhood as it was conceived of and experienced in the early modern period, and selfhood in our post-Freudian world.[10] It is impossible to comprehensively access the attitudes of early modern sleepers and dreamers, and hence draw conclusions regarding the opinions and experiences of the population as a whole; such an analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, a study of selected texts from a historicist perspective can reveal significant details of how some individuals experienced, or at least wrote about, their night-time selves. This thesis explores a number of personal and cultural reactions to the phenomenon of dreaming, rather than presenting a full picture of thinking regarding the subject. Indeed, the diversity revealed by the analysis of these early modern texts—which include notebooks, pamphlets, and plays—indicates that a wide range of responses existed, and that further investigation of this field is warranted. As will be shown, ambiguity and multiplicity are hallmarks of the dream-related texts analysed

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[9] Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 406.

[10] The impact of Freud's thought on critical approaches to early modern texts is discussed further below and in Chapter 4.

in this thesis. In this Introduction, I analyse key points in the history of scholarly debate concerning the early modern self: primarily the questions of whether or not something changed in the nature or perception of selfhood in this period, and if so, why. I also show how the methods and arguments presented by previous scholars in the field have shaped my own approach to the subjects of sleeping, dreaming, and selfhood in England at the turn of the seventeenth century.

Shifting selfhood in the early modern period

The cultural and historical debate regarding pre-modern conceptions of selfhood is not the primary focus of this thesis. However, in order to explore the experience of selfhood in the early modern period, and specifically late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England, it is essential first to evaluate critical thinking on the self in this time period. As noted above, Burckhardt conceived of the fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance as a point at which a collective social and mental fog dispersed to reveal individual people standing alone as isolated and autonomous units. Or to put it another way, this was the point at which the modern self woke up, rubbed its eyes, and began to rise from its bed. By implication, this was a process that continued into Burckhardt's own nineteenth century. While the men and women of the Renaissance might not have been entirely modern, individualistic Western Europeans like Burckhardt and his readers, he implied that they nevertheless enjoyed, or had the potential to enjoy, a similar kind of selfhood. Those considering themselves 'only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation' were on one side of a historical dividing line, and those who saw themselves as unique, self-determining individuals stood on the other. The story of the Renaissance, according to Burckhardt, was one of how people stepped over the line, first in Italy and then elsewhere, to construct the modern world.

Burckhardt's argument has been widely characterised as—in the words of Jason Scott-Warren—'a fairy story'.[11] But fairy stories can have remarkable cultural staying power. Indeed, Scott-Warren goes on to state that 'while few would now accept Burckhardt's account uncritically, it retains its power as a myth of origins.'[12] The majority of the texts on selfhood discussed in this chapter can be considered as direct or indirect responses to Burckhardt. There are several possible reasons for this persistent scholarly interest in Burckhardt's proposition. One is that Burckhardt's ideas may have worked synergistically with the later, and also highly influential, work of Max Weber, who posited a link between Protestantism, the development of capitalism, and the emergence of individuality. True, Weber's work is, as Roberta Garner points out, to some extent inconsistent with Burckhardt's vision.[13] Weber focuses on Reformed Europe as the crucible of individuality, as opposed to Burckhardt's Catholic Italy; Weber's Protestant individuality emphasises 'the inward, spiritual, and even self-isolating aspects of individualism', while Burckhardt's is characterised by 'self- interest, self-discovery, self-fulfillment, and the search for fame and recognition'.[14] Nevertheless, the two perspectives were sufficiently complementary to generate scholarly consensus that during the early modern period—as Geoff Baldwin writes—'Individualism was linked to capitalism, liberalism, and an incipient industrial revolution'.[15] This consensus occurred, Baldwin suggests, because the idea of individuality as

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[11] Jason Scott-Warren, *Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), p. 223.

[12] Scott-Warren, p. 224.

[13] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism and Other Writings*, transl. by Peter Baehr and Gordon C. Wells (London: Penguin, 2002) [first published as 'Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 20 (1904), S. 1–54 and 21 (1905), S. 1–110].

[14] Roberta Garner, 'Jacob Burckhardt as a Theorist of Modernity: Reading *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*', *Sociological Theory*, 8 (1990), 48–57 (p. 51).

[15] Geoff Baldwin, 'Individual and Self in the Late Renaissance', *The Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), 341–64 (p. 341).

an emergent phenomenon inseparable from the rise of capitalism 'fitted well with the stories that historians on the right, and the followers of Marx, both wished to tell.'[16] In other words, a model proposing individuality as a product of the early modern period was consistent with the political-historical narratives of both left *and* right, and hence it became popular and persistent (although left and right would draw quite different conclusions as to how desirable this individuality actually was). There is also the evidence of linguistic change in early modern texts: as Nancy Selleck notes, the fact that it was only in the later part of the seventeenth century that 'words such as self, identity, and person started to take on their modern meanings' has fed into 'the critical commonplace that before that point, the "self" did not exist.' [17] However, the fact that Burckhardt's ideas about the development of selfhood fit so neatly in to the dominant narratives of European societal and cultural development does not of itself mean that such a shift existed, or that the early modern period represented, in Burckhardt's terms, the raising of the veil. It is important to establish a reason for a focus on the early modern period in a piece of work concerning dreams and selfhood, rather than to simply follow Burckhardt's line that this was when the modern self began. Therefore, in the following pages, I analyse the critical response to Burckhardt, and ask what—if anything— makes the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England the ideal time and place in which to situate this thesis.

The idea that in early modern Europe *something* fundamentally changed with regard to ideas about autonomy and self-determination, and that the end product was a popular

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[16] Baldwin, 'Individual and Self', p. 341.

[17] Nancy Selleck, *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne, and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave, 2008), p. 1. See also John Lee: 'the modern critical vocabulary in which subjectivity is described is not available to Shakespeare; words such as character, individual, self, personality, let alone words such as interiority, do not have those meanings which are at present bound inextricably to inner senses of subjectivity.' John Lee, *Shakespeare's* Hamlet *and the Controversies of Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 90–1.

conception of the self which was more recognisably modern than medieval has persisted, albeit seen—and radically reinterpreted—through the prism of modern-day political concerns. Thus, for example, Stephen Greenblatt's influential *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, published just over a century after *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, used case studies of early modern individuals, including Thomas More, Thomas Wyatt, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare, to offer a compelling revision of Burckhardt's narrative. As far as Greenblatt was concerned, individual autonomy distinct from, as Burckhardt put it, 'a race, people, party, family or corporation' was illusory, as was the accompanying ability to self-fashion; there was a deeper level of power relations underpinning society which remained despite the lifting of Burckhardt's veil. Or rather, 'self', defined by Greenblatt as 'a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving' was simply another layer of the veil: in reality the self was, and remains, 'remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society.'[18] Similarly, Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (1985) considers the self to be a construction of historical and cultural contingency, rather than a slumbering faculty awakened by the Renaissance. 'The history of the subject in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', Belsey writes, indicates that 'subjectivity as liberal humanism defines it is not natural, inevitable or eternal; on the contrary, it is produced and reproduced in and by a specific social order and in the interests of specific power-relations.'[19] In this reading, the early modern period was not so much a flowering of the self as a changing of the guard; the social order and the stories it promoted

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[18] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 2.

[19] Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), p. 223. See also Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection* (London and New York: Methuen, 1984).

about the nature of the individual shifted, but the self remained 'remarkably unfree'. Nevertheless, Greenblatt, Belsey, and others did not dispute one of the fundamental tenets of Burckhardt's theory: namely, that there was some sort of alteration in self-conception and self-perception in the early modern period to explain in the first place, even if such an alteration was fundamentally illusory.

However, it is possible that the assumption that *something* changed in the nature of selfhood in the early modern period reflects a greater affinity that modern-day critics and historians feel with early modern culture than with that of preceding periods (notably the medieval), rather than a genuine early modern social phenomenon that requires explanation. Burckhardt, in such a reading, would be only the first to express and explain the feeling that early modern people are 'us' as opposed to the 'them' consisting of people of the medieval periods and earlier. David Aers provides material in support of the argument that a perceived change in selfhood in the early modern period is an illusion generated by a lack of familiarity with medieval culture. He notes that the market economies which supposedly gave rise to bourgeois conceptions of individuality in the sixteenth century were already present in the thirteenth century. Furthermore, he posits, scholars who claim to find novelty in the early modern preoccupation with interiority ignore both religious introspection and medieval literature (such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, composed in the 1380s) that hinged on distinctions between outward presentation and inner thoughts and feelings.[20]

To Aers' arguments, one might add that regardless of whether the 'self' is an authentic entity finally blossoming in the clean air of Renaissance culture, or a construction of political and financial capital, the effect is the same, that is, of a wealth of literary

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[20] David Aers, 'A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the "History of the Subject"', in *Culture and History 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. by David Aers (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), pp. 177–202.

descriptions of a subjective feeling of an inward environment that is distinct from that of the exterior, and of agency and ownership over one's thoughts and actions. Thus Katharine Eisaman Maus writes that:

> The new-historicist critique insists, correctly in my view, that the 'self' is not independent of or prior to its social context. Yet that critique often seems to assume that once this dependence is pointed out, inwardness simply vaporizes, like the Wicked Witch of the West under Dorothy's bucket of water. It may well be true that Renaissance notions of interior truth turn out to be philosophically defective: they are rarely elaborately or rigorously argued for. But lack of rigor neither limits the extent of, nor determines the nature of, the power such ideas can exert. Murkiness and illogicality may, in fact, enhance rather than limit their potency.[21]

Indeed, this stubborn persistence of the existence, authenticity, and integrity of self in the face of contradictory evidence is attested to by Greenblatt himself in the final pages of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, in which he relates an anecdote about an aeroplane flight during which a fellow passenger attempted to get him to mouth the words 'I want to die'. [22] Greenblatt found himself unable to comply because he was aware 'in a manner more forceful than anything my academic research had brought home to me, of the extent to which my identity and the words I utter coincide [...] To be asked […] to perform lines that were not my own, that violated my sense of my own desires, was intolerable.' Greenblatt concludes that he wishes 'to bear witness […] to my overwhelming need to sustain the illusion that I am the

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[21] Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p. 28.

[22] The reason for this request being that the fellow passenger's severely ill son had a speech impairment and might be despairing of the possibility of recovery; the passenger was concerned that 'he would be incapable of understanding the son's attempt at speech'. Greenblatt, *Self-Fashioning*, p. 255.

principle maker of my own identity.'[23] The idea that the autonomous self, capable of inventing and shaping itself, is in fact 'a cultural artifact' is instinctively resisted by Greenblatt even as it is intellectually apprehended; his book might be regarded not so much as a comprehensive rejection of the autonomous self as evidence of the stubborn persistence of the idea. Greenblatt's identification of the notion that 'I am the principle maker of my own identity' as illusory does not diminish the strength of that illusion. He is, after all, a product of a culture that is founded upon and sustains the illusion of individuality. The refusal of the idea of the self to dissolve in the face of well-reasoned arguments against it is, I believe, important, if only in demonstrating the resilience of the subjective phenomenon. In this thesis, while my approach draws on historicism in terms of its drive to contextualise the various texts studied—to ask, as far as it is possible, what meaning and significance these texts may have held for their authors and readers in early modern England—an essential part of my method is to examine the subjective experience of selfhood at its most fundamental level, and ask how this selfhood was altered by, and interacted with, dreaming. I start from the basis that whether the self is ultimately an illusory product of capitalism or not, sufficient evidence exists for a baseline experience of the inward environment being different from the outward environment, and that this inward environment was associated with a sense of agency and ownership. Or to put it another way, that individuals of the early modern period felt that there was both a core interior self—a sense in which one's inward world was one's own—and an associated narrative self which owned, or was constituted of, a sense of volition, thoughts, feelings, and personal history.

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[23] Greenblatt, *Self Fashioning*, pp. 256–7. The modern-day psychologist Daniel Wegner expresses the same concept more pithily: 'If the illusion could be dispelled by explanation, I should be some kind of robot by now.' Quoted in Bruce Hood, *The Self Illusion* (London: Constable, 2011), p. 112.

This assumption, of course, raises the question as to why I should focus on the early modern period as opposed to, say, medieval texts such as those cited by Aers. There are several possible responses to this question. The first is that, for better or worse, as shown above, Burckhardt placed the self at the centre of scholastic discourse on the early modern period almost a century and a half ago, and it has proved difficult to shift from the cultural history of this era. Therefore, when preparing a study of the relationship between dreams and selfhood, early modern culture is a logical place to start. Second, and pertinently for this thesis, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England were productive of texts that are a rich source of material concerning the nature of inward life. Scott-Warren argues that 'Rather than claiming that new forms of subjectivity were born in [the early modern period], we might focus instead on the development of technologies and languages for representing the self', including not only plays but paintings, poems, and diaries, as well as the growth of 'self-compound' words such as 'selfhood' and 'self-conscious', dated by the *OED* to 1649 and 1688 respectively.[24] Similarly, Margaret Simon and Nancy Simpson-Younger note a shift between the late sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries in the meaning of the word 'conscious':

> In 1573 J. Foxe referred to 'a pretty practise to finde out a naughty concious Byshop'; in 1592 Gabriel Harvey noted of Robert Greene that 'a conscious mind, and undaunted hart, seldome dwell together.' In these early uses, conscious meant being aware of one's own predilections or failings, as an extension of the imperative to know oneself (*nosce te ipsum*). By 1725, the meaning had transitioned to its more modern psychological usage: 'Conscious Beings . . . have a Power of Thought, such as the Mind of Man, God, Angels.'

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[24] Scott-Warren, p. 226.

As the authors put it, the definition of the word 'conscious' shifts 'from knowing *who* one is to knowing *that* one is.'[25] Or in the phrase coined by Helen Hackett, the late sixteenth century can be considered 'a moment of the mind' in which a literary focus on intrapsychic phenomena was 'the product of a discourse of the mind' that crossed multiple disciplines and genres of writing, including medicine, philosophy, and theology.[26] It is uncertain whether new tools and technologies (including linguistic innovation) drove fascination with selfhood, were developed at least partially in response to that fascination, or both. Whatever the answer, critics agree that broader cultural developments also played their part; however, exactly which of the many cultural shifts of the early modern period were the active ingredients is less certain.

The fact that at the turn of the seventeenth century, England was settling into its own form of Protestantism following over half a century of sometimes dramatic back-and-forth movement between Catholic and Reformed status is seen as significant by some. Thus Maus proposes the fascination with the self in early modern English texts was a consequence of the English Reformation, which popularised 'an unmediated relationship between God and man, a relationship celebrated for its intrinsic inwardness'.[27] Ruth Lunney suggests as explanatory factors the '"relativity of perception" seen generally as characterizing the new science, the new philosophy', and anticipation of 'the writings of Descartes, in which the self becomes the source and shaper of knowledge.'[28] By contrast, Helen Hackett theorises that early modern

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[25] Margaret Simon and Nancy Simpson-Younger, 'Introduction: Forming Sleep', in *Forming Sleep: Representing Consciousness in the English* Renaissance, ed. by Nancy Simpson-Younger and Margaret Simon (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), pp. 1–17 (pp. 2–3).

[26] Helen Hackett, *The Elizabethan Mind: Searching for the Self in an Age of Uncertainty* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2022), p. 340.

[27] Maus, p. 23.

[28] Ruth Lunney, 'Rewriting the Narrative of Dramatic Character, or, Not "Shakespearean" but "Debatable"', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 61–85 (p. 82).

fascination with the self—'a cultural moment of intense focus upon what lies within'—was related to the political turbulence of the outward world, at a time when 'public events created a climate of insecurity in which the private individual may well have felt powerless in relation to portentous yet unpredictable forces beyond their control.'[29] These and other models are not necessarily contradictory, and it is possible that some combination of all of these factors stimulated early modern interest in the mind as a distinct and intriguing entity. Determining the relative importance of religion, science, and political turbulence in generating interest in 'what lies within' is beyond the scope of this thesis, and may be an impossible task. Therefore, while this thesis includes discussion of the connection between religious beliefs and dreaming in Chapter 2, and focuses on the relationship between culture, selfhood, and dreaming in chapters 3 and 4, it does not make any assumptions about the social, political, and religious mechanisms that might have driven an interest in the subject of selfhood. However, analysing how people of the early modern period wrote about this inward self and its disruption through dreaming is both feasible and revealing of the ways that early modern people expressed ideas about selfhood in general.

This assumption—that the methods a culture uses to address questions about the self reveal something of its attitudes and beliefs regarding that self—follows the precedent of Ruth Lunney, who identified the theatre as a key cultural product in which the disconnect between one's own subjectivity (as an audience member) and that of the other (as the character on stage) is emphasised. Hence, for example, the perception of Hamlet's complex inward nature is generated by the audience member's incomprehension at his failure to take revenge. The audience member is cued not to ask 'should' or 'should not' questions of a character (e.g. 'should the character indulge his appetites or slaughter his opponents or take

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[29] Hackett, *Elizabethan Mind*, p. 341.

revenge?'), but to ask 'why' ('why is the character unable to repent or too ready to kill or reluctant to take revenge?').[30] Lunney's theory conceptualises the individual self as a sort of cultural version of the dark matter that physicists claim must constitute a substantial part of the universe even as it remains hidden from direct observation. The self, in other words, is something which is hard to detect, define, or quantify, but whose existence is indicated by the 'why?' question prompted by witnessing Hamlet delaying revenge.

This thesis extends Lunney's approach by examining the phenomenon of dreaming, a moment at which the 'other' may be, as the quote from Augustine which opens this chapter indicates, oneself. Upon waking and recalling the dream, the 'why?' question is directed acutely towards one's own subjective experience. Dreams involve encounters with the unrecognised inventions of one's own mind; internal sensations are mistaken for external phenomena; and dreamers typically do not recognise their own agency in operation in constructing the contents of their dream worlds. This self-alienating experience of sleeping and dreaming could therefore have generated a wealth of material with which to ask important questions about how the people of the early modern period situated themselves and thought about their selfhood. Specifically, I am interested in the ways in which individuals reconciled the nightly operation of mental faculties beyond their control with their waking sense of agency, and whether the nightly disruption to selfhood caused by dreaming was not only anxiety-inducing, but also held creative possibilities. This thesis focuses on the cultural forms that the response to dreams took: the use of writing to locate the meaning of the dream in its astrological context; the layout of the printed page to express and contain multiple versions of the self in the same physical space; and the collaborative endeavour of theatrical performance that, I argue, required the audience to activate the mental faculties associated

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[30] Lunney, p. 80; p. 68.

with dreaming and thus surrender some degree of ownership of, and agency over, their own intrapsychic space. I propose that these various cultural forms all tell us something about the ways that the people of early modern England reacted to the disruption of the self that dreaming represented, and how they used the various tools available to them to reconcile their dreaming and waking selves.

As noted above, definitive answers that would apply across the vast and diverse swathe of early modern English society are not attainable. Nevertheless, examining practices of sleeping and dreaming, and how people wrote about dreams in diaries, pamphlets, and plays, might suggest ways in which the structure and situation of the self changed at night, and how this was fitted into social, cultural, and philosophical frameworks. Given the profusion of written and printed textual material available, including dramatic works that manifested the experience of dreaming in performance, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are an ideal period in which to analyse this phenomenon. Examination of dreams as moments of disruption can inform us about the internal and external factors that influenced how people characterised their sense of self, and what the markers were that defined a thought, action, or experience as belonging to that self. It can also provide an instructive contrast with the ways in which post-Freudian discourse uses dreams to reveal, heal, and unify the self.

As will be demonstrated in this thesis—in particular through the chapters concerning Simon Forman's dream interpretation and William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—Freud's theories have tended to dominate critical discussion of early modern dream-related texts. Freud has been used, for example, to explore questions of sexuality and power in Elizabethan society in response to Forman's erotic dream of Queen Elizabeth, or to

elucidate themes of rationality versus irrationality in the *Dream*.[31] While these approaches

can be revealing and enlightening, by their nature they are shaped by certain assumptions

about the self (for example, regarding the ways in which the struggle between unacceptable

wishes and attempts to make them less harmful and disturbing results in a distinction between

the manifest and latent content in dreams). Leaving aside the issue as to whether it is

anachronistic to apply Freudian concepts to early modern individuals, clearly a critical

approach to early modern dreams which comes with preformed ideas about selfhood cannot

be used to explore without preconceptions the structure and nature of that selfhood. While I

acknowledge the rich body of critical work that Freudian-influenced readings have produced,

and emphasise that my approach is intended more to complement than to contradict, Freudian

methods are unsuitable to address the questions of this thesis.

Another strand of scholarship—such as that of Stuart Clark and recently Claude

Fretz—has emphasised the confusion generated by dreams in the early modern period, and

the fundamental challenge that these experiences posed regarding both what is real, and what

reality *is*.[32] Recent work on the relationship between the sleeping and waking selves from

scholars including Nancy Simpson-Younger and Margaret Simon, analysed below, has also

described early modern uncertainty surrounding the human mind and body at night, in this

case regarding the persistence—or otherwise—of the self in the unconscious state.[33] As

discussed both below and in Chapter 1, uncertainty is a recurring theme in the early modern

response to dreams. In this thesis, I expand on the work of Clark and Fretz by looking at the

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[31] Louis Adrian Montrose, '"Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture', *Representations*, 2 (1983), 61–94; Marjorie Garber, *Dreams in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis* (1974; rpt New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013).

[32] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Claude Fretz, *Dreams, Sleep, and Shakespeare's Genres* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

[33] Simon and Simpson-Younger, 'Introduction: Forming Sleep'.

uncertainties of the dream state when applied to questions of selfhood and agency, and on that of Simpson-Younger and Simon by investigating what happened to the self not in unconsciousness, but in *altered* consciousness.

As the publication dates of the books and papers cited in this introductory chapter suggest, the study of selfhood in the early modern period is less popular now than it was at the turn of the twenty-first century. Recent years have seen interest in other aspects of identity in early modern texts, such as race, gender, sexuality, disability, and the relationship between human beings and the natural world. However, as discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis, the modern-day sciences—including psychology, neuroscience, and ecological science—have of late embraced the investigation of selfhood, questioning its composition, consistency, and even its fundamental existence. The scientific study of dreams and dreaming is one part of this broad trend. In the light of this current scientific interest, it is a timely moment to revisit the self from a humanities point of view, and to analyse how a previous culture responded to its disruption. Dreams were moments that in their disruption of the self raised questions about, and revealed something of, its nature. The following section uses Thomas Nashe's *The Terrors of the Night* as an example of a text which, written from a highly subjective perspective and dealing with nocturnal experience, emphasises the uncertainties of sleeping and dreaming in early modern England, and shows how these uncertainties extended to the very experience of selfhood.

'A solitarie man in his bed': self-disruption in Nashe's **The Terrors of the Night**

Thomas Nashe's *The Terrors of the Night* (1594) paints a lonely picture of nighttime in early modern England, with individuals 'shut seperatly in our chambers from resort':

A solitarie man in his bed, is like a poore bed-red lazer lying by the high way side; vnto whose displaied wounds and sores a number of stinging flyes doo swarme for pastance and beuerage: his naked wounds are his inward hart-griping woes, the waspes and flyes his idle wandering thoughts; who to that secret smarting paine he hath alreadie, do adde a further sting of impatience, and new lanch his sleeping griefes and vexations.[34]

This characterisation of the early modern night as a time of isolation, when 'the solitarie man […] hath his sinnes continually about him' is likely an exaggeration to serve as backdrop for Nashe's rhetoric of darkness, sin, and guilt.[35] However, it is not an entirely misleading picture of how some people may have experienced the early modern night in a sealed bed.[36] In the passage quoted above, withdrawal from the social and sensory worlds is associated with the process by which the sleeper's 'idle wandering thoughts' become as 'waspes and flyes', apparently autonomous entities that surround and torment him. Nashe's *Terrors* presents the reader with an apparent paradox: isolation and sensory deprivation, for Nashe at least, co-occur with an alteration in the experience of selfhood, initiating not the affirmation of some unique essence of self, but rather, its dissolution.

The final part of this Introduction analyses Nashe's *Terrors* in the context of both Nashe's own writing and broader early modern ideas about sleeping, dreaming, and the mental functions that constituted the experience of selfhood. It posits that dreams in the early modern period could be potentially self-disruptive moments, calling into question agency, identity, and the nature of inward experience. This analysis begins with a discussion as to

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[34] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night* (London: 1594), sig. B1ᵛ; sig. F4ᵛ.

[35] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. D1ʳ.

[36] For an analysis of early modern sleeping practices in England, see the following chapter.

why Nashe's text is particularly well-suited for such an analysis, as it is both written from an intensely subjective perspective, and raises questions as to the stability of this subjectivity in the face of nocturnal terrors.

Nashe's *Terrors* foregrounds the author's subjectivity in terms of both authorial voice and personal, sometimes intimate experience. For example, Nashe begins with an account of the physical circumstances in which he composed the pamphlet—discussed below—and comments on his own thought processes: 'I feare I haue strayed beyond my limits'; 'it hath caused such a thicke fulsome Serena to descend on my braine, that now my penne makes blots as broad as a furd stomacher'.[37] And yet while this subjectivity is prominent, the experience of which Nashe writes—that is, *The Terrors of the Night*—is characterised by the fragmentation of subjective experience. It is this subjectivity that is simultaneously asserted and threatened that makes the *Terrors* a rich text with which to explore the interplay—and antagonism—between sleeping and waking selves. In this section, I analyse the ways in which Nashe's language conveys the instability of the integrity of the self, the uncertain sense of agency over one's thoughts, and the fluctuating boundary between inward and outward environments that could occur at night.

Nashe's characterisation of 'idle wandering thoughts' as externalised, insect-like beings that torment the 'solitarie man' (quoted above) is echoed elsewhere in the *Terrors*, as he describes the process through which thoughts combine with bodily substances to produce dreams: 'as when a man is readie to drowne, hee takes hold of anie thing that is next him: so our flutring thoughts, when wee are drowned in deadly sleepe, take hold, and coessence

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[37] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. F4ᵛ; sig. H1ᵛ. 'Serena' is a variant of 'serene', meaning 'A light fall of moisture or fine rain after sunset in hot countries (see serein n.), formerly regarded as a noxious dew or mist'; 'serene, *n*.1', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/176388> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

themselues with anie ouerboyling humour which fourseth hiest in our stomackes.'[38] David

Hillman finds similarities between the dream theory expressed by Nashe and the much later

model proposed by Sigmund Freud, in which 'the psyche takes up material both from the

body and from the previous day and converts it into dream-material'.[39] It might be possible to

see Nashe's combination of the grossly physical (the contents of the stomach) and the

intangible (the 'flutring thoughts') as an anticipation of Cartesian mind-body dualism, or

even to read both Freud and Nashe's speculations as prototypical iterations of what

philosopher David Chalmers termed 'the hard problem' in the early 1990s: that is, the

relationship between biophysical processes and conscious experience.[40] However, in addition

to the questions this passage poses about the relationship between the mental and the

physical, it also raises an issue highly pertinent to this thesis: that is, the nature of selfhood

and experience of agency, and how these are affected by altered consciousness at night.

Indeed, the paragraph of the *Terrors* concerning 'our flutring thoughts' presents the reader

with a paradox at the heart of the sleeper's experience of selfhood. It is at precisely the

moment of solitude, when the individual is enclosed in the containing layers of bedchamber,

bed, and bedclothes, set apart from outward influences such as social and sensory stimuli—

and thus might be considered definitively *themselves*—that the self begins to fragment,

thoughts 'flutring' with their own volition.

Nashe's reference to these thoughts '[taking] hold' suggests that they are not under

the conscious command of the sleeper: like the 'ouerboyling humour', they are both part of

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[38] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. E4ᵛ.

[39] David Hillman, *Shakespeare's Entrails: Belief, Scepticism and the Interior of the Body* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave, 2007), p. 24.

[40] Seth, pp. 14–15.

the sleeper, and yet somehow their own entities that hold him subject to their whims.[41] Nashe

writes as if there is a specific form of nighttime subjectivity that finds itself separated from—

and tormented by—thoughts and humours that would, in waking hours, be assumed to be

simply composite parts of itself. That isolation and sensory deprivation are preconditions for

this state of altered agency, 'when wee are drowned in deadly sleepe', is reiterated throughout

the *Terrors*. Indeed, in the early modern period the sensory deprivation resulting from

darkness, silence, and ultimately unconsciousness was believed to be the key to disinhibition

of the mental faculties associated with dreaming (see below, and Chapter 4).

Nashe uses military and theatrical similes to describe how solitude, silence, and

darkness lead to self-alienating confusion as the sleeper loses control of his own thoughts:

> Our cogitations runne on heapes like men to part a fray, where euerie one strikes his
>
> next fellow. From one place to another without consultation they leap, like rebells
>
> bent on a head. Souldiers iust vp and downe they imitate at the sacke of a Citie, which
>
> spare neither age nor beautie: the yong, the old, trees, steeples & mountaines, they
>
> confound in one gallimafrie.

> Of those things which are most knowne to vs, some of vs that haue moyst braynes
>
> make to our selues images of memorie: on those images of memorie whereon we
>
> buyld in the daye, comes some superfluous humour of ours, lyke a Iacke-anapes in the
>
> night, and erects a puppet stage, or some such ridiculous idle childish inuention.[42]

These anarchic 'cogitations' are 'like rebells' or soldiers run amok as they plunder a fallen

city; in Chapter 4 of this thesis, I explore the hierarchical frameworks which were used in the

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[41] I use 'he' to refer to the sleeper in the *Terrors*, following Nashe's own references to the sleeper as male.

[42] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. C4^r.

early modern period to conceptualise 'reason' as paramount, but for the present, it is sufficient to note the language of rebellion and disorder that characterises the onset of sleep, and the rearrangement of the senses' operation. The orderly daytime way of operating is no longer in charge; just as rebels represent the dissolution of the state, so dreams represent the dissolution of the daytime self. This disorderly state has very specific characteristics in terms of both its mode of operation and its sensory products; Nashe points to the way that dreams create strange blends of different objects which have superficial similarities, such as 'steeples & mountaines'. As with the 'flutring thoughts' or the 'waspes and flyes', Nashe appears to emphasise that these phenomena are beyond the control of the sleeper, perhaps reflected in the way they manifest outside the boundary of the sleeper's body, such that they are experienced as external vexations. They are 'lyke a Iake-anapes', that is a capering monkey or human performing for show, or 'a puppet stage'.[43]

Nashe's description is characteristic of the workings of the mental faculty of fantasy or fancy, which reassembled, reshuffled, and remixed visual images received by the brain during the day, and whose operation was an essential component of dreaming. The workings of fantasy are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 of this thesis; for the purposes of this discussion, the summary provided in physician and divine Richard Haydocke's 1605 treatise *Oneirologia* provides an illustration of how sensory deprivation and the unleashing of fantasy were connected:

> When ye drowsye vapours haue seazed vppon the Commonsense, fouldeinge it vpp in ye peacable bands of sweet repose, then doth ye Phantasie keepeinge Centinell beare ye whole commaunde of reasons Campe, whiles ye Captaine Sense sleepeth, and ye

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[43] 'jackanapes, *n*.', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2021. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/100502> [Accessed 21 February 2022]. The 'puppet stage' simile is discussed further in Chapter 4.

fiue scouts are excluded. In w*hi*ch time it casts many weake and headless proiects,

setts many friuolous formes of battailes, haueinge some resemblance w*i*th those it

either sawe plotted formerly by the Captaine, or hearde related by him, from ye spies,

to haue binne vsed in forraine parts. Whence wee vnderstande that ye Phantasie must

bee free, or els there can bee noe dreame.[44]

As with Nashe in the *Terrors*, Haydocke conceives of the mental faculties by night as a

disorderly army, slipping from the good governance of the daytime into a state of anarchy. It

is sensory deprivation—the exclusion of the 'fiue scouts' of the senses—that leads directly to

this state. The 'solitarie' and sensorily-deprived situation of the sleeper is associated with the

dissolution and confusion of the normal boundaries between self-generated experience and

perception. In other words, the containing structure of the bed, the absence of light, and

unconsciousness itself, block the work of the senses and lead to the destabilisation of the self.

In the following section, I explore the relationship between solitude, isolation, and self-

disruption and the circumstances in which Nashe states *The Terrors of the Night* was written.

I also analyse a possible connection between Nashe's characterisation of the changes the

mind undergoes at night and the unruly structure of the pamphlet itself.

'My solitary friends': writing **The Terrors of the Night** *in isolation*

Nashe's image of the 'solitarie man' enveloped in darkness is thematically consistent with his

description of the conditions in which the *Terrors* was written. In the opening sections of the

pamphlet, Nashe emphasises the relative social isolation in which the pamphlet was

composed, to 'satisfie some of my solitary friends heere in the Countrey'.[45] This situation—

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[44] Alexander Marr, 'Richard Haydocke's *Oneirologia*: A Manuscript Treatise on Sleep and Dreams, including the "Arguments" of King James I', *Erudition and the Republic of Letters,* 2 (2016), 113–81 (p. 61).

[45] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. B1ʳ.

probably Robert Cotton's house in Conington, sometime in early 1593—is later described as a place where the 'mystie ayre is as thicke as mould [sic] butter'.[46] Even while they form a community, Nashe and his country friends apparently exist in states of solitude. Nashe, furthermore, creates the impression that the pamphlet was produced nocturnally, and hints that the reader might be leafing through it by night:

> my muse inspyres me to put out my candle and goe to bed: and yet I wyll not neyther, till after all these nights reuells, I haue solemnly bid you good night: as much to saye, as tell you how you shall haue a good night, and sleep quietly without affrightment and annoyance.[47]

The text, in other words, is constructed to give the appearance of being composed—and possibly consumed—in the same circumstances of dark solitude in which sleep and dreams occur.

It is therefore tempting to read the rambling structure of the *Terrors* as itself imitative of the chaotic empowerment of fantasy in response to sensory deprivation that is characteristic of the mental faculties at night, as analysed in the previous section of this chapter. As John Casey puts it, the reader may experience 'a creeping feeling that *The Terrors of the Night* is not organized by Nashe'; the 'discussion seems to govern itself, spur itself towards idiosyncratic ends', leaving the impression 'that the *Terrors* is being written extempore as we read'.[48] However, this must be put in the context of Nashe's generally freewheeling prose style, referred to by C. S. Lewis as an 'exhilarating whirlwind of

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[46] Charles Nicholl, *A Cup of News: The Life of Thomas Nashe* (London, Boston, Melbourne, & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 147–8; Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. G4ᵛ.

[47] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. H1ᵛ.

[48] John Casey, 'The Terrors of Nashe's Terrors of the Night', *Early Modern Culture*, 13 (2018), 18–34 (p. 24).

words'.[49] It is possible that the subject of the unruly night-time self afforded Nashe an ideal

opportunity to push his usual style even further, exploring the limits of coherence in the

pamphlet form. That the overall tenor of the *Terrors* is one of uncontrollable anxiety might

either undermine this theory—suggesting fear rather than the enjoyment of artistic

exploration is the predominant emotional tenor—or suggest that Nashe has identified within

the combination of form and content of this pamphlet a medium that affords powerful

creative possibilities for the expression of fear and disorientation, and is exploiting it to the

full. The ways in which the early modern pamphlet form interacted with dream-related

content is explored in detail in Chapter 3. For the present, however, it is sufficient to note that

the solitary night does not contain and affirm the boundaries of the individual; rather, it

produces a diffuse and confused sense of self, raising questions regarding its containment

within the body and who owns the mind's thoughts and feelings. The implications of this

phenomenon for this thesis are analysed below.

Fractured nocturnal selfhood: Burckhardt, Augustine, Locke, and Nashe

This Introduction began by outlining Burckhardt's differentiation between the sleeping pre-

Renaissance self which was subsumed in group identity, and the waking, modern

individualist. Burckhardt's metaphor not only illustrates his theory regarding the social

transformations of the early modern period; it also reveals his pre-Freudian assumption of a

fundamental discontinuity in identity between the sleeping and the waking individual. This

assumption has a long historical precedent. It might be read as a distant echo of St

Augustine's discomfort—expressed in the *Confessions* (c. 397–400 CE)—at the experience

of erotic dreams. These dreams, as David Aers points out, 'led to questions about the basis of

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[49] Quoted in Wendy Hyman, 'Authorial Self-Consciousness in Nashe's "The Vnfortvnate Traveller"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 45 (2005), 23–41 (p. 24).

self-identity' in their irreconcilability with the purer thoughts, desires, and motivations of the waking self.[50] In the words of the 1631 edition of the *Confessions*, translated into English by clergyman William Watts:

> But yet still there liue in my memory, (which I haue now spoken so much of) the Images of such things, as my ill custome had there fixed; and which rush into my thoughts (though wanting strength) euen whilest I am broad waking: but in sleepe they come vpon me, not to *delight* onely, but euen so farre as *consent*, and most like to the deede doing: yea, so farre preuailes the illusion of that Image, (both in my soule and in my flesh) as that these false visions perswade me vnto that when I am asleepe, which true visions cannot doe, when I am awake. Am I not my selfe at that time, O Lord my God? And is there yet so much difference betwixt my selfe and my selfe, in that moment wherein I passe from waking to sleeping, or returne from sleeping vnto waking?

> Where is my reason at that time, by which my mind when it is a wake, resisteth such suggestions as these? at which time, should the things themselues presse in vpon mee, yet would my resolution re maine vnshaken. Is my reason clozed vp, together with mine eyes? or is it lull'd asleepe with the sences of my body?[51]

Augustine is not only describing the realistic quality of the images which 'liue in my memory' due to past errors, but can be resisted with his waking will. With sleep and dreams there also comes a change in his volition and even his moral sense: 'these false visions perswade me vnto that when I am asleepe, which true visions cannot doe, when I am awake'.

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[50] Aers, p. 182.

[51] Augustine, *Confessions*, sigs. Ff5ʳ–Ff5v. The title page of this edition states that one of its purposes is to answer 'the marginall notes of a former Popish translation'.

The overwhelming nature of dreams is potentiated by an alteration in the self that experiences them; Augustine's 'reason' and 'resolution' have been so transformed by sleep that he is not, in a sense, himself.

The question Augustine posed as to where the reasoning self went at night and how it was related to the sleeping, dreaming self—the 'difference betwixt my selfe and my selfe'—proved to be as fascinating as it was insoluble in the following two millennia. One form of the question disregards the issue of dreaming, focusing instead on the effect of dreamless unconsciousness on the self. As Sasha Handley notes, the English philosopher John Locke both expressed and propagated the equation of 'personal identity with the rational waking mind' in his *Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (1690):

> But whether sleeping without dreaming be not an Affection of the whole Man, Mind as well as Body, may be worth a waking Man's Consideration; it being hard to conceive, that any thing should think, and not be conscious of it. […] It is certain, that *Socrates* asleep, and *Socrates* awake, is not the same Person; but his Soul when he sleeps, and *Socrates* the Man consisting of Body and Soul when he is waking, are two Persons: Since waking *Socrates*, has no Knowledge of, or Concernment for that Happiness, or Misery of his Soul, which it enjoys alone by it self whilst he sleeps, without perceiving any thing of it, no more than he has for the Happiness, or Misery of a Man in the *Indies*, whom he knows not.[52]

Locke's conception of sleep as a point of division in the self is clear enough when he uses the readily differentiated states of consciousness and unconsciousness; the waking individual is oblivious of the concerns of their sleeping self, in the same way that they are unaware of the

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[52] Sasha Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 187; Locke, sig. F4ᵛ.

consciousness of a separate, faraway individual. This relationship between consciousness, unconsciousness, and selfhood in the early modern period has been the subject of recent critical attention. Nancy Simpson-Younger and Margaret Simon note that:

> If sleep was understood as a stoppage of sensory perception, it became a locus for the investigation of humanness in the era more broadly, with Descartes predicating his philosophical project on diagnosing his own consciousness and Montaigne wondering if sleeping generals were truly so virtuous as to detach themselves from worldly concerns. To be conscious, in other words, meant the ability to contemplate and draw conclusions from unconsciousness. At the same time, it involved forging an epistemological bridge between the two states, asking which biological, mental, and affective processes might persist in the absence of sensory awareness. Exploring what it really meant to be awake, asleep, or nonresponsive became a foundation for exploring what it really meant to be a human being.[53]

Simpson-Younger and Simon propose that the concept of *unconsciousness* called selfhood into question. However, while sleep involves 'the absence of sensory awareness', dreaming, a perceptive act, continues in the absence of external stimuli, or at least, with severely blunted awareness of those stimuli. Moreover, dream actions and perceptions are accessible, albeit patchily, to a waking mind that might find them bizarre, un-understandable, or even disgusting. In this thesis, I expand on previous work by scholars such as Simpson-Younger and Simon by focusing on *altered* consciousness, that is, transitional states of consciousness and dreams, in early modern England.

To return to Locke's thoughts on selfhood and sleep, Locke noted that dreams problematised his conception of the sleeping and waking individual as distinct entities, with

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[53] Simon and Simpson-Younger, p. 3.

the presence of consciousness as the differentiator. However, he considered that the extreme

irrationality of dreams was sufficient to separate these experiences from those of waking life.

The sleep of reason was effectively equivalent to straightforward unconsciousness:

> 'Tis true, we have sometimes instances of Perception, whilst we are *asleep*, and retain
>
> the memory of those *Thoughts*: but how *extravagant* and incoherent for the most part
>
> they are; how little conformable to the Perfection and Order of a rational Being, those
>
> who are acquainted with Dreams, need not be told.[54]

Implicit in Locke's thesis is that the 'rational Being' is not present, or at least, not in control,

during the dream. If this is the case, one might ask who is doing the dreaming, and what

relation, if any, this entity bears to the waking self. Above, I have analysed the ways in which

an early modern text written from a self-consciously subjective perspective—Nashe's *Terrors*

of the Night—raises similar issues. Nashe's sleeper undergoes a shift away from his daytime

conception of rationality, and his sense of agency and ownership of his thoughts. While

Nashe does not necessarily represent the dominant experience of the early modern night, *The*

Terrors of the Night suggests that the disquieting experience of self-disruption in dreams has

been a historically continuous psychic phenomenon and a long-running cultural concern. In

the *Terrors*, early modern sleeping and dreaming are uncomfortable experiences, despite—or

perhaps because of—the solitude that was made possible by material developments in the

domestic lives of the middling sort (analysed in the next chapter). The self might undergo

fracture; with sensory deprivation, the faculties' hierarchy was severely disrupted. It was as if

another, alien entity—albeit one with thoughts and perceptions derived from the waking

self—took control of perception and altered the dreamer's sense of agency and ownership of

the content of their mind.

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[54] Locke, sig. G1ᵛ.

Dreams and the self: from Freudianism to neuroscience, and back to the early modern period

While common cultural elements regarding the relationship between sleeping, dreaming, and selfhood may be found in—among others—Augustine, Nashe, Locke, and Burckhardt, this does not necessarily represent a chain of influence. It does, however, point to a fundamental difference between pre-Freudian and post-Freudian conceptions of the self. As discussed above, Freud, while acknowledging both the bizarre nature of dreams and the power of the unconscious, believed that connections could be made between the thoughts and perceptions of the waking self and those of the dreaming self. He also proposed that it was possible to bring these two entities into meaningful dialogue, such that they were revealed as different aspects of the same entity, with the information gleaned from one shedding light upon the nature of the other; or, to borrow the phrase that Simon and Simpson-Younger applied to early modern writers, that an 'epistemological bridge' could be built. Freud's conception of dreaming as concealed wish-fulfilment, and hence of the self as a coherent—if enigmatic—whole is now commonplace; so much so that it is hard to conceive of a different, pre-modern form of self that began to fracture as the sun set, and could never be satisfactorily unified. This thesis explores the implications of this fractured self in early modern culture. It is an exploration that has the potential to inform future discussions about the treatment of selfhood in early modern literature; it may also contribute to conversations regarding the possibilities and limitations of Freudian approaches to early modern English texts.

For example, in an essay on psychoanalysis and early modern studies, Stephen Greenblatt wrote that 'An experience recurs in the study of Renaissance literature and culture: an image or text seems to invite, even to demand, a psychoanalytic approach and yet

turns out to baffle or elude that approach.'[55] One need not subscribe to Greenblatt's

explanation—that the social shifts of the early modern period eventually made the psyche,

rather than property, the supposed lynchpin of identity—to take his point. Freudian

approaches have both advantages and limitations when applied to early modern texts. The

subtle but significant distinction between early modern and modern-day ideas of selfhood as

it relates to dreaming provides one example of how Freudian models might be baffled and

eluded when applied to early modern texts. While certain features are shared—dreams are

cryptic and disturb one's sense of agency and ownership of thoughts and perceptions—the

vital final link of the Freudian wish-fulfilment theory is not available to reconcile these

dreams with the daytime self.[56]

Moreover, this thesis's discussion of the early modern night-time self takes place in

the modern-day context of another scientific and cultural shift in thought on the nature of

dreams. Far from Freud's promise that the waking and dreaming selves can be put in

meaningful communication through psychoanalysis, modern-day dream research—with its

focus on the form, rather than the content of dreams—has generated theories of dreaming

more akin to the early modern model than to the Freudian. To take an example, in the

modern-day terminology of Jennifer Windt and Thomas Metzinger, 'the dorsolateral

prefrontal cortex (DLPFC), which is associated with executive abilities such as self-

observation, planning, and decision making in wakefulness, is known to be deactivated in

REM sleep'; thus 'selfreflective awareness and rational thought in dreams' are lost, and

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[55] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture', in *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*, by Stephen Greenblatt (New York & London: Routledge, 1990), pp 131–45 (p. 131).

[56] Distinct from Freud's attempt to bridge the divide between the waking and dreaming selves, his one-time disciple and later rival Carl Jung celebrated the alienated agency of the dreaming mind in his description of a dream figure he named 'Philemon': 'Philemon and other figures of my fantasies brought home to me the crucial insight that there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life. Philemon represented a force which was not myself.' Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections: An Autobiography*, ed. by Anelia Jaffé, transl. by Richard and Clara Winston (London: Fontana, 1995), pp. 218–19.

Instead of deliberately attending to the dream world and carefully controlling their behavior, dreamers tend to wander through the dream world without much reflection, completely taken up by the bizarre events and objects surrounding them, aimlessly stumbling from one fantastic scenario to the next. As a result, dreamers only rarely experience themselves as the *agents* of their own thoughts and actions: the phenomenal qualities of attentional and volitional agency are greatly diminished, if not entirely absent, in most dreams.[57]

Windt and Metzinger describe a brain whose normal balance of function changes at night to create an unsettling alternative version of the self, one with profoundly altered volition that cannot be linked to the waking self by a common thread of biographical detail and repressed desires. While the framework and terminology are characteristic of the twenty-first-century materialist approach to the function of the brain and mind, the picture of the stumbling, overwhelmed, self-alienated dreamer is reminiscent of early modern depictions of the dreaming individual at the mercy of rebellious mental faculties.

Indeed, in neuroscientist J. Allan Hobson's comparison between dreaming and psychotic states such as delirium, he writes that 'dream hallucinations' stage 'a powerful takeover of our minds', making it 'impossible to realize that we are in the grip of an altered state of consciousness.'[58] Hobson's imagery of invasion and occupation—'a powerful takeover'—is remarkably similar to that of Haydocke and Nashe four centuries prior, with 'Phantasie' taking 'ye whole commaunde of reasons Campe', or dream cogitations being like

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[57] Jennifer M. Windt and Thomas Metzinger, 'The Philosophy of Dreaming and Self-Consciousness: What Happens to the Experiential Subject During the Dream State?', in *The New Science of Dreaming: Vol. 3. Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives*, ed by Deirdre Barrett and Patrick McNamara (Westport: Praeger Publishers/Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), pp. 193–247 (p. 198; p. 201).

[58] J. Allan Hobson, *Dreaming: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 88.

'Souldiers […] at the sacke of a Citie'. Modern-day dream science means that the division between waking and dreaming selves that Freud attempted to heal has opened up once more. Dream science is only one part of a more general trend in modern thought; as discussed further in the Conclusion of this thesis, fields such as psychology, neuroscience, and environmental science are also calling into question the integrity, and the very existence, of the unified self.

It should be emphasised, however, that to say the dream self was alienated from the waking self in the early modern period does not mean that the two selves were entirely alien to one another. The inability to dream was one of the two factors that William Camden considered characteristic of 'the savages of Mount *Atlas* in *Barbary*'; these people, he wrote, 'were reported to be both namelesse and dreamelesse.'[59] It is difficult to parse precisely what Camden intended to convey with this observation; the text, his *Remaines of a greater worke, concerning Britaine* (1605) was not focused on the topic of dreams as such. However, one reading might be that dreams are, like names, a property that distinguishes an individual person *as* an individual. Pierre Le Loyer's *A Treatise of Specters*, published in an English translation in the same year, similarly draws a distinction between the night-time experiences of non-humans and humans. Le Loyer notes that 'vnreasonable creatures' such as 'Horses and Dogges' appear to dream, a conclusion presumably drawn from the observation of animal behaviour in sleep. However, he adds that 'this dreaming or discourse in them, is no other, then meerely bestial and brutish'.[60] Thus, while Camden proposes that beings who are considered 'savages' and thus subhuman do not dream at all, Le Loyer proposes that human dreams differ from non-human dreams in terms of a quality that is only vaguely defined as

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[59] William Camden, *Remaines of a Greater Worke, Concerning Britaine* (London: 1605), sig. E3ʳ.

[60] Pierre Le Loyer, *A Treatise of Specters*, transl. by Zachary Jones (London: 1605), sig. B3ᵛ.

not being 'bestial and brutish'. What both writers appear to agree on is that there is *something* about human dreaming which is a uniquely human and civilised phenomenon.

Michel de Montaigne uses the example of dreaming animals to argue the opposite to Le Loyer, in a rhetorical attempt to blur the lines between human and non-human. In his *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, he writes that dreaming animals are evidence that the ability to construct worlds with the imagination is not uniquely human: after all, war-horses, greyhounds, and watchdogs appear to react to dream stimuli as they sleep.[61] Nevertheless, Montaigne's examples provide further evidence that the ability to dream was a site of contestation when it came to defining what was unique about human beings. It is, moreover, notable that Montaigne's examples all concern domesticated creatures. Montaigne depicts their waking and sleeping lives as being filled with the human concerns of war, hare-coursing, and deterring thieves; they exist in synergy with their human owners. One of the paradoxical aspects of dreaming, therefore, is that while we might be said to not be ourselves when we dream, nevertheless our dreams, which draw on the content of our waking lives, are both characteristically human and uniquely our own. The sleeping self and the waking self both have claims to being 'my selfe', as Augustine puts it; they seem to demand mutual recognition even as they repel one another.

It is in exploring the fault lines between sleeping and waking selves in the early modern period that clearer distinctions can be drawn between Freudian and pre-Freudian conceptions of selfhood, hence facilitating the analysis and discussion of early modern texts which concern themselves with experiences of both dreaming and selfhood. This thesis focuses on close reading and historicist-informed analysis of a limited number of texts; the intention is not to identify and apply a single model of the relationship between the waking

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[61] Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, transl. by John Florio (London: 1613), sig. Aa2ᵛ.

and sleeping selves, but rather to explore in detail the richness of a few individuals' conceptualisation of, and response to, the self-disruptive effects of dreaming, when agency was transformed and one's own thoughts and inventions became cryptic to the point of being unrecognisable *as* one's own.

The following chapter analyses foundational concepts essential to this examination of sleeping, dreaming, and selfhood in early modern England, specifically, beliefs about the nature of dreams and the physical practices and experiences of sleep. It demonstrates that these topics—which encompass issues such as sleep as an isolative as opposed to a communal activity; the night as a period of confusion versus lucidity; and the extent to which dreams were experienced and thought of as self-generated and owned phenomena—often resist clear answers or categorisation. I question the degree to which it is safe or useful to generalise about the experiences of sleeping and dreaming in early modern England, and whether the aim of scholarly investigation should be to identify clear-cut unifying features, or to highlight the diversity of possible experiences and responses within a broad framework. Chapter 2 analyses the dream records of the physician Simon Forman, with specific attention to the astrological, divine, and textual methods he used to make meaning of his dream life and its relation to his waking self. In Chapter 3, I look at the way in which dream-themed pamphlets harnessed the self-fracturing effects of night in the context of urban print culture to anticipate—and perhaps influence—the development of polyphonic forms in modern-day European literature. Chapter 4 analyses the portrayal of dreams on stage, and the ways in which the self-alienating experience of dreaming was used to explore the nature of spectatorship and creativity. It is shown that the disruptions of reality and the self that were effected by dreams might ultimately be considered a necessary condition for the positive and constructive transformation of the waking world. In the place of the bridge between sleeping and waking selves proposed by Freud, we find a disjunction deserving of further exploration

by modern-day scholarship, in which early modern individuals found cosmic significance, new literary forms, and deeply creative possibilities.

Chapter 1: 'A bubling scum or froath of the fancie': sleeping, dreaming, and uncertainty in early modern England

While the body usually remains inert during dreams, the nature of inward space is characterised by bizarre visual experiences and disjointed but sometimes compelling narratives. This chapter focuses on attempts by both people of the early modern period and modern-day historians to make order and sense out of the places, practices, and experiences of sleeping and dreaming. Although sleeping and dreaming are common aspects of day-to-day existence, they nevertheless represent a profound alteration relative to the inward and outward experiences of waking life; this was true of the early modern period, and remains so today. The attempts to detect and impose structure that I analyse include the categorisation of the spaces in which people slept, the attempt to define sleeping patterns, and the classification of the types and meaning of dreams, taking into account materials, practices, and concepts. I ask if these frameworks are productive of clear and discrete categories and concepts, or if the places and patterns of sleep, and definitions of dream types, are better characterised by uncertainty and ambiguity. Of necessity, answering this question involves evaluating scholarship on key issues to do with this thesis; in order to rethink the topic of dreams and the self, previous preconceptions regarding the subject need to be analysed first.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the ways in which the experience of sleeping and dreaming, and specifically its effect upon the individual's sense of selfhood, was reflected and addressed in texts such as pamphlets, diaries, and plays. The settings and ways in which people slept, and the medical and religious explanations for the phenomenon of dreaming, are not the main focus of this thesis. This chapter is therefore not intended as a comprehensive survey, but rather as an analysis of the uncertainty that attends apparently clear-cut categorisations concerning sleeping and dreaming. Further necessary details—for

example, regarding the ways in which the senses operated at night—will be provided as appropriate in later chapters, as and when they are relevant to my examination of specific texts. Nevertheless, the analysis in this chapter may prompt a reconsideration of various critical commonplaces surrounding sleeping and dreaming in early modern England in favour of a more diverse and ambiguous picture; as is demonstrated in later chapters, diversity and ambiguity are characteristic of the ways in which early modern texts explored and exploited the relationship between dreams and selfhood.

The sealed bed: an ambiguous object

The conditions in which people slept in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were themselves a space of change, ambiguity, and uncertainty. This belies the popular image of the solid 'four-poster bed' seen in museums of early modern life. In William Harrison's 1587 *Description of England*, a move from barely covered mattresses to sturdy, enclosed beds is singled out as one of the more significant social shifts of the late sixteenth century. Harrison describes:

> the great (although not general) amendment of lodging, for (said they) our fathers, yea, and we ourselves also, have lien full oft upon straw pallets, on rough mats covered only with a sheet, under coverlets made of dagswain or hap-harlots (I use their own terms), and a good round log under their heads instead of a bolster or pillow.

At the time of writing, Harrison claims, even 'many farmers […] have for the most part learned also to garnish […] their joint beds with tapestry'.[1] It is not necessary to take

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[1] William Harrison, *The Description of England: The Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life*, ed. by Georges Edelen (Washington, DC: Folger Library and New York: Dover, 1994), pp. 200–1. This was

Harrison at his word to conclude that, for certain social groups at least, changes were underway in sleeping practices, and that these changes may have been linked to an increasing tendency to use the bed as a symbol of personal prosperity. These shifts, moreover, were considered worthy of remark by social commentators. As Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson observe, Harrison's comments 'express a wider awareness that beds had taken on a new status for the average "good man": rather than waiting years after his marriage, as he might have done formerly, he now saw the acquisition of a bed as essential to setting up a household of his own'.[2] In other words, the bed might be seen as symbolic of economic changes; previously clear associations between social and marital status and material goods no longer held true. In this opening section of the chapter, further analysis of the bed reveals that it not only embodied the social status (or at least, the social pretensions) of its owner. The early modern bed's location within the household and its physical structure also both affected its owner's experience of sleeping and dreaming, and reflected the strangeness and ambiguity of this experience.

From the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries in England, the custom grew of placing the household bed in a dedicated room, usually located upstairs.[3] In well-off households, the bed was accessed via a 'withdrawing chamber', with a closet beyond the bedchamber providing an innermost sanctum; even among poorer members of society,

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originally published in the 1587 edition of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Dagswains and hap-harlots were rough fabric coverings; 'dagswain, *n.*' *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/46896>; 'hap-harlot, *n.*' *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/84041> [Both accessed 22 April 2023].

[2] Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, *A Day at Home in Early Modern England: Material Culture and Domestic Life, 1500–1700* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 238.

[3] This process in England is described by Hamling and Richardson, p. 29, and Sasha Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 147. It is also noted in Italy by Sandra Cavallo and Tessa Storey in *Healthy Living in Late Renaissance Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 133.

temporary dividers of wood or textile might provide some degree of privacy at night.[4] It should, however, be noted that sharing a bed chamber was not an uncommon practice. At the lower end of the social spectrum, or among travellers, beds and bedchambers could be communal, while those higher up may have used a roll-out truckle bed to provide an additional berth in their bed chamber for servants.[5]

Still, the notable feature of early modern English beds of the kind owned by the middling sort and above—the type that replaced the 'straw pallets' and 'rough mats' described by Harrison—was the degree of enclosure and seclusion they offered. The wooden frame, canopy, and heavy drapes presumably functioned in part to implement early modern medical advice that the sleeper be shielded from extremes of temperature and the rays of sun and moon.[6] It is also possible that the enclosed bed provided space for the sort of contemplation recommended by religious texts, which saw bedtime as the natural point in the day to reflect upon the grave.[7] Whatever the reasons behind the popularity of drapes and canopies, the nineteenth-century term 'four-poster bed' inadequately reflects the character of the enclosed bed in early modern homes and minds. While in some respects early modern beds resemble discrete, clearly bounded spaces, in context the distinction is not entirely clear between the bed as an item of furniture which allowed the display of fine carvings and fabrics; as an encapsulated subsection of its surrounding room; and as a room in itself.[8] The language used by the people of the early modern period reflects this. The wooden headboard

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[4] Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 164; Handley, p. 117.

[5] Raffaella Sarti, *Europe at Home: Family and Material Culture*, transl. by Allan Cameron (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 121–3.

[6] Janine Rivière, *Dreams in Early Modern England* (New York & Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2017), p. 40; Cavallo and Storey, p. 134.

[7] Hamling & Richardson, pp. 231–8.

[8] Ivan G. Sparkes, *Four-poster and Tester Beds* (Haverfordwest: C. I. Thomas & Sons, 1990), p. 6.

and canopy were materially similar to the panelling of the bedchamber's walls and ceiling; beds with these features were referred to as 'sealed' or 'wainscot' beds.[9] For example, pre-Civil War house inventories for a northern English house include items such as a 'standing bed with wainscot tester'; a 1590 probate inventory of 'Stephen Grosse, woolen weaver' from Ipswich lists a 'sealed bedsted'; and wills from the Archdeaconry of Suffolk in the early seventeenth century include several listings for a 'sealed bedstead' and two for a 'bedstead of wainscot' (or 'wainscott').[10] Nor was the bedframe itself necessarily the sole or definitive boundary between the sleeper and the outside world. In her history of early modern sleep, Sasha Handley suggests still closer layers of enclosure were formed by linen sheets

> whose cool stiff fibres were called on to regulate the body's inner functions and to secure its visible surfaces from infiltration by bedbugs, disease or diabolical forces. […] They safeguarded its external boundaries by absorbing sweaty excretions and nocturnal emissions, and by closing the skin's pores against contagion.[11]

Additionally, nightclothes and bedcaps lay even nearer to the surface of the body, providing further shielding and containment. Which of these many layers, if any, represented the final or definitive boundary between the sleeper and the outer world is unclear.

Comprehending the role of the bed and bedclothes as protective boundaries is further complicated by the fact that the early modern bed not only kept potentially harmful or

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[9] Sparkes, p. 6.

[10] Leslie Thomson, 'Beds on the Early Modern Stage', *Early Theatre*, 19 (2016), 31–58 (p. 40); *The Ipswich Probate Inventories 1583–1631*, ed. by Michael Reed (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1981), p. 32; *Wills of the County of Suffolk: Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk 1620–1624*, ed. by Marion E. Allen (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), p. 64, p. 87, p. 114, p. 147, p. 155, p. 222, p. 64, p. 390. Sarti noted that in Tuscany, the space bounded by the bed curtains might have been referred to as a 'room'. I have not been able to find evidence of this in early modern England, although it might be argued that, in the use of the bed as a site of 'discovery' in the early modern theatre, beds were effectively used as miniature rooms within the larger space of the stage. Sarti, p. 120; see also Thomson, p. 48.

[11] Handley, p. 51.

disturbing factors such as light, sleep, and cold out; it also served to keep potentially noxious factors *in*. Handley notes the advice by physicians such as Thomas Tryon (1634–1703) that beds in inns were a potential source of contagion, being able to 'suck in and receive all sorts of pernicious Excrements that are breathed forth by the Seating of various sorts of People, which have Leprous and Languishing Diseases, which lie and die on them'.[12] Spiritual danger, too, was present in the bed space, indicated by the presence of religious carvings on some beds depicting prayer; particularly popular was the story of Adam and Eve, reflecting both the sanctity of marriage and the perils of temptation.[13] Furthermore, material traces from early modern houses and furnishings suggest that folk magic was used to ward off sinister influences at night, whether with candle marks on the ceiling, or symbols carved into the bedstead itself.[14]

This section began with William Harrison's account of widening social access to comfortable, enclosed spaces of sleep, as opposed to the 'straw pallets' and 'rough mats' of previous generations. However, textual evidence such as Tryon's warning about disease-ridden beds, and material evidence of both conventionally religious and folk-magic based remedies against the terrors of the night, suggests that the connection between dark, enclosed spaces and deep and restful sleep was neither automatic nor straightforward. Indeed, one of the more popular and accepted theories regarding early modern sleeping practices posits that the early modern night was characterised by a period of lucid wakefulness partway through. The following section reassesses this theory, which has had a substantial influence on recent thinking regarding the early modern night. It considers whether rather than—or in addition to—the clear consciousness, socialisation, and self-scrutiny of segmented sleep, the early

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[12] Quoted in Handley, p. 59.

[13] Hamling, pp. 168–74.

[14] Handley, p. 100; Hamling and Richardson, p. 262.

modern night might have been characterised by a greater diversity of sleeping habits and experience.

A period of wakefulness: reassessing the segmented sleep theory

Roger Ekirch's theory that the majority of people of the pre-industrial age split their sleep into two distinct periods, filling a sustained gap in between with social activity or private meditation, has been widely accepted by historians, literary scholars, and the general public in the two decades following its original publication, in part because it appears to hold some explanatory power regarding the relationship between the people of the early modern period and their dream selves.[15] The segmented sleep theory proposes that:

> Until the modern era, up to an hour or more of quiet wakefulness midway through the night interrupted the rest of most Western Europeans [...] Families rose from their beds to urinate, smoke tobacco, and even visit close neighbors. Remaining abed, many persons also made love, prayed, and, most important, reflected on the dreams that typically preceded waking from their 'first sleep'. Not only were these visions unusually vivid, but their images would have intruded far less on conscious thought had sleepers not stirred until dawn. [...] In addition to suggesting that consolidated sleep, such as we today experience, is unnatural, segmented slumber afforded the

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[15] This chapter has been written up in a slightly different form as a paper for the journal *Medical History*. Niall Boyce, 'Have We Lost Sleep? A Reconsideration of Segmented Sleep in Early Modern England', *Medical History*, 67 (2023), 91–108. For examples of scholarly adoption of Ekirch's theory, see below; for its use in popular culture, see footnote 22 of this chapter.

unconscious an expanded avenue to the waking world that has remained closed for most of the Industrial Age.[16]

In the above passage from 'Sleep We Have Lost', Ekirch proposes a direct link between a period of wakefulness in the middle of the night, and the tendency to reflect upon dreams. He speculates that 'The historical implications of this traditional mode of repose are enormous, especially in light of the significance European households once attached to dreams for their explanatory and predictive powers.'[17] In other words, this pattern of segmented sleep was, Ekirch posits, sufficiently common that one might make generalisable statements about early modern dreaming based on it, namely that those who engaged in it—i.e. 'most Western Europeans'—experienced enhanced recall of, and reflection upon, their dreams compared with modern-day individuals who sleep, or attempt to sleep, in one consolidated block. Subsequent scholars have built on this statement. William Sherman cites 'Sleep We Have Lost' in his discussion of the role of sleeping and dreaming in early modern culture, and writes that:

> The relative tranquillity and continuity of modern slumber have allowed us to forget […] that the border between wakefulness and sleep was a less stable and more active zone in the pre-modern imagination. And this in turn suggests that it may be the shifting, 'tricksy' charms of Ariel as much as Prospero's rough magic or Caliban's dreams of revenge that accounts for [*The Tempest*'s] uncanny ability to transport and be transported.[18]

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[16] A. Roger Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-industrial Slumber in the British Isles', *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 343–86 (p. 344).

[17] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 344.

[18] William H. Sherman, 'Shakespearean Somniloquy: Sleep and Transformation in *The Tempest*', in *Renaissance Transformations: The Making of English Writing 1500–1650*, ed. by Margaret Healy and Thomas Healy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 177–91 (pp. 186–7).

In his book on *Dreams, Sleep, and Shakespeare's Genres*, literary scholar Claude Fretz uses Ekirch's evidence to make the case that a gap between sleeps allowed for review and contemplation of dreams, meaning that early modern dreams were 'more powerful phenomena than our modern experience of dreaming might lead us to believe'.[19] Historians Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, meanwhile, state that 'Both phases of sleep lasted roughly the same amount of time, individuals waking some time around midnight [...] Thus, some authors assumed a natural waking at this time and attempted to guide thought to spiritual ends.'[20] It is worth noting, however, that while these statements broadly agree with Ekirch, the precise interpretation varies, indicating some ambiguity in the nature of the segmented sleep theory as it is expressed in 'Sleep We Have Lost' and subsequent work by Ekirch. Sherman interprets Ekirch's research as indicating that people in the early modern period spent the time between sleeps in a 'hypnagogic state' of 'drowsy wakefulness'.[21] Fretz and Hamling and Richardson's interpretation, however, is more suggestive of reflection in a state of relatively clear consciousness. This variation in interpretation in part reflects the richness of Ekirch's material; but it is also an indication that, as outlined below, the sum of the various sources assembled by Ekirch might indicate greater diversity in early modern sleeping patterns, and in the response to dreams, than a majority practice of segmented sleep would suggest.

Ekirch's research has undoubtedly been of great value to social, cultural, and literary historians, both in emphasising the importance of sleeping practices in interpreting historical

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[19] Claude Fretz, *Dreams, Sleep, and Shakespeare's Genres* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p. 52.

[20] Hamling and Richardson, p. 260. See also Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 6: Koslofsky writes that 'the experience of segmented sleep seems to have been familiar to all medieval and early modern Europeans', and that the wakeful interval between sleeps was 'a demarcated period of nocturnal activity in the middle of long nights'.

[21] Sherman, p. 186.

cultures, and in calling into question basic assumptions about such practices.[22] The purpose

of this section is not to deny the existence of segmented sleep in the past, and specifically the

early modern period. It is, instead, to demonstrate that evidence cited in Ekirch's 2001 paper

might be interpreted in a different manner. This thesis is concerned with the ways in which

dreams were associated with confusing rearrangements of personal agency and selfhood,

rather than simply as material for self-scrutiny (whether in full lucid consciousness or

otherwise). It is concerned with the diversity of possible responses to the self-disruptive

experience of dreaming, rather than relatively straightforward unifying theories, such as a

common period of nocturnal reflection. The following pages therefore reassess the segmented

sleep theory, and selected material gathered in support of it, in detail. The latter part of this

section re-evaluates some of the copious material from the 2001 paper 'Sleep We Have Lost'.

I have focused in particular on material from England in the sixteenth to the eighteenth

centuries, first as this makes up a large amount of the material used by Ekirch to support his

argument in the 2001 paper; second, as this provides a comparatively coherent set of texts to

analyse, in terms of linguistic, historical, and geographic boundaries, while also being a rich

source of pre-industrial writing; and third, as this is the historical period covered by this

thesis.[23]

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[22] The evocative images conjured in Ekirch's prose—of 'Families' who 'rose from their beds to urinate, smoke tobacco, and even visit close neighbors'—have also become commonplace in material aimed at a general audience (and maybe going beyond Ekirch's intentions). See, for example, Folger Shakespeare Library. *A Family Guide to 'To Sleep, Perchance to Dream'*. Web. < https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/mediawiki/media/images_pedia_folgerpedia_mw/f/f1/To_Sleep_Perchance_to_Dream_FAMILY_GUIDE.pdf> [2009; Accessed 10 April 2022]; Brian Fagan and Nadia Burrani, *What We Did in Bed: A Horizontal History* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2019), p. 5; Stephanie Hegarty, *The Myth of the Eight-hour Sleep*, online news report, BBC News, 22 February 2012. Web. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16964783> [Accessed 2 February 2022]; Katie Gatens, 'Wake Up to the Wonders of a Broken Night's Sleep', *The Sunday Times*, 20 February 2022. Web. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/wake-up-to-the-wonders-of-a-broken-nights-sleep-hg8c9hzp7> [Accessed 8 May 2022]; Robert Harris, *The Second Sleep* (London: Hutchinson, 2019), p. vii; p. 19.

[23] Ekirch himself has noted that 'Allusions to "first" and "second sleep" are plentiful in early modern texts'. A. Roger Ekirch, 'The Modernization of Western Sleep: Or, Does Insomnia Have a History?', *Past and Present*, 226 (2015), 149–92 (p. 154). He adds that 'they are also well represented in medieval literature and, though fewer in number, in […] classical works'.

'Sleep We Have Lost' was by no means Ekirch's final word on the subject of segmented sleep. In subsequent papers he has made modifications to his argument and provided additional evidence. However, the essence of his approach—citing scientific and anthropological texts, and quoting from a vast number of pre-industrial (and selected post-industrial) texts which apparently refer to segmented sleep—has remained unchanged.[24] For example, Ekirch's 2015 *Past and Present* paper 'The Modernization of Western Sleep', like 'Sleep We Have Lost', uses the retrieval and analysis of numerous references to 'first' and 'second' sleeps from mainly printed texts to explore historical sleeping patterns.[25] I am not the first to strike a note of caution, nor to suggest that the early modern night might have seen a wider diversity of sleeping practices and patterns than the segmented sleep theory suggests. For example, Janine Rivière notes that 'although A. Roger Ekirch suggests premodern people typically experienced a pattern of segmented sleep, this is not discussed in manuals of health or discussions of the proper regimens of sleep.'[26] It is certainly striking that, while Ekirch argues that his evidence consists of 'fragments' and 'shards' in 'sources ranging from depositions and diaries to imaginative literature' that he must 'piece together' to construct a pattern of biphasic, segmented early modern sleep, Rivière's research has identified no single, unambiguous early modern medical discussion of segmented sleep.[27] Furthermore,

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[24] See A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close: A History of Nighttime* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005); Ekirch, 'Modernization'; A. Roger Ekirch. 'Segmented Sleep in Preindustrial Societies', *Sleep*, 39 (2016) 715–16; A. Roger Ekirch, 'What Sleep Research Can Learn From History', *Sleep Health*, 4 (2018), 515–18. Numerous excerpts from primary sources are also collected on Ekirch's website, *Additional Historical References to "Segmented Sleep"*. Web. <https://sites.google.com/vt.edu/roger-ekirch/sleep-research/segmented-sleep> [Accessed 3 September 2022]. In terms of the 2001 paper's influence, it is cited in the work by Fretz and Koslofsky mentioned at the start of this section; Koslofsky and Fretz also cite *At Day's Close*, which draws on many of the same sources as the 2001 paper in its sections on segmented sleep, and indeed cites this paper. Hamling and Richardson cite *At Day's Close*, as do Fagan and Durrani.

[25] In the case of 'The Modernization of Western Sleep', Ekirch reviews material from late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century; an example from this paper is discussed below.

[26] Rivière, p. 146.

[27] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 364.

although Sasha Handley reads some textual evidence as congruent with segmented sleep, she also cites the German-language work of Gabriele Klug when expressing doubt as to 'whether the linguistic meanings of "first" and "second" sleep do in fact correspond to a pattern of segmented slumber.'[28] In private correspondence, Klug (now Schichta) has informed me that:

> I was able to find some matching references in the Middle High German texts I analyzed: There are several records of a 'first sleep' (though none of a 'second' sleep). However, I used to interpret these passages with regard to the 'common knowledge' (which, by the way, still seems to be an issue in our days) that sleep before midnight is deeper and 'better' than sleep after midnight. In medieval German literature I found no references to actual periods of wakefulness that would have separated first and second sleep (apart from examples related to religious practice, i.e. if a person rises to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hour).[29]

Research such as Schichta's does not invalidate the concept of routinely divided first and second sleeps in early modern England; it does, however, raise the question as to why such practices left little, or equivocal, evidence in German texts. Handley proposes that 'Much evidence does exist to support the wide-spread practice of biphasic sleep but such routines were not uniformly characteristic of early modern habits'.[30] My analysis goes further still, arguing that this supposedly supportive evidence might itself be re-interpreted in a way that reveals ambiguities and contradictions, pointing to a greater complexity than a simple and widespread pattern of 'first' and 'second' periods of sleep. It is possible that sleep did occur in two phases in some cases in early modern England; but reading early modern texts with the

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[28] Handley, pp. 8–9. Handley cites Ekirch's 'Sleep We Have Lost', *At Day's Close*, and 'Modernization'.

[29] Gabriele Schichta, private correspondence, 23 November, 2020, quoted with permission.

[30] Handley, p. 213.

assumption that segmented sleep was a routine and widespread practice might lead to misinterpretation, or rather, restricted interpretation of the evidence. Carefully re-examining the texts Ekirch presents can reveal new interpretations that do not rely on the segmented sleep model. Segmented sleep may be just one framework, rather than the sole framework, for understanding texts concerning pre-industrial sleep.

Indeed, Ekirch's summary of his own thesis—cited at length above—is not without ambiguity. The phrase 'up to an hour or more' is unclear: the wording could mean 'around an hour', but might also encompass anything from a few seconds of wakefulness to an extended period of activity. The implication seems to be that a gap of an hour or so between phases of sleep was normal practice for the majority of people (however, the activities he mentioned require very different amounts of time and wakefulness: from urinating, to making love, to visiting neighbours).[31] Ekirch's assertion that dreams in the first phase of sleep were 'unusually vivid' and more likely to be remembered because sleep was broken is similarly questionable. It is unclear whether Ekirch means that dreams during the first sleep were richer experiences than dreams in the second sleep, whether there was something about the gap between first and second sleeps that meant memorisation of first-sleep dreams was more likely than second-sleep dreams, or both.

Evidence from both contemporary sleep research and early modern texts qualifies somewhat the proposition that first-sleep dreams might have had 'unusually vivid' qualities.[32] Modern-day sleep studies show that human beings usually cycle in and out of REM (rapid eye movement) sleep throughout the night, with a preponderance of REM in the latter part of

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[31] This phrasing was modified by Ekirch in 2015, when he stated that the interval between sleeps was 'Typically […] bridged shortly past midnight by up to an hour or so of wakefulness'. Ekirch, 'Modernization', p. 152.

[32] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 144.

the night; REM is the sleep phase associated with vivid narrative dreams.[33] While there might

be difficulties in the wholesale application of neuroscientific findings in modern-day humans

to the brains and bodies of early modern individuals, this evidence suggests that there is a

human tendency for more vivid dreams to be experienced towards the hours of morning,

rather than in the initial period of sleep. Furthermore, this evidence is consistent with the

common early modern belief that morning dreams held the most reliable truth value,

occurring at a point when, as Rivière puts it, 'the body had completed digestion, allowing the

soul to commune more freely with spirits'.[34] The term 'morning' is, of course, inexact,

although the sources cited by Rivière appear to refer to the period leading up to the dawn.

Even the physician Richard Haydocke (1569/70–*c*.1642), who rejected the idea of morning

dreams as prophetic, acknowledged their characteristic clarity:

> ye morninge dreames begotten of ye milde vapours of ye second concoction, are most
>
> sincere & pure: insoemuch yt some haue esteemed them ye truer; whereof there is noe
>
> great reason. They may bee the more intire and aptly composed, as of poeticall
>
> fictions some may bee more artificially handled then others, and yet none of them
>
> true.[35]

The phrase 'intire and aptly composed' might be suggestive of dreams that have some form

of memorable—albeit bizarre—narrative coherence. Incidentally, Haydocke's use of the

phrase 'second concoction' suggests another ambiguity that problematises understanding of

first and second sleeps, and is discussed in further detail below; it is unclear whether the

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[33] Patrick McNamara, *The Neuroscience of Sleep and Dreams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 30–32.

[34] Rivière, pp. 68–9 (p. 68).

[35] Alexander Marr, 'Richard Haydocke's *Oneirologia*: A Manuscript Treatise on Sleep and Dreams, including the "Arguments" of King James I', *Erudition and the Republic of Letters,* 2 (2016), 113–81 (p. 171).

existence of two or more biological phases in the early modern conception of sleep necessarily implied that there would be a significant gap of regained consciousness between these phases, or whether the phrases 'first' and 'second' might be more akin to the descriptors 'early' and 'late'.

Ekirch's argument that dream 'images would have intruded far less on conscious thought had sleepers not stirred until dawn' is plausible; it is impossible to consciously reflect on mental experiences while one is still in a state of unconsciousness or semi-consciousness (putting aside cases of lucid dreaming). However, it is unclear that a midnight phase of wakefulness would have led to the greater ability of the individual to memorise the details of dreams. Ekirch proposes that a period of wakefulness in the middle of the night would have allowed for the consolidation of dreams in long-term memory: 'Had pre-industrial families not stirred until dawn, remaining instead asleep in their beds, many of these visions of self-revelation, solace, and spirituality would have perished by the bedside—some lost in the throes of sleep, others dissipated by the distractions of a new day'.[36] With a little preparation, it is also possible that artificial light and writing materials close to hand might also have aided the memorisation of dreams. However, the new day would also have brought with it the means to rapidly record and reflect upon dreams, with even easier access to light and writing materials; indeed, the notebooks of astrological physician Simon Forman include references to morning dreams such as that dated 4 January, 1594: 'in the morninge lyinge in my bed I dremt howe I was in a place wher too men were readinge a bocke of the philosophers stone'.[37] Furthermore, the evidence that morning dreams were held to be potentially significant experiences, or at least notably rich and coherent, suggests that the 'distractions of

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[36] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 381.

[37] MS Ashmole 1478, Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK, fol. 48ᵛ. Simon Forman's dream records are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

the new day' did not necessarily mean that dreams before dawn faded rapidly into oblivion and insignificance. Of course, it is impossible to quantify the factors that argue for midnight dreams being more memorable (a waking period of reflection) versus morning dreams being more memorable (REM sleep patterns, cultural significance, availability of light and writing materials, possible ability to relate the dream to others). The point, however, is that if we are to ask why dreams formed an important part of early modern culture, it is important to look beyond segmented sleep as an explanation.

The science of segmented sleep

The scientific and anthropological evidence that Ekirch employs to support the idea of segmented sleep is best described as selective. The single scientific study cited is a 1993 paper by Thomas Wehr, via its report in the *New York Times*. Ekirch writes that Wehr's study demonstrated that 'human subjects, deprived at night of artificial light over a span of several weeks, eventually exhibited a pattern of broken slumber—astonishingly, one practically identical to that of pre-industrial households.'[38] However, this finding is questionable.

The scientific paper on which the *New York Times* report appears to be based is a relatively small study of 16 participants, aged between 20 and 36 years; 15 were male, and one female.[39] The extent to which its experimental regimen can be considered a simulation of sleeping conditions in the pre-industrial—and specifically the early modern—world is dubious; the *New York Times* report states that the lighting pattern was used 'to recapitulate prehistoric sleep conditions' on 'a schedule that approximates what prehistoric people in the

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[38] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', pp. 367–8.

[39] Thomas A. Wehr, Douglas E. Moul, Giuseppe Barbato, Holly A. Giesen, Jason A. Seidel, Charles Barker, Charles Bender, 'Conservation of Photoperiod-responsive Mechanisms in Humans', *American Journal of Physiology* (1993), 265, R846–57 (p. R846).

middle latitudes would have experienced in the dead of winter.'[40] While it was clearly not

Wehr's intention to produce conditions that mimicked the early modern night, one has to

question what the significance of a finding of biphasic sleep under these conditions, even if

confirmed, would be. It is unclear to what extent an inherent pattern of biphasic sleep, even

emergent under light deprivation, would persist under the influence of specific cultural

sleeping practices such as the material conditions of sleep (beds and bedding, solitary or

communal), diet, medicines, and prayer and meditation.

Whatever the case, the evidence regarding a natural pattern of split sleep is unclear;

while the paper states that sleep was 'typically separated into two fragments with an interval

of wakefulness between them' the relevant figure does not demonstrate this conclusively, and

indeed its legend states that 'In long nights, sleep generally separated into ≥2 [i.e. two or

more] fragments and often exhibited a symmetrical bimodal pattern of distribution'. The

'bimodal pattern', in other words, is subjectively assessed and neither clearly defined nor

quantified.[41] Furthermore, a 2013 study by Kenneth Wright and colleagues, in which eight

participants (two females) were studied under one week of normal daily routines with

exposure to electrical lighting followed by two weeks of camping in summer (a 14 h 40 min

light: 9 hr 20 min dark cycle with only exposure to firelight at night), found that 'natural'

lighting conditions affected the timing of the circadian clock; but biphasic sleep was not

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[40] During the 14h dark period to which participants were shifted, they were 'confined alone in a windowless dark room', and 'instructed to remain at bed rest and to sleep whenever possible […] except when it was necessary to use an adjoining dark bathroom.' Wehr, p. R847. Natalie Angier, 'Modern Life Suppresses Ancient Body Rhythm', *New York Times*, 14 March 1995. Web.
<https://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/14/science/modern-life-suppresses-an-ancient-body-rhythm.html>
[Accessed 23 June 2019].

[41] It should also be noted—in the interests of complete reporting—that one participant 'progressively became severely depressed and suicidal during the first 5 days of exposure to long nights and was removed from the experiment.' Wehr, p. R847; p. R848; p. R852.

reported.[42] However, small studies of relatively short duration should not of themselves lead one to dismiss Wehr's data. In order to fully resolve this issue, larger-scale studies and possibly systematic review of the scientific evidence are needed.

As with the data cited from Wehr's work, the anthropological evidence that Ekirch presents is of questionable relevance to sleep in the early modern world. He writes that 'Anthropologists have found villages of the Tiv, Chagga, and G/wi, for example, in Africa to be surprisingly alive after midnight with newly roused adults and children.' He cites 'a study in 1969' of the Tiv in Nigeria, that 'recorded, "At night, they wake when they will and talk with anyone else awake in the hut"', and adds that 'The Tiv even employ the terms "first sleep" and "second sleep" as traditional intervals of time.'[43] Leaving aside the issue as to whether a twentieth-century Nigerian society has sufficient features in common with early modern European culture to allow one to shed light upon the other, the text cited by Ekirch is again open to more than one interpretation.

While Paul Bohannan's 1953 study documents the use of the terms 'first sleep' and 'second sleep' by the Tiv, it is not clear that these terms are used to describe the sort of sleeping practice which Ekirch proposes, that is, two neatly differentiated segments of sleep with a break in the middle:

> Tiv are much less specific about time during the night. The time between dusk and about 10 o'clock is called 'sitting together' (*teman imôngo*). After that follows 'the middle of the night' (*helatô tugh*), which overlaps with the 'time of the first sleep' (*icin i mnya môm*); 'the time of the second sleep' (*acin a mnya ahar*) is about 3 AM

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[42] Kenneth P Wright Jr, Andrew W McHill, Brian R Birks, Brandon R Griffin, Thomas Rusterholz, Evan D Chinoy, 'Entrainment of the Human Circadian Clock to the Natural Light-dark Cycle', *Current Biology*, 23 (2013), 1554–58.

[43] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 367.

or a bit later. The pre-dawn breeze (*kiishi*) gives its name to the period just before dawn. [44]

This paragraph is part of a study of concepts of time among the Tiv. It immediately follows a section concerning the precision with which the Tiv divide up the daylight hours through the position of the sun; the point is that the hours of darkness are less well defined, not that they are divided into clear and distinct periods. The paper is not concerned with sleeping practices as such, and thus it is not clear that Bohannan is indicating that there are two periods of sleep with a gap of wakefulness, or whether the 'first' and 'second sleep' might simply be used in a way that is broadly synonymous with earlier and later phases of the night.

Meanwhile, the quotation from the 'study in 1969' that states 'At night they wake when they will and talk with anyone else awake in the hut' indicates simply that some individuals do not sleep through the night, and that the sleeping arrangements of the Tiv are such that it is possible they might find another person awake. This might indicate occasionally broken sleep for a certain number of individuals rather than widespread observance of clear periods of segmented sleep. The anthropological evidence is, as with the scientific evidence presented, neither generalisable nor unequivocal in its documentation of segmented sleep.

Re-reading the texts: the meaning of 'first' and 'second' sleep

The bulk of the evidence Ekirch presents in 'Sleep We Have Lost' is not scientific or anthropological, but consists of excerpts from a variety of early modern texts. The picture

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[44] Paul Bohannan, 'Concepts of Time among the Tiv of Nigeria', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 9 (1953), 251–62 (p. 253).

constructed is based on, as noted above, a proliferation of what he calls 'shards' fitted

together, rather than detailed analysis of any single text. While this method has the strength

of gathering material from a wide range of sources, it has an important limitation: the various

quotations that Ekirch presents in his study might support the idea of segmented sleep if read

with that concept in mind, but may also suggest other possibilities, such as idiosyncratically

broken sleep, or specific circumstances in which light and interrupted sleep was to be

expected.

Poor-quality sleep was not uncommon in early modern England. Rivière notes the

data gleaned by Michael MacDonald from the medical notebooks of Richard Napier that

show 20 percent of all cases involved trouble sleeping. 2.7 percent of these cases included a

complaint of 'fearful dreams', suggesting that at least some of these individuals were troubled

by undesired waking (referred to today as middle and terminal insomnia) rather than, or in

addition to, the inability to fall asleep (initial insomnia).[45] Indeed, some material cited by

historians in support of routinely segmented early modern sleep might also be read simply as

evidence of undesirable broken sleep. For example, Hamling and Richardson cite a prayer

from Thomas Bentley's *The Monument of Matrons* (1582) to illustrate their point that 'some

authors assumed a natural waking' in the middle of the night.[46] The poem in question is

entitled 'At mid-night, if you happen to awake', and the author attributes nocturnal waking to

divine action: 'Euen now in the night season, while thou holdest mine eies waking, I saie,

will I thinke of thee my creator'.[47] The phrase 'if you happen to awake' suggests preparation

for a possible eventuality, rather than for an inevitable part of the night's schedule. Moreover,

'Euen now' suggests that this nocturnal waking is troublesome and undesirable, rather than

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[45] Rivière, p. 137.

[46] Hamling and Richardson, p. 260.

[47] Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones* (London: 1582), sig. Dddd2ʳ.

routine; Bentley is praising God despite holding Him responsible for his inability to return to sleep.

Another example that illustrates the importance of context is Ekirch's citation of Montague Summers's English translation of Noel Taillepied's *A Treatise of Ghosts*, which describes the period 'about midnight when a man wakes from his first sleep'.[48] The full sentence reads: 'In all ages throughout history has it been recorded that disembodied Spirits have appeared, as well by day as night, but more often about midnight when a man wakes from his first sleep and the senses are alert, having taken some repose'. The passage follows a description of how 'the clear unclouded vision of a child often perceives spiritual visitants whom older eyes cannot discern', and hence carries the implication that the beneficial first phase of sleep makes the perception of ghosts more likely.[49] The reference might mean that ghosts tend to show up around midnight, when people normally wake from the first period of segmented sleep; another interpretation is that the individual has incidentally woken up from a deep and restful first phase of sleep, and is thus able to see the ghost; another interpretation might be that the awakening is related to the arrival of the ghost. Elsewhere in Taillepied's text, there is an allusion to being woken from sleep by a haunting; in a section on how spirits may haunt those responsible for their deaths, he quotes Virgil's version of Dido's promise to Aeneas that she will 'disturb thy Sleep' as an 'angry Ghost'.[50] It is clear that Taillepied is claiming the first phase of sleep is particularly restful and beneficial; it is less clear that this is unambiguous evidence for segmented sleep.

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[48] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 366. Noel Taillepied, *A Treatise of Ghosts*, transl. by Montague Summers (The Fortune Press: London, 1933), pp. 97–8.

[49] Taillepied, transl. Summers. pp. 97–8; Noel Taillepied, *Psichologie ou Traité de l'Apparition des Esprits* (Rouen: 1588), sig. G13ᵛ: 'enuiron la minuict quand on est eueillé du premier somme, lors que les sens sont libres & en repos'.

[50] Taillepied, transl. Summers. p. 87.

To take a further example, in this case one where detailed biographical information about the subject is available, Ekirch's collection of segmented sleep references online includes an excerpt from a letter from Erasmus to Johann Choler, dated August, 1535: 'I accomplished this work, without being able to give it all the care it should have taken, but [during] hours of the afternoon, walking, while my families ate, sometimes in bed, while waiting for the second sleep.'[51] Ekirch does not, however, note that at this point in Erasmus's life, he was experiencing health problems, notably chronic pain caused by gout, which interfered with his sleep.[52] It is therefore uncertain that an excerpt from Erasmus's work at this stage in his life can be taken as representative of a normal or expected sleeping pattern; the point he is making, that his work has occurred in snatched time rather than with sufficient care and focus, suggests that wakefulness and activity between first and second periods of sleep is not necessarily a social or personal norm.

Evidence that waking from a first sleep into a period of alertness might have been associated with some distress is provided by Sasha Handley's citation from prayer books, including a 1749 edition of Bishop of Bangor Lewis Bayly's *New Practice of Piety*, which, in Handley's words, 'included set prayers for distinct phases of the night: for undressing, lying down in bed, settling to prayer, waking between the first and second sleep, and for accidental waking, which might be due, for example, to the noise of a striking clock.'[53] However, the relevant page of the *New Practice* does not use the language of a 'first' or 'second' sleep, but refers to a prayer '*To be used* in the Night *when you* awake, *or cannot sleep*', which begins

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[51] *Additional Historical References to "Segmented Sleep"* [Accessed 3 September 2022].

[52] James M. Estes, 'Erasmus' Illnesses in His Final Years (1533–6)' in Desiderius Erasmus, *The Correspondence of Erasmus*, transl, by Clarence Miller, ed. by James M. Estes (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), pp. 336–8.

[53] Handley, p. 74.

'Stand in awe and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.'[54] It is not clear from the text if this waking is a routine part of a segmented pattern of sleep, or a common, if unwanted, nocturnal experience (as the phrase '*cannot sleep*' would suggest, a term that covers both initial difficulties falling asleep, and sleeping difficulties following nocturnal waking). While 'when you awake' and 'cannot sleep' are distinguished from one another, their grouping together within this text suggests that both might be undesirable or even distressing states. This impression is reinforced by the fact that this prayer and the prayer about the striking clock are gathered under the heading 'Ejaculations', which at the time of publication denoted 'The putting up of short earnest prayers in moments of emergency' and 'A short prayer "darted up to God" […] in an emergency.'[55]

Moreover, nocturnal waking was not necessarily a feature unique to, or uniquely bothersome in, early modern England. A 2010 survey recorded that 31.2% of the general European population reported waking up at least three nights per week, and that 7.7% had difficulty resuming sleep. Nocturnal awakenings, in other words, are highly prevalent in present-day Europeans.[56] The specific drivers behind poor and broken sleep have changed over the past 500 years; however, it is not necessarily the case that there was a time of 'natural' segmented sleep, in which a clear gap between two sleeps was an anticipated part of one's nightly routine, that has now been lost.

Detailed analysis of a sample of Ekirch's sources reveals alternative readings; while segmented sleep cannot be ruled out, neither is it the sole possible explanation for the terminology or circumstances described within the texts. Ekirch states that the first segment

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[54] *The New Practice of Piety* (London: 1749), sig. G6ʳ.

[55] 'ejaculation, *n*.', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2022. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/60031> [Accessed 4 September 2022].

[56] Maurice M. Ohayon, 'Nocturnal Awakenings and Difficulty Resuming Sleep: Their Burden in the European General Population', *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 69 (2010), 565–71.

of sleep was referred to as a 'first sleep' (or less frequently 'first nap' or 'dead sleep').[57]

However, as noted above (and discussed in detail below), this term might simply describe the

first phase of a continuous night's sleep; even if a period of wakefulness is implied, it is not

always clear that this was a regular part, 'up to an hour', of the normal early modern night.

Indeed, some sources cited by Ekirch describe distinctly unusual circumstances. For example,

Ekirch quotes William Davenant's *The Unfortunate Lovers*, in which Rampino ('A young

gallant souldier, much indebted and vexed by Creditors') states he is 'More watchfull then /

A sicke Constable after his first sleepe / On a cold bench'.[58] The figure of speech here is

unclear. It might be drawing a parallel between the officer sleeping on duty, and the usual

domestic pattern of segmented sleep. However, the implication could also be that, after

dropping off during the first period of his watch (i.e. the hours of the usual first phase of

sleep), the constable has woken and is being watchful; either because he is feeling physically

ill, or in compensation, lest he fall asleep again ('sick' perhaps being used in the sense of

'guilty' as well as indicating physical infirmity).[59] Davenant might even be referring to a

constable new to his duties, who has slept for the first time on 'a cold bench', that is to say,

has had the first taste of the harsh physical circumstances of his job. While it is impossible to

determine the correct meaning of what might have been either a new coinage by Davenant or

a colloquial phrase, it does lend itself to more than one interpretation.

Besides the night watch of Davenant's constable, other sources cited by Ekirch

involve unusual sleeping situations and arrangements. As Ekirch notes, William Baldwin's

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[57] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 364. Footnote states he has 'discovered sixty-three references within a total of fifty-eight different sources from the period 1300–1800'.

[58] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 366; William Davenant, *The Unfortunate Lovers* (London: 1643), sig. A4ᵛ; sig. G1ᵛ.

[59] 'sick, *adj*. and *n*.', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2021. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/179187> [Accessed 26 February 2022].

Beware the Cat contains a reference to a 'first slepe'; however, this is in the context of a Christmas gathering at Court, where the narrator and three other men share a chamber. Outside of the festive season and these sleeping arrangements—described at some length, suggesting novelty—an intellectual dispute in the middle of the night following a 'first slepe' may not have been normal behaviour:

> It chaunced that at Christmas last I was at the Court with master Ferres then master of the Kyngs maiesties pastimes about the setting forth of certaine enterludes, which for the kynges recreation we had deuised and were in learning. In which time among many other exercises among our selues we vsed nightly at our lodging to talke of sundry thinges for the furtheraunce of such offices wherin ech man as than serued. For which purpose it pleased master Ferres to make me his bedfellowe, and vpon a pallet cast vpon the rushes in his owne chamber to lodge master willot and. M. Streamer, the one his Astronimor the other his diuine. And among many other thinges to long to reherse, it hapned on a night which I thinke was the. xxviij. of December after that M. Ferres was come from the court and in bead, there fell a controuersie betwene M. Streamer who with M. willot had already slept his first slepe, and I that was newly come to bead the effect wherof was whether birdes and beastes had reason[.][60]

While the phrase 'first slepe' is used here in a way that suggests a commonly understood phenomenon, it does not follow that this refers to a discrete period of sleep separated from a subsequent period by 'up to an hour' of wakefulness; this point is discussed in further detail below.

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[60] William Baldwin, *Beware the Cat* (London: 1570), sig. A3[r].

In the same vein as Davenant and Baldwin, the references to a first sleep in George

Fidge's *The English Gusman* do not describe normal circumstances for the middle or lower

sorts. The text is a biography of the English highwayman James Hind; his 'first sleep' is

taken 'by the *Counter*' (or compter), i.e. a prison, while intoxicated.[61]

> Hind being now come to *London*, did meet with many of his friends, and
>
> acquaintance, and one night being *drinking* in the *City*, and too long staying by the
>
> *good liquor*, made Indentures as he went by the *Counter*, (a Trap to catch such *Rats*,)
>
> was forced to take a nap before he went any further, and after his first *sleep*, awaked
>
> and looked about him, saying, *This is a large house and may entertain many guests*,
>
> but I do not intend to keep my Christmas here[.][62]

A later reference to a 'first sleep' in the same text appears to imply that waking in the night

and being unable to return to sleep was unusual: '*Allen* [Hind's fellow outlaw, fearing

capture] made as though that disturbance would not let him sleep any more that night: saying,

When my first sleep is broke, I can sleep no longer: so he sends one of his servants to the

Host of the house to come and drink with him'.[63] The fact that Allen feels the need to state

'*When my first sleep is broke, I can sleep no longer*' suggests that the alertness that follows—

sending to the host to start a drinking session—is an exceptional rather than a routine

practice. The phrase '*When my first sleep is broke*' is itself ambiguous; it might mean that it

is routine to have a break of consciousness following a 'first sleep', but unusual to then stay

awake for the rest of the night, or that waking after a first period of sleep is not routine and

may result in subsequent insomnia.

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[61] 'compter, *n.*', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, December 2021. Web.
<www.oed.com/view/Entry/37923> [Accessed 26 February 2022].

[62] George Fidge *The English Gusman* (London, 1652), sig. B3ʳ.

[63] Fidge, sigs. C2ᵛ–C3ʳ.

In other cases, the reference to a 'first sleep' is not accompanied by a description of a period of wakefulness between sleeps. For example, in Richard Hurst's translation of Jean Ogier de Gombauld's *Endimion*, it is not certain if the subject wakes up for 'up to an hour' during the night: 'I tooke my first sleepe, which was short and quiet: but in my second I was much troubled with Dreames'.[64] Indeed, even if we assume that there is an 'up to an hour' interval of wakefulness, this entry is not consistent with Ekirch's view that the period in between a first and second sleep was of special significance in meditating on and committing dreams to memory: here, the dreams of interest do not occur until the *later* part of sleep, although of course it is possible that this was an exception to a norm. In another of Ekirch's references, in which 'dead sleep' is taken as a synonym for 'first sleep'—James Shirley's *The Constant Maid* (1640)—the text reads: 'All people are a bed, the verie Owles / Are in their dead sleep'.[65] This might simply be Shirley's way of conveying the lateness of an hour at which no-one is up and about, not even night owls, rather than an indication that he believes owls have segmented sleep.

In brief, the phrase 'first sleep' is not of itself indicative of a habitual pattern of well-defined, separate periods of sleep, but might have other meanings depending on the context. Searching the Early English Books Online (EEBO) database for the term 'first sleep' in English printed texts with no date restrictions (thus covering the years 1475–1700) yields many such examples.[66] 'First sleep' might mean an allocated period of sleep during shift

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[64] Jean Ogier de Gombauld, *Endimion*, transl. by Richard Hurst (London: 1639), sig. F5ᵛ.

[65] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 365: 'For references to the "first sleep" of animals, see, for example, James Shirley, *The Constant Maid* (London, 1640)'. James Shirley, *The Constant Maid* (London: 1640), sig. F1ʳ.

[66] EEBO is an online resource which 'aims to provide digital images of one copy each of the surviving books and broadsides printed in the British Isles and British North America between 1473 and 1700 and of the English language books printed in Europe during the same period.' EEBO full-text searches are limited by their restriction to printed texts, the survival of such texts, their transcription via the Text Creation Partnership (not all books on EEBO have been transcribed), and the accuracy of these transcriptions and indexing. Joseph

activity, such as a military operation. The anonymous author of English Civil War text *The Civil Wars of Bantam* (1683) describes sailors 'dividing our selves into two Watches, my Lot being in the first. After Midnight, I went to Rest with somewhat better Hopes than those that had the first Sleep; as conceiving, if they had any real Design upon us, we should have heard of it before that time.'[67] Alternatively, 'first sleep' might simply mean the initial period of sleep during a night of broken rest, consisting of interspersed sleep and waking. In *The Speeches, Discourses, and Prayers, of Col. John Barkstead, Col. John Okey, and Mr. Miles Corbet*, politician and regicide Miles Corbet is quoted as stating, on the day of his execution, that 'my first sleep […] from the time I went to bed, continued till two a clock, and I have had two sleeps since'.[68]

'First sleep' might also indicate the sleep preceding very transient, even incomplete, wakefulness: for example, in Richard Blackbourn's novel *Clitie* (1688), the protagonist's father experiences a significant dream during a second period of sleep after a moment of awakening: 'after his first Sleep (which we'll suppose was sound enough) he awak'd with a certain heaviness at his Heart, unlike to any he had felt before, but he continued not long ere soft slumbers clos'd his Eyes again'.[69] Finally, 'first sleep' may simply refer to the belief that sleep is deepest in the early hours. Joseph Caryl's *Exposition upon the Book of Job* (1656) interprets the reference to 'that part of the night, *when deepe sleepe falleth on men*' (Job 4:13) as meaning 'in the former part or beginning of the night *for the first sleepe is the deepe*

Loewenstein and Alireza Taheri Araghi, *EEBO and EEBO-TCP: A Brief Introduction*. Web. < https://earlyprint.org/intros/intro-to-eebo-and-eebo-tcp.html> [Accessed 9 October 2022].

[67] *The Civil Wars of Bantam* (London: 1683), sig. B2[r].

[68] John Barkstead, *The speeches, discourses, and prayers, of Col. John Barkstead, Col. John Okey, and Mr. Miles Corbet* (No location: 1662), sig. E4[v].

[69] Richard Blackbourn, *Clitie* (London: 1688), sig. K2[r].

sleepe; and we use to say that a man, especially a weary hard-wrought man, is in a *dead sleepe,* when hee is in his *first sleepe.*'[70]

It is perhaps unsurprising that 'first sleep' is a phrase with such diverse meanings. The *OED*'s definition of 'first' is notably capacious, indicating that the word might, in the early modern period as now, have meant 'earliest in time or serial order, foremost in position, rank, or importance'.[71] Among these possible meanings 'first' might simply indicate the initial phase of something; a lyric cited from 1500 uses the phrase 'fyrste of wynter' to describe the opening period of the season, rather than one winter that is followed by another: 'The fyrste of wynter harde se shall ye..But þe latter ende of wynter ys gude'. Similarly, when Philip Sidney wrote of Homer and the Greeks: 'as by him their learned me*n* tooke almost their first light of knowledge, so their actiue men, receiued their first motions of courage', he was using the word 'first' to refer to the initiating (and valuable) stirrings of continuous processes, not implying that the 'first light' and 'first motions' were entities separated by a gap of time from subsequent lights of knowledge or motions of courage.[72]

The existence of the contrasting term 'second sleep' does not necessarily imply a gap between the two periods of sleep, or, if it does, it does not mean that first and second sleeps were clearly defined and separated periods in a pattern to which the majority of people rigidly adhered. Searching EEBO for the terms 'second sleep/sleepe/slepe' in full text with the same parameters used above retrieves fifteen hits.[73] Of these, only five contain explicit references

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[70] Joseph Caryl, *An Exposition upon the Book of Job* (London: 1656), sig. M4ʳ.

[71] 'first, *adj.*, *adv.*, and *n.*2', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2022. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/70609> [Accessed 10 April 2022].

[72] Philip Sidney, *Defence of Poesie* (London: 1595), sigs. G3ʳ–G3ᵛ.

[73] The limitations of EEBO searches are outlined in footnote 66 of this chapter. Nevertheless, assuming that errors and omissions occur more or less at random (in that they are no more likely to affect the frequency of

to both a 'first' and a 'second' sleep. In two cases, a 'second sleep' does not seem to mean a

defined period of sleep at all. In his *Sermon Preached to the Honourable Society of Lincolns-*

Inne (1664), Ralph Cudworth writes:

> And indeed if men should be restored after death to such gross, foul and cadaverous
>
> Bodies as these are here upon Earth, which is the very Region of Death and Mortality,
>
> without any change at all; what would this be else but, as Plotinus the Philosopher
>
> against the Gnosticks writes, […] to be raised up to a Second Sleep, or to be
>
> entombed again in living Sepulchres?[74]

A 'Second Sleep' is presented here as an undesirable absurdity; inhabiting a mortal body after

death is like getting up only to fall asleep again. Similarly, in William Perkins's *A Godlie and*

Learned Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Iude (1606), the term 'second sleep' is used

not to describe a literal segment or phase of sleep, but to indicate one of three types of

'spirituall sleep':

> This spirituall sleep is three-fold: first, the naturall sleepe of heart by which euery one
>
> is ouertaken; so as by nature no man can so much as moue himselfe to the least good,
>
> till God awake him, and say to him, *Awake thou that sleepest, and stand vp from the*
>
> *dead*. The second sleepe is a slumber, and indeed the *remainders* of this naturall
>
> sleepe in the children of God, being awakened out of their dead sleepe; for euen they
>
> are ouertaken often with a spirituall slumber, by reason of remainders of sin in them.
>
> […] The third sleepe is the *increase of that naturall sleepe* and deadnes of heart by

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detection of one term than another), they can give a very rough indication of how common particular terms may
have been in early modern print.

[74] Ralph Cudworth, *A Sermon Preached to the Honourable Society of Lincolns-Inne* (London: 1664), sigs. H3ʳ–
H3ᵛ.

the custome of sinne, when as the heart is made past feeling, and altogether senselesse

through continuance in sinne[.][75]

When a 'second sleep' is something that follows on a 'first sleep', it is not always clear that this is a routine occurrence. For example, Moïse Amyraut's *Discourse Concerning the Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture* (1676) tells the story of a man who dreams of his friend's murder:

> After Supper, he in the private house being gone to bed, and asleep, the other appear'd
> to him in a dream, and prayed him to come to his assistance, for as much as the
> Master of the Inn design'd to murther him: the affright of the dream having wakened
> him, he rose up, but being come to himself he took it for a meer dream and idle
> vision, and went to sleep again. In his second sleep, the image of his friend came
> again into his phansie[.][76]

Arguably, the man in this tale wakes not because of a routine break in sleep, but because of a terrifying dream; he rises because of 'affright', but falls asleep again as soon as he is 'come to himself'.

Even the time at which a 'first sleep' supposedly ends is not entirely consistent across early modern texts. Kenelm Digby's *Choice and experimented receipts* (1675) advises: 'Eat of these the quantity of three or four Dates in a morning after your first sleep, and sleep an hour or two upon it before you rise', suggesting that 'first sleep' ends in the early hours of daylight, not midnight.[77]

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[75] William Perkins, *A Godlie and Learned Exposition upon the Whole Epistle of Iude* (London: 1606), sig. G6^r.

[76] Moïse Amyraut, *A Discourse Concerning the Divine Dreams Mention'd in Scripture*, transl. by James Lowde (London: 1676), sig. C6^r.

[77] Kenelm Digby, *Choice and experimented receipts* (London: 1675), sig. G7^v.

While the possibility of segmented sleep cannot be ruled out by any of these texts, they demonstrate that the meaning of the phrases 'first sleep' and 'second sleep' are not fixed. In short, the extensive references containing the term 'first sleep' do not of themselves provide a weight of evidence for segmented sleep as a typically understood, widespread practice in early modern Europe. There are similar problems with the use of phrases such as 'second sleep' and 'morning sleep'. Terms such as 'first sleep', 'dead sleep', 'second sleep', and 'morning sleep' should invite cautious interpretation whenever they are found.

Nocturnal activity in early modern England

As noted above, broken sleep was experienced commonly in the early modern period, as it is today. The question remains as to whether the textual evidence cited by Ekirch suggests a general pattern of a period of 'up to an hour' of wakefulness, as opposed to a more diverse picture of transitory waking, or waking because of specific professional or personal pressures (for example, to do housework or for religious reasons). For example, while Ekirch quotes a line from George Wither's *Iuvenilia* (1633)—'At mid-night when thou wak'st from sleepe'— to demonstrate that wakefulness at night was normalised, putting this excerpt in context reveals a more complex picture. The poem concerns 'Presumption' and Wither is attempting to stir the subject's guilty conscience, emphasising the terror and isolation of the night:

> Reader, if this do no impression leaue,
>
> So that thou canst not any feare conceiue
>
> Through this description; thinke vpont at night
>
> Soone in thy bed when earth's depriu'd of light
>
> I say at mid-night when thou wak'st from sleepe,
>
> And lonely darknesse doth in silence keep

The Grim-fac't night.[78]

All that can be gleaned from this text is that the sleep of the reader might be broken, whether from external causes such as noise, internal feelings of guilt, or for no particular reason. It is true that one interpretation of this text is consistent with Ekirch's idea of first and second sleeps; however—at the risk of repetition—other readings are possible, and incidences of unwanted broken sleep cannot always be clearly delineated from routinely segmented sleep.

Similarly, Ekirch writes that 'in the view of John Locke, "That all men sleep by intervals" was a common feature of life'; however, other readings are possible when the quotation is placed in context.[79] The relevant section of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (1690) concerns the impossibility of pronouncing absolute knowledge on man:

> we cannot with Certainty affirm, That all Men sleep by intervals; That no Man can be nourished by Wood or Stones; That all Men will be poisoned by Hemlock: because these Ideas have no connexion nor repugnancy with this our nominal Essence of Man, with this abstract Idea that Name stands for.[80]

The passage in question uses human sleep patterns in passing as an example, rather than specifically focusing on this topic. While one reading of it is congruent with Ekirch's argument—sleeping 'by intervals' is, like the absence of wood- and stone-based diets, a self-evident, if ultimately unprovable truth—Locke is vague regarding what sort of interval he means, and how long such intervals last. He could mean that segmented sleep is universal; he could mean that sleep is often subject to transient interruptions; or his meaning could be that

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[78] George Wither, *Iuvenilia* (London: 1633), sig. M12^r.

[79] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 365; also cited in Ekirch, 'Modernization', p. 154.

[80] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (London: 1690), sig. Qq1^v.

people alternate between wakefulness during the day, and unconsciousness at night. Elsewhere, Locke refers to individuals 'who sleep out whole stormy Nights, without hearing the Thunder', which is not suggestive of segmented sleep as the norm.[81] In brief, multiple meanings were attached to the terminology around sleep, resulting in confusion for the modern-day reader about what constituted 'normal' sleep (or even if such norms existed). Ambiguous evidence which might refer to segmented sleep, or simply something very like broken sleep as we would recognise it today, is not made clearer or stronger by its accretion.

Ekirch's description, as noted above, paints a picture of the early modern night as a time of activity and even sociability, an opportunity afforded by segmented sleep: 'Families rose from their beds to urinate, smoke tobacco, and even visit close neighbors. Remaining abed, many persons also made love, prayed, and, most important, reflected on the dreams that typically preceded waking from their "first sleep".'[82] But it is not clear that these activities were either common in practice or communal in nature. For example, urination in the night is indeed mentioned in medical texts such as Andrew Boorde's *Compendyous Regyment* (1547); however, getting out of bed to urinate is not an activity unique to pre-industrial societies, and the passage as a whole suggests that the individual will alternate between sleep and brief periods of waking, rather than experiencing two distinct segments of sleep:

> whan you be in your bed lye a lytel whyle on your left syde, & slepe on your ryght
> syde. And whan you do wake of your fyrste slepe make water yf you fele your
> bladder charged, and than slepe on the lefte syde, and loke as ofte as you do wake so
> ofte tourne your selfe in the bed from the one syde to the other.[83]

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[81] Locke, sig. P4ᵛ.

[82] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 344.

[83] Andrew Boorde, *Compendyous Regyment* (London: 1547), sig. C1ᵛ.

In other words, the passage could suggest that people in the early modern period may have expected to wake periodically; the ending of the first period of sleep could have been one such occasion (and been accompanied by the need to urinate), and the phrase 'as ofte as you do wake' suggests that there may have been other brief moments of consciousness during the night. Boorde's advice was to use such occasions to turn and sleep on the other side. One possibility is that Boorde is distinguishing between a 'up to an hour' of wakefulness following a 'fyrste slepe' that should be used to discharge the bladder, and later, briefer moments used simply to turn in bed. It is also possible that 'as ofte as you do wake' refers to the moment of waking after a first sleep across a series of nights, rather than multiple incidences of waking within the same night. It may, however, also be a passage that reflects the idiosyncrasies of individual sleep patterns, rather than providing evidence for a standardised time for nocturnal urination, as 'families' or otherwise.

Ekirch's other examples of nocturnal activity again suggest a diversity of patterns of sleep and activity based on individual circumstances, rather than a common period of 'up to an hour' of wakefulness.[84] The legal depositions that Ekirch cites refer to individuals rising from bed for a specific purpose—for example, studying, checking for marauding cows, stealing things, or leaving the house with other illicit or criminal plans—and do not demonstrate that these episodes of activity were part of a normal night's sleep pattern. Furthermore, the statement that 'women left their beds to perform myriad chores' elides 'women' with 'servants': one example cited is the deposition of a servant rising to brew malt, and the other a protest poem by manual labourer Mary Collier.[85] In other words, these are

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[84] The word 'common' is used here following Ekirch's own use of the term in 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 365: 'in the view of John Locke, "That all men sleep by intervals" was a common feature of life'.

[85] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 370.

examples of nocturnal activity made necessary by an individual's social and professional position, rather than spontaneous activity during a natural break in sleep.

There is, of course, the question as to how people in the early modern period would have woken up without the aid of alarm clocks. Sasha Handley has suggested factors such as the orientation of beds facing east to catch the sun's rays, and external noises (e.g. from animals) may helped to wake people in the morning. While these could have ensured early rising in the summer months, it is less likely that they would have worked in the dark winter mornings. Another factor might simply have been a mixture of motivation and habituation; Handley suggests that this might have aided spiritually-influenced early rising. This topic requires further research; however, for the purposes of the present thesis, it is sufficient to note that domestic staff of the early modern period were obliged to rise in the night and did so, and that this fact does not of itself present evidence for segmented sleep. The degree of obligation and compulsion experienced by servants means that it is hard to ascertain how spontaneous their early morning waking might have been.[86]

While Ekirch writes—qualifying his earlier statement 'Families rose from their beds'—that 'Most people, upon awakening, probably never left their beds unless to relieve their bladders, if then', he also suggests that the early modern night might have been at least somewhat sociable. 'Besides praying', he writes, the people of the early modern period 'conversed with a bedfellow or inquired about the well-being of a child or spouse.'[87] Depositions and diaries support the existence of nocturnal conversations: however, these

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[86] For Handley's comments, see Emma Bryce, 'How Did People Wake Up Before Alarm Clocks?', *Live Science*, 3 November 2018. Web. <https://www.livescience.com/64002-how-wake-up-before-alarm-clocks.html> [Accessed 5 September 2022].

[87] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', p. 371.

confirm that people did indeed wake up in the night, but not necessarily that this was part of a common pattern of 'first' and 'second' sleep separated by a period of 'up to an hour'.

Ekirch also points to a print by Dutch artist Jan Saenredram, *Night* (c. 1595), which shows nocturnal activity, in this case a wife adjusting her husband's bedding.[88] But as with the textual evidence, this picture also provides evidence for a counterargument. First, the wife is the only person awake in the room, while her husband and maid sleep: thus, interrupted sleep is not depicted as a social phenomenon, accompanied by nocturnal conversation or inquiry. All that we as twenty-first-century viewers can tell from the picture is that the wife has woken up, with no indication as to how long this period of wakefulness will last, or what behavioural norms attend such an event. Second, the inscription at the foot of the picture indicates that the purpose of the picture is to depict night as a time of peace, not as a moment of activity between sleeps: 'Nocte vacant curis animi, placidamq*ue* quietem / Percipiunt, gratoq*ue* indulgent omnia somno'; 'At night minds are free from cares, they perceive placidity and quiet, and they indulge all things in welcome sleep.'[89] This is a vignette of a period of solitary, perhaps brief, wakefulness, against a general backdrop of oblivion. Even if the inscription has an ironic flavour, given the depiction of a wife attending to her sleeping husband's comfort, this nevertheless reinforces the ideal of the night as a time of 'placidity and quiet'. Furthermore, the height of the fire in the grate—as opposed to burned-down wood or coals—casts doubt on what time precisely is represented here. While it would be unlikely that a single image could make a conclusive case for segmented sleep, it is unclear in what

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[88] Ekirch, 'Sleep We Have Lost', pp. 371–2. A high-resolution image is available at
<https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.154310.html> [Accessed 8 May 2022].

[89] My thanks to Lily Hart for assistance with this translation.

way this specific image supports the theory of 'first' and 'second' sleeps separated by 'up to an hour'.

The model of segmented pre-modern sleep proposed by Roger Ekirch two decades ago has been widely accepted by historians, literary scholars, and the general public. However, the scientific and anthropological evidence presented in support of this model is selective and limited. While the evidence from early modern texts is impressive in its breadth, close analysis reveals a significant degree of ambiguity and nuance that argues against a routinely segmented sleeping pattern as the sole or even the main meaning attributable to references to the 'first sleep', 'dead sleep', or 'second sleep'. The 'first' and 'second' sleeps may simply represent different phases of a continuous process of sleep; if there was a gap, it might have been so short as to be insignificant in terms of offering opportunities for nocturnal activity; nocturnal activity in any case might have related more to the specific circumstances of the individual (for example, domestic service) rather than being a generalised, society-wide phenomenon. Some texts might simply be describing disturbed sleep—a feature not unique to the early modern world—and in some cases, the inability to return to sleep after waking, which would today be classified as middle or terminal insomnia. Evidence from printed sources, meanwhile, indicates that the terms 'first sleep' and 'second sleep' held more than one meaning, and that each individual use of the term needs contextualisation both within the early modern text itself, and preferably with collateral information regarding the author and circumstances of the specific text's production.

There are limitations to this chapter's review of the segmented sleep theory. The sheer volume of literary sources cited by Ekirch would make re-analysis of every citation prohibitively long. However, the examples quoted here demonstrate that reading these sources without the assumption of segmented sleep as the early modern norm reveals alternative meanings. Moreover, to reiterate a point made above, ambiguous sources are not

made any less ambiguous through collation. Constructing models of the early modern night

is, by nature, a tentative, limited, and ambiguous process; the readings which this chapter

proposes are undoubtedly open to further revision. It can be concluded, however, that there is

a greater diversity of interpretation of sleep-related texts than might be assumed from the

widely-accepted segmented sleep model. Ekirch's work has proved hugely valuable to the

fields of early modern cultural history, the history of medicine, and modern-day sleep studies

in both collating a huge amount of material and questioning basic assumptions about human

sleeping patterns. However, unquestioning adoption of the segmented sleep theory may have

the unintended consequence of concealing the diversity of early modern experiences of, and

responses to, sleeping and dreaming. In the final section of this chapter, I analyse the variety

of ways in which people of the early modern categorised their dreams, again underlining the

variety and ambiguity that attended the experience of dreaming. It was not just unclear what

dreams meant; sometimes, it was uncertain who was doing the dreaming.

Categorising early modern dreams

The most recent and comprehensive monograph on early modern English dreams, Janine

Rivière's *Dreams in Early Modern England* (2017), draws on medical, philosophical, and

religious texts to describe three broad ways of thinking about dreams. They might, Rivière

writes, have been somatic phenomena, 'natural' dreams reflecting the health of the body and

mind; literal or disguised glimpses of the future; or experiences of spiritual communication,

'sent by God, angels or the Devil'.[90] These categories, however, were neither rigid nor

absolute. While Rivière's research is useful in helping the modern-day scholar of early

modern dreams to understand and organise a profusion of material, there might have been

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[90] Rivière, p. 7.

overlap between categories; for example, in Chapter 2 I explore how Simon Forman's dream interpretation method incorporated the spiritual aspects of dreaming, the constitution of the dreamer in terms of their humoral balance and astrological condition, and the potentially prophetic power of dreams. Furthermore, as discussed below, while the specific or predominant character of a dream experience can be parsed in retrospect, whether by the early modern dreamer themselves or a modern-day cultural historian, the initial experience of the dream and its aftermath were not necessarily accompanied by a clear idea as to what sort of dream it was, or even whether it had been generated by the dreamer.

This confusion is reflected in the inclusion of dream-related material in early modern medical books. Although it is anachronistic to apply the modern term 'medicalisation' to early modern texts, medical discussion of dreams indicates that professionalisation, and professional language, stepped into a gap of understanding regarding both the meaning of their dreams, and how the experiences and actions of the dream self related to waking life. Broadly speaking, medical theories held that 'natural' dreams were products of the physiological changes the body underwent during sleep, when rising and condensing vapours resulting from digestion induced drowsiness and cut off communication between the brain and the external senses. In the absence of external stimuli, the internal senses seized control; the faculty of fantasy—often synonymous with imagination—thus generated dreams.[91] As Robert Burton put it in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), 'In time of sleepe' fantasy 'is free, & many times conceaues strange, stupend, absurd shapes'.[92] The precise nature of these shapes could provide the physician with a clue as to the body's health. For example, Burton's predecessor Timothy Bright recorded in his *Treatise of Melancholie* (1586) that the dreams of

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[91] Handley, pp. 21–8. The faculty of fantasy or fancy is discussed in depth in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

[92] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford: 1621), sig. C2^r.

melancholy people 'are fearefull: partly by reason of their fancie waking, is most occupied

about feares, and terrours […] and partly through blacke and darke fumes of melancholie,

rising vp to the braine, whereof the fantasie forgeth obiectes, and disturbeth the sleep'.[93]

Indeed, in *The Terrors of the Night*, Thomas Nashe claimed that 'Phisitions by dreames may

better discerne the distemperature of their pale clients, than either by vrine or ordure', thus

admitting that dreams had utility as diagnostic aids, while reducing them to the status of

simple (and offensive) waste products.[94] However, as the texts quoted above indicate, it was

unclear whether physiological factors could be held entirely responsible for the generation

and content of dreams, or whether they simply helped to mould dreams into a particular form

while the precise origin, if such a thing existed, was located elsewhere. Thus, for example,

Bright appears to argue that melancholic dreams are the product of the residue of daytime

mental activity combined with the physical substance of melancholy. Nashe's argument,

meanwhile suggests that as with 'vrine or ordure', dreams are the end products of a bodily

process which require medical knowledge and deduction to trace back to their source, this not

always being immediately comprehensible or apparent to the distempered individual

themselves (additionally, as discussed in the Introduction, it can be difficult to distil Nashe's

texts, and specifically the *Terrors*, down to a single specific meaning or viewpoint).

The popularity of the idea that dreams might contain coded messages about the future

is indicated by early modern books and pamphlets that were adapted—with varying fidelity—

from the books of dream interpretation attributed to second-century CE Greek diviner

Artemidorus. *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Artemidorus went through 26 editions in

England between 1606 and 1786. Thomas Hill, meanwhile, published both a long text on

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[93] Timothy Bright, *Treatise of Melancholie* (London: 1586), sig. I2ʳ.

[94] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night* (London: 1594), sig. E4r.

dream interpretation, *The Most Pleasauante Arte of the Interpretacion of Dreames* (1559; now lost, with a fragment of the 1571 edition and the entirety of the 1576 edition surviving), and a shorter *Treatise*, which exists in editions from 1567, 1601, and 1626.[95] It is possible that these shorter- and longer-form texts were aimed at different readerships based on their cost; the fact that the *Treatise* appeared *after* the *Most Pleasaunte Arte* suggests that demand for a cheaper and more concise version might have been the reason for the existence of two texts. Related publications listing types of dreams with their interpretations, such as the anonymous *The Dreames of Daniell* (1556) and William Lilly's *A Groats Worth of Wit for a Penny* (*c*. 1670), published over a century apart, are also indicative of the popularity and durability of the basic Artemidorian model.[96] Furthermore, the survival of a few pages from a Welsh-language edition of Artemidorus published in 1659 indicates that interest in divining the future through dreams was present beyond English-speaking urban areas in the early modern period.[97] The Artemidorian system's basic premise was simple: dreams were a form of visual language that could be translated with reference to the appropriate text. For example, the 1606 translation of Artemidorus interprets a dream of dental loss as a warning of imminent bereavement: 'Wherefore what kinde of teeth so ever a man dreames hee looseth, hee shall loose some such personage as that tooth signifieth'.[98] However, things might have been more complicated in practice. First, even an extensive text could not cover every possible dream image, let alone every potential combination of images; second, there is

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[95] Rivière, p. 56; p. 63. Thomas Hill, *The Most Pleasaunt Arte of the Interpretation of Dreames* (London: 1571); *The Moste Pleasaunte Arte of the Interpretacion of Dreames* (London: 1576); *A Little Treatise of the Interpretation of Dreams* (London: 1567); *A Most Briefe and Pleasant Treatise of the Interpretation of Sundrie Dreames* (London: 1601); *A Most Briefe and Pleasant Treatise of the Interpretation of Sundry Dreames* (London: 1626).

[96] *The Dreames of Daniell* (London: 1556), William Lilly, *A Groats Worth of Wit for a Penny* (London: *c*. 1670).

[97] Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica* [*Gwir Ddeongliad Breuddwydion*], transl. unknown (Shrewsbury: 1659).

[98] Artemidorus, *The Judgement, or Exposition of Dreames*, transl. by ?Robert Wood (London: 1606), sig. C4ᵛ.

the issue of authority and accuracy within the text, and the extent to which dream books were truly believed and accepted.

The apparent popularity of Artemidorian texts should not be automatically taken to indicate a corresponding depth of belief in this model of dreaming and dream interpretation. We do not know how people treated these texts: as indisputable authorities, as confirmation of pre-existing beliefs and biases, or even as a frivolous diversion. It is also uncertain as to whether any individual opinion would be consistent across a society, or even across a given individual's repeated use of a dream book at different points in time. Nashe's remark that he was glad he had 'neuer the plodding patience to reade' Artemidorus, and that it was nonsensical 'that the yoalke of an egge should signifie gold, or dreaming of Beares, or fire, or water, debate and anger' might be indicative of an extreme personal view rather than widespread scepticism.[99] Nevertheless, it indicates that the confidence with which dream books pronounced on the meaning of dreams was not necessarily shared by their readers. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 2, the neat formula of visual symbol and its translation into a specific meaning was not necessarily fixed, but could vary according to the gender and social position of the individual. Adding further to this uncertainty, the distinction between prophetic dreams that foretold the future due to divine or even demonic agency—i.e. supernatural dreams—and those preternatural dreams that simply resulted from some poorly-understood shift in the nature of the mind's operations at night, is unclear to the modern reader. This aspect of dreaming is discussed further in the next chapter, but for the present it is worth noting that natural dreams might or might not have been prophetic; that prophetic dreams might or might not have been divine; and that divine dreams were a highly disputed phenomenon in early modern England. To reiterate, while Rivière's division of early modern

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[99] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. D3ᵛ.

dreams into the natural, prophetic, and divine has utility as a broad outline of the territory, these categories begin to blur and fragment as one focuses more closely on any specific text.

Thus, for example, regarding prophetic dreams Thomas Hill writes ambiguously of dreams that 'none do shewe matters to come, but those whiche are sente frome the superioure cause, and those also whiche are caused of humours', a statement which appears to allow for both supernatural and preternatural causes, although he later expresses the somewhat unreformed opinion that 'dreames happeninge on Christmas day, and on the day of the salutation of the virgin Marye, shewe maruelous matters to follow, & do also extend their good happes vnto the returne of the next yeare'.[100] In contrast, the '*Epistle Dedicatory*' from 'The French Translator to his friend, a *gentleman of good account*' published in the 1606 English edition of Artemidorus states that 'I beleeue that often times God doth aduertise vs of things which touch vs for our honor, health, or safty, by Signes, Visio*n*s, Dreames, & other meanes which please him', and that 'dreams are much more diuine, the*n* phisyognomy chiromancy podomancy and astrology, as being done by the soule onely.'[101] But to say that prophetic dreams might be examples of the divine dream was to court contention in post-Reformation England when many believed that, as James I and VI put it, 'all Prophecies, visions, and prophetick dreames are accomplished and ceased in Christ'.[102]

The fact that the Bible itself contained examples of divine dreams could thus be countered by the assertion that such phenomena, while true and notable in their day, were now in the past. Indeed, it was the very existence of widely distributed vernacular Biblical texts that had eliminated the need for God to communicate through dreams. Thus, the *Geneva*

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[100] Hill, *Moste Pleasaunte Arte* (1576), sig. D7ʳ; sig. E2ʳ.

[101] Artemidorus (1606), sig. A2ʳ; sig. A4ʳ; sig. B2ʳ. The title page states that this edition has been translated from Greek 'into Latin, after into French, and now into English'.

[102] James I and VI, *Basilikon doron* (Edinburgh, 1603), sig. I7ʳ.

Bible's (1560) glossary downplays the possibility of literally miraculous dreams or visions in its interpretation of Joel 2:28 (a verse repeated in Acts 2:17): 'And afterwarde wil I power out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sonnes and your daughters shal phophecie: your olde men shal dreame dreames, & your yong men shal se visions.' Joel 2:28 is annotated 'As they had visions and dreames in old time, so thei now haue clearer reuelations', and Acts 2:17 is taken as 'Meaning that God will shewe him selfe verie familiarely & plainely bothe to old and yong'.[103] However, the very same verse could be used by those who argued that dreams might still have divine origins; almost a century after the *Geneva Bible*'s publication, clergyman Matthew Goodwin used Acts 2:17 to argue that 'Dreames *Divine* may yet remain. From God may come (yea shall come) good Dreams in these latter times.'[104] And even if God did not transmit dreams into the sleeping heads of the faithful, it was still possible that the forces of darkness were able to do so. This possibility raised serious epistemological questions. Stuart Clark cites early modern witch trials as an example; it was unclear whether bizarre events such as Sabbats occurred in the external world or in dreams, and what the consequences of this might mean in terms of the personal culpability of participants. Such questions, Clark writes, both anticipated and fed into the profound doubts about the truth of sensory experience later expressed by thinkers such as René Descartes.[105]

Dreams, in other words, represented moments of profound uncertainty about the nature of experience, knowledge, and even personal agency; the careful cataloguing of the effects of the humoral balance on dreams in medical texts, and the precise interpretive frameworks of dream books, might be seen as responses to this instability rather than

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[103] *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament [Geneva Bible]* (Geneva: 1560), sig. Yyy3ʳ–Yyy3ᵛ; OO3ʳ.

[104] Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames* (London, 1658), sig. b1ʳ.

[105] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

evidence of a settled consensus around the origin and meaning of dreams; and even these categorisations did not necessarily settle the argument. Which category a specific dream fell into was not always clear, and indeed, could be hotly contested; and Rivière stresses that there was overlap between the categories she describes. There were certain clues that might indicate the nature of a particular dream, such as, as noted above, the belief that dreams occurring in the early morning—after the body had completed digestion and the soul was free to 'commune more freely with spirits'—were likely to be significant, as opposed to a nonsensical by-product of the body's functions.[106] However, the reading of dreams also depended on broader cultural frameworks in which dreaming occurred, such as the nature and extent of Reformed thinking prevalent in a particular social environment. For example, Mary Baine Campbell's study of early modern English translations of dream treatises by Moyse Amyraut and Pierre (aka Ludwig) Lavater notes that these texts emphasise the diagnostic function of dreams. Thus, she argues that these 'Protestant efforts to replace Catholic dream theory' helped push English culture towards the view that the times of miraculous dreams that foretold the future were now gone, and that dreams could be, at best, indicative of troubled bodies and minds.[107] Even so, early modern England was a place where medical texts that gave natural explanations for dreams could be purchased and read alongside dream books that translated dreams into prophecies, and tracts that argued against any supernatural aspects of dreaming from a theological perspective. And, as described above, even a single text might not present a single clear or coherent model of dreaming.

Moreover, while it is plausible that, as Campbell argues, a shift in the culturally acceptable framework for dreaming was reflected in printed texts, it is nevertheless unclear as

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[106] Rivière, p. 68.

[107] Mary Baine Campbell, 'The Inner Eye: Early Modern Dreaming and Disembodied Sight' in *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World*, ed. by Anne Marie Plane and Leslie Tuttle (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 33–48 (p. 39).

to how much this represented a true shift in the ways that individuals (or the societies in

which they lived) experienced dreams. And, just as Stephen Greenblatt found that theoretical

clarity regarding the nature of the self still left him with a residual experience of selfhood

that—to use Maus's imagery—proved resistant to melting, so too the ability to taxonomise a

dream did not necessarily bring an end to the enigmatic and ambiguous residua that it left

behind.[108] While Nashe, for example, might dismiss dreams as 'nothing els but a bubling

scum or froath of the fancie, which the day hath left vndigested; or an after feast made of the

fragments of idle imaginations', his extensive description of the bizarre and vivid apparitions

that overwhelmed a 'wise graue sensible man' in the days leading up to his death suggests

that rationalisation and categorisation were, then as now, insufficient to contain the

experiential force of dreams.[109] The experience of dreams as phenomena outside an

individual's knowledge, will, or control is reflected in the fact that these medical, spiritual,

and prophetic frameworks were necessary in the first place; as discussed in the introductory

chapter of this thesis, sleeping and dreaming may have been profoundly self-disruptive

phenomena.

Sleeping and dreaming in early modern England: change, diversity, and ambiguity

Even taking the limitations of surviving texts and materials into account, analysis of practices

and ideas around sleeping and dreaming in the early modern period reveals a picture of

change, diversity, and ambiguity. Change is represented by a shift in the material conditions

of sleep towards dark, enclosed spaces in the form of the sealed bed, itself an ambiguous

object that may simultaneously have been one or all of several things: a prestigious item of

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[108] See Introduction.

[109] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. C3^v; sig. G2^r.

furniture; an extension or subsection of the bedchamber; and a separate domestic space in itself. Furthermore, the enclosure which it provided, along with sheets and bedwear, could represent safety and comfort, but might also have been associated with vulnerability and threat (see the previous chapter's discussion concerning the contribution of darkness and isolation to Nashe's *Terrors of the Night*). Further ambiguity emerges from a re-assessment of the segmented sleep theory, calling into question how common the practice of 'first' and 'second' sleeps actually was, and whether early modern texts cited in support of this theory reveal a diversity of sleeping patterns and practices—such as broken sleep and occupation-related shift sleeping—rather than a commonly understood practice of segmented sleep. If segmented sleep was not as common as has previously been believed, this suggests that complementary and alternative explanations regarding the relationship between early modern individuals and their dreams are needed. To generate and evaluate such explanations is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, both the 'moment of the mind' experienced by late-sixteenth-century English culture, and the combination of the experiential force of dreams with their frustratingly elusive interpretations are both potential mechanisms that may have driven early modern cultural engagement with dreams.[110] Moreover, although it is possible to identify broad categorisations of early modern dreams—such as Rivière's recent use of the natural, prophetic, and divine—in practice, such categories have a tendency to blur and overlap. And perhaps most importantly, the nature, source, and meaning of any given dream may not have been apparent to the dreamer either immediately or on later reflection, despite, or perhaps because of, a range of texts offering a variety of models and explanations.

The study of sleeping, dreaming, and selfhood in the early modern period is therefore less a matter of working with clear-cut categories than delving into—to borrow Nashe's

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[110] The 'moment of the mind' and possible explanations for this are discussed in the Introduction to this thesis.

term—a 'bubling scum' of messy and changeable practices, terms, and concepts. It would be going too far to say that *nothing* is certain with regard to early modern sleeping and dreaming. However, the analysis in this chapter suggests that any reading of dream-related texts should be accompanied by caution and awareness regarding the multiplicity of meanings and diverse, idiosyncratic practices and reactions to the forceful and unsettling nature of dreaming. The following chapter analyses the response of one early modern individual to the experience of dreaming, focusing on the astrological physician Simon Forman's use of writing to subsume and contain his sleeping and dreaming selves within external divine and cosmic schema.

Chapter 2: Dreams and the extended mind: the notebooks of Simon Forman

On the night of 23 January, 1597, astrologer and physician Simon Forman (1552–1611) dreamed of Queen Elizabeth. In the decades following the dream's transcription in historian A. L. Rowse's 1974 biography of Forman, it has received a substantial amount of scholarly attention; critics have used Freudian and New Historicist approaches to explore what it might reveal about sexuality and power in early modern England.[1] In this chapter, I complement these previous approaches by asking instead what Forman's writing and recording practices reveal about his waking self's approach to his dream self. I propose that Forman constructed this relationship between his dream and waking selves not through an internalised narrative of secret wishes and desires, but rather through externalised religious, cultural, medical, and material structures. Forman's dream records are analysed in the context of his biography, his religious, astrological, and medical ideas, and his writing practices. This method cannot, and is not intended to, elucidate a specific meaning of the Elizabeth dream, or indeed any other dream recorded by Forman. Neither does it necessarily paint a representative picture of how English people at the turn of the seventeenth century reconciled their dream and waking lives. However, it enables exploration of the possibility raised in the Introduction of this thesis: of using dreams to elucidate a pre-Freudian approach to inwardness and the phenomenon of selfhood in the early modern period.

This chapter begins with a critical review of scholastic thought regarding Forman's dream of Elizabeth, providing a new transcription of the dream and highlighting details that challenge the now-traditional Freudian interpretations. This review concludes that scholarly

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[1] A. L. Rowse, *Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974).

analysis of Forman's records might gain from looking at the processes by which he himself made sense of his dreams. The chapter then covers the spiritual dimensions of Forman's ideas about dreams and their interpretation, his own use of astrology to determine the meaning of dreams, and his writing, re-writing, and textual organisational practices. I propose that writing, in and of itself, may have been a way for Simon Forman to make meaning of his dreams; his dream accounts, like his medical notes, are not simple records but the surviving material trace of an active, extended cognitive process of reframing, contextualisation, and interpretation. For Forman, the waking and sleeping selves were reconciled not within the psyche, but in Heaven, in the stars, and on the page.

'Methought she began to love me': interpreting Forman's dream of Elizabeth

Modern critical analysis of Forman's dream of Queen Elizabeth on 23 January, 1597, originated with Rowse's transcription. I quote this transcription in full below, as the details that Rowse saw fit to include and omit are, as will be shown, relevant to his influential interpretation of the dream's cultural significance. According to Rowse, Forman wrote that he:

> dreamt that I was with the Queen, and that she was a little elderly woman in a coarse white petticoat all unready. She and I walked up and down through lanes and closes, talking and reasoning. At last we came over a great close where were many people, and there were two men at hard words. One of them was a weaver, a tall man with a reddish beard, distract of his wits. She talked to him and he spoke very merrily unto her, and at last did take her and kiss her. So I took her by the arm and did put her away; and told her the fellow was frantic. So we went from him and I led her by the arm still, and then we went through a dirty lane. She had a long white smock very

clean and fair, and it trailed in the dirt and her coat behind. I took her coat and did carry it up a good way, and then it hung too low before. I told her she should do me a favour to let me wait on her, and she said I should. Then said I 'I mean to wait upon you, and not under you, that I might make this belly a little bigger to carry up this smock and coats out of the dirt.' And so we talked merrily; then she began to lean upon me, when we were past the dirt, and to be very familiar with me, and methought she began to love me. And when we were alone, out of sight, methought she would have kissed me.[2]

In the decades following the publication of Rowse's biography, the dream's themes of sex and power have been the focus of much critical interest and interpretation. Rowse initiated this process, juxtaposing Forman's account with his later dream of 22 February, 1597, in which the Queen came to him 'all in black *with* a french hod'. Rowse wrote that 'One hardly needs to be a Freud to spot the symbolism in Forman's dreams: in these the Virgin Queen in white, "all unready", then trailing in the dirt, and finally appearing in black, with a French hood.' This, presumably, is a reference to Forman's unconscious mental faculties transforming Elizabeth from the Virgin Queen into an earthy, sexual being; Rowse relates these dreams to public apprehension regarding Elizabeth's possible marriage to Francis, Duke of Anjou, and reads the red-bearded man as representing the Earl of Essex, with whom she was rumoured to have had an intimate relationship.[3]

While subsequent critics have built upon Rowse's interpretation, the core of his argument—that this dream represents an intersection of male sexuality with the persona of a supposedly virginal monarch—has remained fundamentally unchallenged. The main

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[2] This dream is in MS Ashmole 226, fol. 44ʳ, and transcribed in Rowse, *Simon Forman*, p. 20.

[3] This dream of 22 February 1597 is recorded in MS Ashmole 226, fol. 44ᵛ; Rowse, *Simon Forman*, pp. 20–1.

contributions to this discussion are analysed below. Following this analysis, I use a new transcription of the Elizabeth dream to propose an alternative approach to this and other dream records of Forman's. This approach supplements previous critical explorations of sexuality and power in Forman's dream by prioritising the question not of how modern day psychoanalysts might interpret it, but how Forman himself made meaning of his dream life and related it to his waking sense of self.

The ongoing influence of Rowse—and, by proxy, Sigmund Freud—on critical discussion of Forman's Elizabeth dream is manifest in New Historicist critic Louis Montrose's 1983 analysis of what it revealed about 'the cultural contours of an Elizabethan psyche.'[4] The influence of Montrose on subsequent critical thought is explored below; for the present, it is worth noting that Montrose proposed Forman's dream of sexual entanglement with a powerful woman was characterised by themes of submission and dominance:

> The virginal, erotic, and maternal aspects of the Elizabethan feminine that the royal cult appropriates from the domestic domain are themselves appropriated by one of the Queen's subjects and made the material for his dreamwork. […] for Forman to raise the Queen's belly is to make her female body to bear the sign of his own potency. In the context of the cross-cutting relationships between subject and prince, man and woman, the dreamer insinuates into a gesture of homage, a will to power.[5]

Montrose's argument is consistent with Freud's idea of a dream as a repressed wish; in which case, the prominence of a woman as powerful as Elizabeth may have prompted men to dream

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[4] Louis Adrian Montrose, '"Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture', *Representations*, 2 (1983), 61–94. For details of the authors who cite Rowse's transcription, see footnote 13 in this chapter.

[5] Montrose, pp. 64–5.

of sexual dominance over her.[6] This argument, of course, depends on the extent to which Freud's model of the dream-as-wish is both correct in itself, and applicable to a late-sixteenth-century psyche. Montrose's framing of the dream as Forman's 'will to power' also suggests that a general cultural theme of concern regarding female power was made manifest in Simon Forman's psyche in particular. While this is not an unreasonable supposition, Montrose does not provide direct evidence that Forman specifically expressed such ideas in his notebooks. Montrose refers instead to the writings of, among others, Henri IV of France's ambassador and Sir Robert Naunton. Other interpretations of Forman's dream of the Queen differ in specific details and critical focus compared with Rowse and Montrose. However, they share the same, essentially Freudian, fundamental assumptions about the unconscious processes of dream formation, and the importance of power and sexuality in determining dream content.

For example, Allison Harl cites Rowse (but not Montrose) in her exploration of Forman's sexual identity. Harl posits 'an underlying fear of rejection and loss of power in [Forman's] relationships with women', which might, according to her psychoanalytically-informed reading, have been 'the result of his dysfunctional relationship with his mother.' Harl's Forman is characterised by a passive, aloof attitude towards women, which reaches its peak towards the end of the dream, when Elizabeth makes to kiss him and

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[6] For Freud on the dream as wish-fulfilment, see *The Interpretation of Dreams*: 'the dream possesses a value of its own as a psychical act, that a wish is the motive for its formation, and that the experiences of the previous day provide the immediate material for its content'. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, transl. by Joyce Crick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 175 [first published as *Die Traumdeutung* (Leipzig & Vienna: Franz Deuticke, 1900)].

Forman enjoys the erotic position of the passive object. […] His dream suggests that she invites him to penetrate her, and thus to conquer her. In doing so, on some level he would succeed in dethroning her and appropriate her power for himself.[7]

Harl thus identifies a consistent thread joining Forman's waking and sleeping selves, the underlying assumptions of which are fundamentally Freudian (for example, that a difficult relationship with one's mother would continue to make itself felt in later relationships with other women).

Like Montrose and Harl, Helen Hackett relates Forman's Elizabeth dream to his individual biography and the broader Elizabethan cultural and political landscape. In an essay citing Montrose and Rowse, she writes that Forman's fantasy of impregnating the Queen may 'be connected with Elizabeth's anomalous childlessness'; his unconscious is perhaps reacting to national anxiety about the lack of an heir.[8] She picks up on Montrose's suggestion that the red-bearded weaver of Forman's dream is related to the character of Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, noting that Forman 'might recently have seen *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a new or nearly-new play in 1597 [...] If his unconscious was responding to a recent viewing of the Dream, it is striking that it unquestioningly translated Titania into Elizabeth.'[9] Hackett

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[7] Allison L. Harl, 'Passive, Pursued and Powerful: Construction of the Male Self in Renaissance Autobiography', *Discoveries*, 22.2 (2005). Web. <http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/dreinheimer/discoveries/archives/222/harl222pf.htm> [Accessed 27 October 2019].

[8] Helen Hackett, 'Dream-visions of Elizabeth I', in *Reading the Early Modern Dream: The Terrors of the Night*, ed. by Katharine Hodgkin, Michelle O'Callaghan, and S. J. Wiseman (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 45–65 (p. 55). For other interpretations of Forman's dream informed by psychoanalysis, see Carole Levin, *Dreaming the English Renaissance: Politics and Desire in Court and Culture* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 150–2; Levin cites Montrose and Rowse in her discussion. Also Per Sivefors, 'Sex and the Self: Simon Forman, Subjectivity and Erotic Dreams in Early Modern England', in *Pangs of Love and Longing: Configurations of Desire in Premodern Literature*, ed. by Anders Cullhed, Carin Franzén, Anders Hallengren, and Mats Malm (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 281–92; Sivefors cites Rowse, Montrose, Hackett, and Levin.

[9] Montrose, p.65: 'It is strange and admirable that the dreamer's rival for the Queen should be a weaver—as if Nick Bottom had wandered out of Shakespeare's Dream and into Forman's'; Hackett,'Dream-visions', p. 60.

reads Elizabeth's white dress as a representation of Elizabeth's virginity under assault from the red-bearded weaver and Forman himself, and her later black dress as 'Forman's recognition that the reign is ending and that a dark time is coming'. While Hackett's reading of Forman's dream makes acute and revealing associations (and it is very possible that the visual impressions of playgoing could be revisited in a dream), it is, as with Harl's account, impossible to parse which of these associations were made by Forman's subconscious, and which by the critic faced with multiple texts that appear to invite connection. In other words, this and other readings of the Elizabeth dream reveal the power of psychoanalysis as a method to detect revealing associations between texts. They also—as Katherine Hodgkin points out in her critique of Montrose—demonstrate how difficult it is for the modern-day critic to avoid Freud's influence when writing about dreams. Hodgkin argues that while Montrose might state he has set out 'not to psychoanalyse Forman, but to use the figures in his dream as a way of grasping "the cultural contours of an Elizabethan psyche"', nevertheless

> his reading must first assume that the Queen may stand for the mother, and second, that Forman's troubled early relationship with his own mother also has a part to play in shaping the dream. In the dreamwork, it is assumed, both the cultural and individual unconscious have parts to play.[10]

Indeed, it may be argued that Rowse's original editorial perspective has contributed to the way in which psychoanalysis has permeated discussion of Forman's dream. Rowse ascribes Forman's motivation for writing to 'compulsive and obsessive' self-revelation, powered by frustration regarding his thwarted career as a scholar that 'banked up his powers as a

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[10] Katharine Hodgkin, 'Dreaming Meanings: Some Early Modern Dream Thoughts', in Hodgkin et al., *Reading the Early Modern Dream*, pp. 109–24 (p. 110).

writer.'[11] Rowse not only offers a psychoanalytic reading of Forman's dream, but uses a psychoanalytically-informed model, in which Forman's manuscripts are a form of displacement activity, to account for Forman's writing practices as a whole.

As outlined in the Introduction, psychoanalytic concepts may be best understood as a twentieth-century cultural phenomenon that developed on previous currents of thought about the mind and self, rather than as the revelation of immutable truths about, for example, the relationship between people and their dreams. In this chapter, I ask whether the psychoanalytic readings of Forman's dreams offered by previous critics can be productively supplemented by a critical focus on the structures *outside* his psyche which he may have used to orientate his dream and waking selves, and interpret his dreams. I begin this process with a new transcription of Forman's dream of Queen Elizabeth. Words and phrases omitted in Rowse's transcription are in bold; significant alterations (beyond Rowse's use of modernised spelling and grammar) are underlined.

Anno 1587 the 23 Januari about 3 An m I drempt that I was wth the Quene and that she was a lyttle elderly woman in a cors weit peticote all unredy <u>&</u> she & I walked up and down thorowe lanes & closes talkinge & reasoning **of many matters** at last we came over a gret close wher wer many people. and ther were too men at hard wordes. **and** on of them was a weaver a talle man wth a reddesh berd distracte of his wits. **And** she talked to him and he spak very merily unto her & at laste did tak her and kisse

her. Soo I toke her by the arme & put her away & told her <u>that</u> fellowe was frantick **and** soe we went from him & I led her by the arm still and then we wente thorowe a durty lane And she had a long weit smok very clene and faire and yt trailled in the durte & her cote behind **and** I toke her cote & did carry yt up a good waie and then yt

[11] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, p. 4; p. 6.

hunge to lowe before And I tolld her **in talk** she should do me a favour to let me

waight on her & she said I should then said I. I mean **madam** to waighte upon youe &

not under youe that I might make this belly a lyttle bigger to carry up this smok &

cotes out of the durte And so we talked meryly **&** then she began to lean upon me

when we were past the durte & to be very familiar with me and me thoughte she

began to love me And when we were Alone out of sighte me thought she wold have

kissed me. **And wth that I waked.   That morning [...]**[12]

Notable omissions in Rowse's transcription are: the precise date and time given at the

beginning of the passage ('Anno 1587 the 23 Januari about 3 An m', i.e. 3am); the words 'of

many matters' in the sentence 'I walked up and down thorowe lanes & closes talkinge &

reasoning of many matters', and 'in talk' in the sentence 'And I tolld her in talk she should do

me a favour to let me waight on her'; and the text that follows 'me thought she wold have

kissed me' at the end of the passage.

These edits made by Rowse are of potential significance to a reassessment of

Forman's dream. Material pertinent to the '3 An m' note and the text that follows the dream

account will be discussed later in this chapter. For now, suffice it to say that the timing of the

dream indicates the importance of astrological factors in Forman's dream recording and

interpretation practice; the text that comes after 'me thought she wold have kissed me',

meanwhile, highlights the role of editing and organisation in Forman's treatment of his

dreams. Rowse's removal of these elements takes the dream out of the context in which

Forman would have understood it (the time that it occurred, and his day-to-day written life),

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[12] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 44^r.

and thus invites interpretation according to twentieth century—that is to say psychoanalytic—terms.

The reason why Rowse removed 'of many matters' is unclear; he might have skipped over these words by accident, found them illegible, or simply deemed them unnecessary. In outlining his transcription method, he writes that 'there really is no point in coming between the writer and the modern reader with antique spelling and punctuation', and a similar rule could have been applied to what he judged to be superfluous phrases.[13] However, the absence of 'many matters' may be significant in the transcription of a dream that, Rowse claimed, 'throws a shaft of light, as nothing else that I know, into the erotic stimulus that the menfolk derived from having a Virgin Queen upon the throne'.[14] The 'lyttle elderly woman' who can discourse 'of many matters' is an image less associated with power, sexuality, and submission, than it is suggestive of an relationship of intellectual equals. It is unlikely that his characterisation of Elizabeth as 'lyttle' and 'elderly' has erotic connotations; even if Forman's dream ends on a markedly erotic note, it does not begin that way, and dreams, of course, are notable for their metamorphotic properties. It is possible that Forman's dream describes multiple aspects of how he represented Elizabeth to himself. Indeed, for Forman royal authority was a potential source of approval and confirmation of his professional

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[13] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, pp. xii. The omission of the phrase 'of many matters' is, unsurprisingly, reproduced in the work of critics using Rowse as a source, including Hackett, Levin, and Sivefors. Hackett, 'Dream-visions', p. 54; Levin, p. 150; Sivefors, p. 281; Montrose, pp. 62–3. Montrose's quotation of the dream is confusing. He cites the 1974 publication date of the first edition of Rowse's biography, but gives a title and page reference that suggest that the excerpt is taken from the 1976 paperback edition. However, the phrase 'of many matters' is not included in either of these editions; it is possible that Montrose had access to an unpublished version of Rowse's transcription. Montrose (p. 87) cites 'A. L. Rowse, *The Case Books of Simon Forman* (London, 1974), p. 31'. The 1974 UK edition of Rowse's biography, used as the main reference in this chapter, is entitled *Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), while the US edition is *Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age: Simon Forman the Astrologer* (New Yok: Scribner, 1974). These editions have identical pagination; in both, the dream of Queen Elizabeth is on p. 20, not p. 31. The 1976 paperback edition is entitled *The Case Books of Simon Forman: Sex and Society in Shakespeare's Age* (London: Picador, 1976), and in this version the dream of the Queen appears on p. 31; however, it does not contain the phrase 'of many matters'.

[14] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, p. 20.

identity, a view consistent with the image of the wise figure able to converse 'of many matters'. In a later dream of Elizabeth, dated 9 January, 1598, he writes that 'that the Quene did commend me moch for my skille & Judgment in phisick & did chid wth the docters and railed on them moch, for trobling of me'.[15] At the time of this 1598 dream, Forman was making ill-fated moves to gain Elizabeth's patronage, including having an individual called Sellinger intercept her in her private garden to plead his case. Three years later, Forman cast a figure to evaluate his chances of replacing the Queen's recently-deceased physician John James.[16] The restored phrase 'of many matters' thus fits with a pattern of Forman's association of royal dreams with validation of his skill as a physician.[17] It highlights the possibility—explored in further detail below—that for Forman, dreams raised issues of knowledge and professional identity, and that this merits investigation as much as the erotic fantasies that have characterised the predominantly psychoanalytic critical approaches to date.

The deletion of the phrase 'in talk' might again be a superfluity, the removal of which by Rowse does little to alter the essential character of the dream. It is apparently a tautology; how else would Forman have told the Queen anything, other than 'in talk'? Nevertheless, printed sources from the last two decades of the sixteenth century suggest that multiple meanings of the phrase 'in talk' existed, and that this phrase might therefore hold some significance. In the 1583 edition of Foxe's *Actes and monuments*, for example, it is used to specify that communication occurs in speech as opposed to in writing ('That whiche was lacking in talke […] at your being here, I haue supplyed by writing in your absence'), and to

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[15] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 310ʳ.

[16] Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 88.

[17] It is also worth noting that in 1607, four years after Elizabeth's death, Forman recorded a dream of a visit from King James. MS Ashmole 1472, p. 807. This is part of the 'philosophers' stone' collection (see below).

signify both the act and manner of speaking or conversation ('My Lord, I most hartily thanke your Lordshyp, as well for your gentlenes, as also for youre sobrietye in talke'; 'I know that in talk with heretickes there commeth hurt to all men'; 'they waxed hote in talke').[18] In Forman's dream, therefore, 'in talk' might be a stock phrase added redundantly; it may serve the function of emphasising the following part of the conversation as particularly significant; or it could highlight the contrast between Forman's 'talk' as an external, social encounter versus the privacy of his thoughts within the dream. Whatever the reason, the phrase 'in talk' functions as a reminder that Forman is reporting a conversation from a subjective point of view. As a dreamer (and then as an author), he distinguishes the contents of his own thoughts from those of the Queen, who, while an invention of his sleeping brain, is treated as a separate, distinct entity with her own inwardness and volition. Within the dream space, Forman cannot access Elizabeth's mental processes and, importantly, she cannot access his. Thus, he can fool her into agreeing to a sexual encounter with a pun on the word 'waight(e)' reminiscent of Cleopatra's fantasy in Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1606)*:* 'Oh happy horse, to bear the weight of Anthony' (1.5.21).[19] It is a reminder of the potentially alienating divide between sleeping and waking selves described in the Introduction to this thesis; Forman's dreaming mind has invented a version of Queen Elizabeth, but within the dream he perceives her as a distinct being with her own separate inward world. Thus he can fool her with a pun. This reading again raises the question as to how early modern individuals reckoned with the potentially disturbing sense of the dream space as a place where one's waking agency no longer applied, and where the products of one's own mind appeared as strangers.

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[18] John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London: 1583), sig. CCCCc4ʳ; sig. RRRR5r; sig. EEEEe3ᵛ; sig. KKKKk4ᵛ.

[19] William Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, ed. by Michael Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

The full text, then, while not radically different from Rowse's transcription, does point to significant elements of the Elizabeth dream besides repressed sexuality: for example, issues of intellectual knowledge, and an emphasis on the intense subjectivity of the dream experience, in which one's own mental inventions go unrecognised. Thus, elements of Forman's dream life suggest that a critical approach that is not primarily informed by psychoanalysis might add to previous work on the subject. In order to further explore this point, and emphasise the importance of going beyond Freudian-influenced readings of early modern dream texts, I now turn to another of Forman's dreams that superficially presents an open-and-shut case from the psychoanalytic point of view. This is his recurrent childhood dream of troubled waters.

Autobiographical dream interpretation and beyond: the Life of Simon Forman

Forman's dream of troubled waters is described in a manuscript entitled 'the Bock of the life and generation of Simon' (referred to hereafter as the *Life*). The *Life* is an account of Forman's early years up to his arrival in Oxford as a poor scholar in 1573; it was written in 1600, and was first transcribed and published in the nineteenth century.[20] Despite the apparently intimate access that it gives to Forman's experiences, its precise purpose is enigmatic. Elizabeth Clarke has documented that a preface to 'the diary proper' consisting of 'a brief account of [the author's] life to that date' became frequent practice in the late

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[20] Forman's extensive manuscript collection came to the Bodleian via his protégé Richard Napier, who acquired the papers after Forman died in 1611. The books were passed down to Napier's nephew, Sir Richard Napier; following Sir Richard's death in 1676, his son Thomas Napier sold them to Elias Ashmole. The papers were included in Ashmole's donation to Oxford University. See Barbara Howard Traister, *The Notorious Astrological Physician of London: Works and Days of Simon Forman* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. xiv–xv. The 1600 *Life* is in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 208, fols. 136ʳ–142ʳ. It has previously been transcribed and published as *The Autobiography and Personal Diary of Dr Simon Forman*, ed. by James Orchard Halliwell (Privately printed: London, 1849), pp. 1–12, and in Rowse, *Simon Forman*, pp. 267–78. Forman treated 1 January as the beginning of the year; see Judith Cook, *Dr Simon Forman: A Most Notorious Physician* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2001), p. xii, Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, p. xiv.

seventeenth century.[21] The fact that the *Life* concludes in 1573 might, therefore, be significant in marking this document as a much earlier example of this practice. 1573 is the year in which biographer Lauren Kassell estimates that Forman first took up his studies in astrology and medicine, and thus began his assumption of the professional identity which would last for the remainder of his days.[22] Forman's *Life* may anticipate the kind of preface described by Clarke, acting as a prelude to his extensive if fragmented records concerning the events of his adult, professional existence as a physician and astrologer. Alternatively, it could be part of a fuller prose autobiographical narrative which was either not completed or has only partially survived; or it might simply be a standalone account written for reasons unknown.[23] While it is impossible to determine the exact purpose of this document, all of these possible explanations point to it as a text written from a self-consciously subjective perspective, with the construction of a narrative of personal and professional identity a fundamental concern.

The *Life* is subdivided into sections dealing with various episodes and stages in Forman's development, such as 'Howe Symon after his fathers death was put to shifte for him selfe & went to dwell wth his aunte for 2 yers' and 'Howe Simon was gyuen to his bocke And Lerned by nighte all that Henry Gird lerned in the daie'.[24] One page is dedicated to Forman's dream life, entitled 'Of visions that the said S had beinge yet a childe':

> Simon beinge a child of .6. yers old[,] his father loved him aboue all the reste but his
> mother nor brethren loved him not. His father for the afection he had to him wold
> alwaies haue him ly at his bedes feete in a lyttle bed for the nonce. And soe sone as he

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[21] Elizabeth Clarke, 'Diaries', in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 609–14 (p. 610).

[22] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, p. xvi.

[23] A more concise account of Forman's early life composed in 1606 can be found in MS Ashmole 208, fols. 225–6.

[24] MS Ashmole 208, fols. 138^v; 140^v.

was alwaies lad downe to slepe he should see in visions alwaies many mighti

mountanies and hills com rowling against him as though they wold over ron him and

falle on him and bruse him. yet he gote upp all wais to the top of them and with moch

a doe wente over them. Then should he see many grete waters like to drowne him

boilinge and raginge against him as thoughe they wold swallowe him up. yet he

thought he did overpasse them. And thes dremes and visions he had every night

continually for .3. or 4. yers space ~~continually~~. Thes visions god did showe him in his

youth to signifie vnto him his trobles in his riper years. For the mightie mountaines

might signifie the great & mightie potentates that he had controuersy with

afterwardes. And the waters mighte signifie the greate counsells that were houlden

against hime to overthrowe him. Yet god the only defender of all that be his. wold

never let him to be overthrowen. but continuallye gave him alwaies in the end the

victory of all his enemies. And he overpaste all wth credite by the helpe of god to

whom be praise for evermore. Amen.[25]

It is unclear as to whether Forman made a significant distinction between what he calls

'dremes' and 'visions' in this passage. For example, Forman records that on 12 September

1588 'I sawe a vision as I slepte'; in this 'vision' he is given a prophecy, and the dream ends

as 'I a woke'.[26] In his unpublished book on astrological practice, *The Astrologicalle

Judgmentes of Phisick and Other Questions*, he refers to individuals who might experience

'true dreames, and many uisions' and also those to whom God shows 'Drems and

Reuelations'.[27] A collection of dreams elsewhere in his manuscripts, discussed further below,

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[25] MS Ashmole 208, fol. 137ʳ.

[26] MS Ashmole 1472, p. 809.

[27] MS Ashmole 363, fol. 70r; MS Ashmole 389, p. 638, transcribed in Simon Forman, 'A Critical Edition of Simon Forman's "The Astrologicalle Judgmentes of phisick and other Questions"', ed. by Robert Ralley, Lauren Kassell, and Michael Hawkins, in *The Casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, 1596–1634: a*

is entitled 'Of Certaine Dremes and Visions that I have sene totching the ph*ilosoph*ors stone'.[28] For other writers of the early modern period, the difference between dreams and visions could be important (see the discussion below of various interpretations of Joel 2:28 for an example of the potential importance of distinguishing 'dream' from 'vision'). However, Forman makes no attempt here to parse the specific meanings of these words, which at least suggests that he regarded them as connected, as opposed to contrasting, experiences. In his *Life*, 'dremes and visions' might, for practical purposes, be treated as synonymous; thus, despite the heading 'Of visions', the 'grete waters' experience may be considered as a dream, and it has been treated as such by critics.

Previous critical approaches to Forman's dream of 'grete waters' have, as with his Elizabeth dream, foregrounded interpretations informed by psychoanalysis. Such readings frame the dream as a consolation for the disappointments of Forman's everyday existence. Forman's dream work thus condenses his multiple struggles—for example, his difficult relationship with his family—into images of waters and mountains via Freudian dream work; then, in an act of wish-fulfilment, he overcomes them. In his 1974 biography of Forman, Rowse wrote that Forman's dreams 'tell us everything about him: they are often anxiety dreams, eloquent of his inferiority complex, his constant sense of struggling against odds, his feelings of persecution—all quite understandable.'[29] Carole Levin added in 2008 that 'Forman did have mountains and ocean tempests to overcome' in his life, and that the waves he surmounted in his dream-life might have represented the struggles of his childhood and

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Digital Edition, ed. by Lauren Kassell, Michael Hawkins, Robert Ralley, John Young, Joanne Edge, Janet Yvonne Martin-Portugues, and Natalie Kaoukji. Web. <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/transcriptions/TEXT5> [Accessed 10 April 2020].

[28] MS Ashmole 1472, pp. 807–813; the heading 'Of Certaine Dreames' is on p. 810.

[29] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, p. 28.

adolescence.[30] These critical and historical readings, which span a number of decades, offer a model of Forman's grandiosity as a form of compensation for the slights and disadvantages that he experienced. The third-person narrative voice, moreover, is taken by Per Sivefors to anticipate psychoanalytic ways of thinking about the self; it is, he writes, 'implying a wish to keep interpreter and interpreted neatly apart.'[31] In other words, Forman's account of the 'grete waters' anticipates the treatment of dreams as material that might be decoded by stepping outside the first-person point of view, and taking an objective perspective akin to that of a scientist or doctor. Sivefors concludes that the self that emerges from Forman's *Life*—and his dream of Queen Elizabeth—might therefore be considered a prototype of the self of the Freudian era. This form of the self both has subjective experiences, and uses a detached, analytic perspective on those experiences to find meaning and connection between waking and dream selves. This includes the exploration of biographical and other material in the psyche. It is, as Sivefors puts it:

> a 'psychologizing' perspective that simultaneously emphasizes and makes
> problematic the individual's own significance to the process of dreaming. […]
> Forman's dream points forward in time: towards an understanding according to which
> dreams, and their sexual contents, reveal something about the dreamer's own mind,
> but also towards the problems in representing such a mind in writing.[32]

However, placing Forman's description of 'grete waters' and 'mightie mountaines' in the context of the *Life* as a whole and that of other early modern life-writing suggests another possibility: that the third-person voice of this account does not point to an individual turning

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[30] Levin, p. 57.

[31] Sivefors, p. 287. I am not clear why Sivefors refers to 'several dream accounts', as the 'dremes and visions' is the only section of the *Life* that contains a dream narrative.

[32] Sivefors, pp. 282–3.

inward to examine their own psyche, but one looking outward to understand divine intentions.

Forman acknowledges the influence of God from the first page of the *Life*, which begins with 'In Dei Nomine. Amen' written top and centre of the first page in lieu of a title.[33] The 'grete waters' dream itself concludes like the ending of a prayer: 'And he overpaste all wth credite by the helpe of god to whom be praise for evermore. Amen.' While autobiographical writing in early modern England—from deathbed confessionals to travel narratives—commonly assumed the first-person form, Meredith Skura points out that there was often ambiguity as to the factual or fictional nature of such accounts.[34] If the first-person voice was no guarantee of truth and authenticity, it is possible that Forman's use of the third person serves the function of invoking objectivity and veracity; however, it is not clear what the purpose of this would be if Forman was the only person likely to read the text that he had written. Whatever Forman's intentions in producing this text—intentions which are now irretrievable—it is significant that he uses his account to claim knowledge of God's motivation in sending him the dream ('to signifie vnto him his trobles in his riper years') and of the divine plan for his subsequent life ('god the only defender of all that be his. wold never let him to be overthrowen. but continuallye gave him alwaies in the end the victory of all his enemies'). In other words, the use of the third person does not necessarily signal the future development of analytic—including self-analytic—modes of European thought. Forman is not being his own analyst; he is using the act of self-writing, and the description of his recurrent dream, to bring God's purpose into the narrative, the divine plan for Forman's life forming the link between the dreams of the nervous boy lying in 'a lyttle bed' at his father's

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[33] MS Ashmole 208, fol. 136[r].

[34] Meredith Anne Skura, *Tudor Autobiography: Listening for Inwardness* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 3–5.

feet, and the waking subjectivity of an adult at the height of his powers and profession, defying his enemies. It is striking, certainly, that although Forman explicitly mentions family conflict ('his mother nor brethren loved him not'), unlike modern-day critics he does not directly connect this with his tempestuous dreams. Rather, these dreams signify later encounters with 'great & mightie potentates' and 'greate counsells' that lay in the young Forman's future, and of which he would have been unaware at the time of his dream. It is God's foreknowledge of Forman's later life that forms the framework in which the young sleeping Forman and the older writing Forman may be considered as part of one coherent narrative of the self.

Analysis of other manuscripts of Forman's provides additional evidence in favour of exploring a non-psychoanalytic approach to his dreams. It was not uncommon for Forman to search for the meaning in his own dreams in the same way that he might interpret those of a patient. A search of the online *Casebooks* project for cases in which Forman was both practitioner and patient—i.e. in which he applied his astrological skills to answer his own personal queries—retrieves 480 records.[35] I have been able to identify fifteen occasions on which Forman carried out consultations to determine the meaning and reliability of his dreams. Thirteen of these consultations are horary, and two geomantic. Horary consultations are astrological in nature, being based on the time at which a vital question is asked, and hence the position of the stars (usually calculated by drawing a figure), while geomancy involves divination from dots or marks placed on a page (Figure 1).[36]

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[35] *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/search?age-role=any;sectionType=text;f2-practitioner=Dr%20Simon%20Forman%20%28PERSON2824%29;f4-patient=Dr%20Simon%20Forman%20%28PERSON2824%29> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[36] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, p. 52.

Many of Forman's self-consultations on dreams concern his personal relationships or business affairs. For example, on 10 January 1599, Forman used a horary chart to determine the meaning of a dream in which he heard a voice saying 'this Dai R Walw is buried', this being a reference to Ralph Walworth, then husband of Forman's sweetheart Ann Young.[37] Notably, given Forman's claim in the *Life* that the 'grete waters' dream was recurrent in his childhood, three of these self-consultations concern dreams of water or the sea, indicating that such dreams persisted into adult life. At 07:00 a.m. on 20 September, 1598, Forman wrote a note inquiring 'ad hoc tempus vtrum sit turba vrsus me nec no*n* su*p* sonnum [sic] De Aquis', translated by the online *Casebooks* editors as 'whether there is trouble in store for me or not further to a dream about [waters?].'[38] At 05:15 a.m. on 6 September, 1599, Forman performed a horary consultation to determine 'Vtrum est Turba vrsus me su*p* somnm [sic] meu*m* qd fui in mare', translated as 'Whether there is trouble in store for me or not upon my dream that I was in the sea'; this text is followed by a judgement.[39] Finally, a horary consultation dated 05:45 a.m., 5 December, 1599, asks 'wher ther be Any Troble toward*s* me by my Dreams of waters & fliing'; the text has been crossed out, and is followed by a judgement.[40]

Forman's suspicion that dreams of waters might indicate trouble in store, and his complex method of working out if this was indeed the case, illustrates how his method both

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[37] MS Ashmole 225, fol. 227ᵛ; Traister, p. 148; for an example of a dream consultation involving a patient, see MS Ashmole 411, fol. 89ʳ, dated 10:15 a.m., 25 May, 1601: 'Mʳˢ Blague to k. what shall com of her dreme that she soe ofte hath had of the old man'. Transcription: 'CASE9334', in *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE9334> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[38] MS Ashmole 195, fol. 161ᵛ. Transcription and translation: 'CASE4253', in *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE4253> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[39] MS Ashmole 219, f. 146ʳ. Transcription and translation: 'CASE5960', in *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE5960> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

[40] MS Ashmole 219, fol. 208ʳ. Transcription and translation: 'CASE6428', in *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE6428> [Accessed 11 May 2020]. I am grateful to Lauren Kassell for her help in interpreting these pages of Forman's notebooks.

resembles and differs from other methods of dream interpretation in the early modern period. As described in Chapter 1, Artemidorian methods of determining dream meanings were popular, at least in print, in the early modern period. According to such texts, troubled waters indicated danger. The first English translation of Artemidorus' *Judgement, or Exposition of Dreames*, published in 1606, claims that 'to be in a tempest upon the riuer or sea, is ill & signifyeth heauines [and] danger'.[41] The 1576 edition of Thomas Hill's *Most Pleasaunt Arte of the Interpretation of Dreames* warns that 'to se the sea troubled or tossinge, signifieth heuines or sorow'.[42] While there is no evidence that Forman owned or consulted either book, these examples suggest that an association between dreams of water and negative life events might not have been unusual in early modern England. However, while this cultural belief might well have led Forman to suspect that 'Troble' was indicated, he did not leave his inquiry there. The repeated consultations regarding his adult dreams of turbulent waters between September, 1598 and December, 1599—with the time carefully recorded for each— suggest that Forman went in search of new meanings on each occasion on which the dream recurred; it was not enough for him to simply translate the dream's visual symbolism into prophecy, nor was any the meaning of any individual symbol necessarily fixed. Thus, the reassuring formulation of the *Life*, that 'the waters mighte signifie the greate counsells that were houlden against hime to overthrowe him. Yet god […] wold never let him to be overthrowen', could have been a unifying explanation for his childhood experiences (at least in retrospect), but it was not stable in adulthood. In order to identify what specific dreams meant, Forman, as indicated by his meticulous noting of the time in his self-consultations, looked outward to the position of the stars.

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[41] Helen Hackett, *The Elizabethan Mind: Searching for the Self in an Age of Uncertainty* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2022), p. 232; Artemidorus, *The Judgement, or Exposition of Dreames,* transl. by R. W. (London: 1606), sig. G4^r.

[42] Thomas Hill, *The Moste Pleasaunte Arte of the Interpretacion of Dreames* (London: 1576), sig. P1^r.

The use of astrology in dream interpretation was not unique to Forman; Janine Rivière notes its employment by John Dee, Elias Ashmole, William Lilly, and Samuel Jeake of Rye, and that it was a development of medieval 'dreamlunars', dream books that 'interpreted dreams according not to their content but rather to the position of the moon at the time of the dream.'[43] In terms of the relationship between dreams and selfhood, the astrological method has important distinctions from the Artemidorian approach. While both methods acknowledge that the meaning of the dream depends on the nature of the dreamer, with the Artemidorian approach this is expressed only in terms of broad social categories. So, for example, Artemidorus states that:

> Yf any one dreames that he comes out of a womans belly […] This dreame is good for him which is poore, for he shall haue meanes or frindes which will mainetain him, yf he be not a tradesman, & of an art which requireth the worke of the hand, for this dreame forewarnes him that he shal be without work, as children which haue their handes bounde together [...] To him which is rich this dreame signifieth that he shall haue no rule in the house, but others shal ouerrule him against his wil, for children are gouerned by others. To him whose wife is not with childe, it signifieth that hee shall loose his wife for children are not married[...] But to him whose wife is with childe, it signifies that he shall haue a sonne[.][44]

Similarly, Hill writes:

> If any in the maner of babes dreameth that he thinketh hymselfe to bee swadled lyke a chylde, and to suck of a woman that he knoweth, dothe portend after a longe sicknesse, except he hath a wyfe wt chyld. For then shalbe borne a sonne lyke to

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[43] Janine Rivière, *Dreams in Early Modern England* (New York & Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2017), p. 70.

[44] Artemidorus (1606), *Judgement*, sig. B4r.

himselfe, whiche in thesame manner shallbee fedde, and brought vppe. But if a

woman shall see this dreame, it doth signyfy that she shalbee deliuered of a daughter

lyke to her selfe: and if anye woman thinketh in her dreame to haue milke in her

breastes, to a yonge woman it promiseth conception, and perfecte fruite, and byrth

also, but to an olde woman beinge poore, it signifyeth riches, and to a riche woman, it

signifyeth expenses and charges[.][45]

As Peter Thonemann notes in his introduction to a twenty-first-century translation of

Artemidorus, 'For Artemidorus, the meaning of a dream does not depend on an

understanding of the dreamer as an individual, but rather on the correct "placement" of the

dreamer on a spectrum of social roles and public statuses.'[46] In his astrologically-informed

readings, Forman's method reflects not just a divergence from the Artemidorian model in

terms of the shifting meaning of visual symbols, but also in the importance afforded to factors

unique to the individual dreamer. But these are not 'individual' factors—biographical details

and inward drives—as the modern-day person might understand them. Rather it is the

individual's unique *astrological* situation, established via the time of day, that is relevant.

The casebooks indicate more elusive, unsettling, and changeable meanings of Forman's adult

dreams of the sea than the interpretation he gives for the *Life*'s dream of 'grete waters'. What

both casebooks and *Life* have in common, however, is their implicit suggestion that the

significance of the dream experience only fully emerges via its placement within a heavenly

network, be it divine or astrological. The individual factors that relate the dream to the

waking life of the dreamer are not located in the dreamer's biography or their various inward

wishes and urges, but externally, within astrological patterns (the casebooks) or the mind and

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[45] Hill, *Moste Pleasaunte Arte* (1576), sigs. I5ʳ–I5ᵛ.

[46] Peter Thonemann, 'Introduction' in Artemidorus, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, transl. by Martin Hammond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. xi–xxviii. It is notable that Artemidorus rejected astrology: see p. 200 of this edition.

intentions of God (the *Life*). It is with the influence of the divine in Forman's dream records and dream-interpretation practice that the next section of this chapter is concerned.

'Your yoong men shall dream dreames': divine presence in Forman's dreams and practice

Simon Forman's only print publication, *The Groundes of the Longitude: With an Admonition to All Those that are Incredulous and Beleeue Not the Trueth of the Same* (1591), is a short pamphlet light on the subject of the longitude, and heavy on the admonition.[47] Forman withholds the details of how he has happened upon a scheme for mariners to calculate longitude accurately (a technical advance that would not be achieved until the mid-eighteenth century).[48] Instead, he devotes most of the pamphlet's space to defending his ability to solve the problem of longitude, despite his lack of academic qualifications. In one passage, Forman writes of his knowledge as a gift from the divine, and identifies himself both as a member of, and as an outsider to, a long tradition of 'learned men':

> Maruaile not therefore at me, that I should finde out the knowledge hereof, neither think it a thing impossible to be done, for it is not I, but the grace of God which is in me, as Paul saith, for all good giftes and the true knowledge of things commeth from God, according as it is written: *And in the latter daies I will powre out my spirite vpon all flesh, and your yoong men shall dreame dreames, and your old men shall see visions, and your children shall tell of things to come.* And therefore all though the Lorde did hide the knowledge here of from all the learned men that euer haue written vnto this day […] it was decreed so by his diuine powre before that when the time

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[47] Simon Forman, *The Groundes of the Longitude* (London: 1591). MS Ashmole 208 indicates that latitude and longitude were another part of Forman's complex method of self-situation: it includes notes on the relative latitude and longitude of Quidhampton and London. MS Ashmole 208, fol. 2^r.

[48] Andrew King, 'Harrison, John (bap. 1693, d. 1776), horologist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 3 January 2008. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/12438> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

thereof was come, it should be found by him whom he would to shewe his glory and powre euen by the simple and least made account of, to confound the wisdome of the wise and mightie.[49]

Forman thus reframes his outsider status—the boy denied a formal education, the poor scholar at Oxford—as an advantage. God has chosen Forman, the most unlikely of vessels, as a vehicle of his grace and knowledge precisely because he is 'least made account of'; God both delivers information denied to others and takes Forman's part against those who would underestimate him.

Although Forman does not state explicitly in the pamphlet that the knowledge of the longitude was transmitted to him via a dream, he uses Joel 2:28, which as noted in Chapter 1 is a Biblical passage concerning dreams and prophecy, to support his self-identification as the recipient of divine knowledge and favour. In Forman's version of the verse, this is quoted as '*your yoong men shall dreame dreames, and your old men shall see visions*'. This is certainly congruent with Forman's interpretation of the 'grete waters' dream in the *Life*, the significance of which, as described above, is explained by recourse to the mind and intentions of God. Forman's *Groundes of the Longitude*, therefore, might be taken as an illustration of how, for Forman, divine intervention did not just explain the content of a dream, but was also a means by which he might integrate his waking and sleeping selves through placing these two versions of himself in a broader external framework. In this case, Forman asleep and Forman awake are just two aspects of the whole entity of Forman, the divinely-favoured astrological physician.

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[49] Forman, *Longitude*, sigs. A3ᵛ–A4ʳ.

There is possible significance in the error that Forman makes in his Biblical citation. While Forman's rendering is that '*yoong men shall dreame dreames*' and '*old men shall see visions*', the *Geneva Bible* (1560) and the *Bishops' Bible* (1568) give this verse the other way round. In both, 'olde men shal dreame dreames' and 'yong men shal se visions'.[50] It is tempting to think that this error was introduced into the *Groundes*—consciously or otherwise—in the light of Forman's identification of dreams transmitted from God as a significant part of his life and position as an individual enjoying divine favour. In this reading, he would be casting himself in the role of a 'yoong man' who 'dreame[d] dreames'. However, there are several arguments against this possibility. First, the attribution of dreaming dreams to young men may have been a simple error on the part of Forman or his compositor; Reginald Scot makes the same mistake in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584).[51] Second, in 1591, when the *Groundes* was published, Forman was 39 years of age; hardly a 'young man' by early modern standards. Finally, as outlined above, Forman did not necessarily make a distinction between dreams and visions. Whatever might be the case, Forman's quotation of the passage in itself, while inaccurate, is significant; in the cultural conflicts of the English Reformation, Joel 2:28 provided material for disputation as to the nature of knowledge and who might be permitted to possess it.

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[50] Quotation is from *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* [*Geneva Bible*] (Geneva: 1560), sig. Yyy3^r–Yyy3^v; *The Holie Bible Conteynyng the Olde Testament and the Newe* [*Bishops' Bible*] (London: 1568), sig. Z8^v, has 'your olde men shall dreame dreames, your young men shall see visions'. The formulation of young men seeing visions and old men dreaming is maintained where the verse is cited in Acts 2:17: *Geneva Bible*, sig. OO3^r ('your young me*n* shal se visions, and your olde men shal dreame dreames'), *Bishops' Bible*, sig. I6^v ('your young men shall see visions, and your olde men shall dreame dreames'). This arrangement is the same in all English translations of the verse I have found: see *Bible Gateway*. Web. < https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Joel%202:28> and < https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Acts%202:17> [Both accessed 4 April 2023].

[51] Reginald Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London: 1584), sig. O1v.

Joel 2:28 was favoured by Reformers, who saw that it lent credibility to those outside the Catholic establishment. Evangelical theologian and martyr John Frith (1503–1533), for example, argued that

> as concerninge myne youth […] the sprete of god is bou*n*de to no place eue*n* so is he not addicte to any age or person but enspireth when he will and where he wil makin the yonge to se visio*n*s & espye the truth and the eldres to dreame dreames and to wandre in phantasies[.][52]

In other words, Joel 2:28 meant that the old—and the old order—no longer had a monopoly on knowledge and wisdom; in order to make this point, Frith, unlike Forman, emphasises the difference between 'visions' as truth, and 'dreames' as 'phantasyes'. The *Geneva Bible* draws no such distinction: it glosses Joel 2:28 as 'As they had visions, and dreames in old time, so shal they now haue clearer reuelations', and Acts 2:17 as 'God wil shewe him self verie familiarely & plainely bothe to olde & yong.'[53] The quotation is thus framed as a prophecy of a time when the whole populace will enjoy clear revelations of the divine, presumably the era of the Reformation itself. Joel 2:28 was subsequently used by authors such as Francis Bacon to defend 'those employments wherin youth is conuersant', and by mid-seventeenth century social and religious revolutionaries such as John Saltmarsh and Anne Yemans to promote novel and radical ideas.[54] In short, for over a hundred years Joel 2:28 appealed to individuals eager to affirm their own authority, and frame the present moment as one in which it was

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[52] John Frith, *A Disputacion of Purgatorye* (Antwerp: 1531), sig. A2ʳ.

[53] *Geneva Bible*, sig. Yyy3ᵛ; sig. OO3ʳ.

[54] Francis Bacon, *The Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon* (London: 1605), sig. D2ʳ; John Saltmarsh, *The Smoke in the Temple* (London: 1646), sig. G4ʳ. See also *A Voice from Heaven* (London: 1644), sig. A4ʳ and *The Opening of Master Prynnes New Book* (London: 1647), sig. B1ᵛ by the same author; Roger Pooley, 'Saltmarsh, John (d. 1647), Preacher and Religious Controversialist', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/24578> [Accessed 22 April 2023]; Anne Yemans, *Crooked Paths Made Straight* (London: 1648), sig. A4ᵛ. See also Rivière, pp. 95–103.

possible to connect with divine knowledge without traditional rituals or hierarchies. It is therefore no surprise to find Forman using it to establish his status as both a social outsider and an eminent astrologer and physician. Coming from a humble background—emphasised in both the *Life* and the *Groundes*—his self-perceived status and knowledge came not from wealth or formal education, but from a direct connection with God. The following section explores Forman's dreams of obtaining divine and occult knowledge, and the significance of the book as a recurrent object in such dreams. In this analysis, it is shown that the book was not just a symbol of knowledge, but a constituent part of Forman's depiction of his own selfhood.

Acquiring divine knowledge through dream books

Forman had several dreams of acquiring books, which he recorded in a manner that suggests they represented both the concept of knowledge, and an expressed sense of selfhood that extended to include books and their contents. In a dream record dated 31 October, 1595, part of the collection of dreams regarding the philosophers' stone, Forman writes that

> I dremt that I was in a place by a passage wai and ther cam an old woman wth a p*ar*chm*en*t bock in folio writen wth many pictures, and she offred the bocke to mani to sell, and none wold buy it. because they said they could not read yt. and when I sawe them all refuse it I called the woma*n* unto me and asked what I should give for the bocke. & she toke me the book and I loked in yt and could reed and understand yt well And the old woman put her hand upon my head and prayed over me & blessed me saying Blessed arte thou my sonne that delightest in wisdom and seekeste after knowledge. to the shall the gates of all goodnes be opened, goe one and prosp*er*, and she stood on my right hand and I sate on a thing [?] and my face towards the south

and the people pressed moch aboute me wonderfully to heare what was written in the

bock by reason whereof I lefte to locke farder therein, but I closed the bocke and did

put yt in my bosom. And the old woman closed my girkin on yt. and I said mother

give me leave to p*er*use yt thorowely and then come to me again and sai what I shall

pai for yt, soe she set me noe price but dep*ar*ted leaving the bock wth me. And soe I

awaked.[55]

This dream contains several of the themes common to Forman's book dreams: the

happenstance discovery of a book ('in a place by a passage wai'); the notion that books were

a source of mystical knowledge or power; and the sense that he as a reader had unique

interpretive powers. Certain books are, it seems, in some way personalised objects ('I loked

in yt and could reed and understand yt […] she set me noe price but dep*ar*ted leaving the

bock wth me'). Similar themes emerge, singly or in combination, in other book-dreams of

Forman. On 9 December, 1596, he dreamed that he 'found a bock in a wall by a pondes syde

of bricke new made', the volume beginning with an image of 'christ pictured in collors', and

on 2 November, 1600, he 'drempt that doctor blague had lent me many bockes of magike'.[56]

Most strikingly, Forman records that on 2 April, 1597, he was 'among a great mani folks'

when he heard it 'said to all folkes that I was ded'. At the end of this dream, 'on said unto me

ther be yor bockes'. Forman describes that he 'toke them in a basket' and 'went to a nother

place'.[57] The horary consultation noted above of 6 September, 1599, 'Whether there is

trouble in store for me or not upon my dream that I was in the sea' is accompanied by a

detailed account of the dream that prompted this query. Forman describes surviving near-

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[55] MS Ashmole 1472, p. 809.

[56] MS Ashmole 236, fol. 263^r; MS Ashmole 234 fol. 124^r.

[57] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 89^v.

shipwreck and finding an inn, where he is both 'troubled about the hiding of my bockes' and has 'strang bockes brought me written in Karactes'.[58]

It is striking that books in Forman's dreams are experienced—or at least, written about—as objects that are almost a component of his sense of selfhood. The book of his dream of 31 October, 1595, is legible only to him—'I loked in yt could reed and understand yt well'—he keeps the book 'in my bosom', and does not need to pay for it, implying it is his by right. Furthermore, even in dreams of disaster in which his person is endangered or worse, Forman is deeply concerned with the fate of his books. Presumably unbeknownst to Forman, another Elizabethan astrologer, John Dee (1527–1609), recorded a similar relationship with his books in his dream records. On 6 August, 1597, Dee recorded that:

> this night I had the vision and shew of many bokes in my dreame, and among the rest was one great volume thik in large quarto, new printed, on the first page whereof as a title in great letters was printed 'Notus in Judaea Deus'. Many other bokes methowght I saw new printed, of very strange arguments.[59]

As with Forman, therefore, Dee dreamed of books as the medium of divine transmission of knowledge. Also as with Forman, one of Dee's dreams of his own death was accompanied by anxiety regarding the fate of his library. On 24 November, 1582, he

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[58] MS Ashmole 219, fol. 146ʳ.

[59] John Dee, *John Dee's Diary, Catalogue of Manuscripts and Selected Letters*, ed. by James Orchard Halliwell, James Crossley, John Eglington Bailey, and M. R. James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 59. 'Notus in Judea Deus' refers to Psalm 76, 'Known in Judea is God', concerned with the greatness of God's majesty.

dremed that I was deade, and afterward my bowels wer taken out I walked and talked

with diverse, and among other with the Lord Thresorer who was com to my howse to

burn my bokes when I was dead, and thought he loked sourely on me.[60]

While it is unwise to draw general rules of dream interpretation based on just two subjects, it is striking that Forman and Dee, both of whose practices were dependent on the use of written and printed texts, should associate books, God, and knowledge so closely in their dreams. It is also significant that danger to their physical person in their dreams was associated with danger to their books. The importance of writing and recording to Forman's astrological practice will be discussed in depth below. For the present, however, it is sufficient to observe that Forman's dreams of books affirmed his own sense of his status as a vessel for divine knowledge. Books in these dreams appear to have both held traces of God's knowledge and power and been part of Forman's expressed experience of selfhood.

In one dream of Forman's, a book which appears in his dream then reappears in the waking world, uniting his nocturnal and daytime selves:

Anno 1594. The 4 of Januari [symbol for Friday/Venus] in the morninge lyinge in my bed I dremt howe I was in a place wher too men were readinge a bocke of the philosophers stone and I fell in talke wth them & toke the bock to expound yt unto ym.

And that dai beinge [Friday]. between x & xi of the cloke. cam a strange man that dwelte at the gren dragon at Holborn Conduit and brought me this bock and a nother lyttle bock of notes on astronomy to sell and I bought them.[61]

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[60] Dee, pp. 17–18.

[61] MS Ashmole 1478, fol. 48^v.

The type of uncanny, liminal object represented by the volume sold by the 'strange man'—one that moves between dreams and the real world—was a potent symbol on the early modern English stage, representing the medium through which the supernatural and the divine communicated with mortals. Notably, the movement of a text from the inward world of the dream into the external world resolves the plot of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (1610). Similarly, in Thomas Heywood's *1 If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1604), Queen Elizabeth is visited in her sleep by angels who leave her English Bible open at the verse '*Who so putteth his trust in the Lord, / Shall not be confounded*', and in Gervase Markham and William Sampson's *Herod and Antipater* (1619), the furies leave two scrolls behind for Antipater after appearing in his vision.[62] These examples demonstrate that the notion of texts that move and convey divine knowledge between dream and waking worlds was not uncommon in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century English culture. Of these plays, it is on record that Forman saw *Cymbeline*, presumably over fifteen years after his dream of the 'bocke of the philosophers stone'. He does not mention the dream of Posthumus in his account of the play, which might indicate a shift in his interests over the intervening years, or simply that a scene of supernatural revelation through dream texts did not strike him as being a surprising and hence noteworthy detail.[63]

In the case of Forman's dream of 4 January, 1594, the book that he sees in a morning dream (morning dreams being, as described in Chapter 1, of particular potency in terms of truth and knowledge value) not only symbolises the transmission of knowledge, but actually becomes the material, waking manifestation of that knowledge, being brought to him later that day at the Green Dragon. In a very concrete way, then, divine agency, operating via the

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[62] Thomas Heywood, *If You Know Not Me, You Know No Bodie: or, The Troubles of Queene Elizabeth*, ed. by Madeleine Doran (Malone Society: Oxford, 1935), lines 1064–5.

[63] Forman's notes on the plays he saw at the Globe are discussed below.

object of the book, unites Forman's dreaming and sleeping selves. Whether Forman saw himself as a young man dreaming dreams, or an old man seeing visions, one of the keys to the union of his dream and waking lives was the operation of God's plan. And the book was an object that—in the 4 January, 1594 dream at least—linked his dream and waking selves.

'Making strange characters in blood-red lines': pen and ink in Forman's astrological practice

In the preceding pages, I have outlined how Forman used divine agency to create a coherent narrative of selfhood that incorporated both his waking and sleeping selves. In the following section, I analyse how he used astrological methods—via the medium of pen, ink, and paper—as another way to achieve the same ends. Forman's astrological practice was not without its difficulties; during his lengthy dispute with London's College of Physicians about his unlicensed professional status, his working practices were picked over—and very possibly exaggerated to his detriment—with a particular focus on his paper-based methods of astrological diagnosis. Seventeenth-century President Charles Goodall's (1642–1712) summary of one of the College's clashes with Forman, presumably sourced from the College annals, includes the detail of 'the notorious cheats that *Forman* made use of for deceiving the people, as his enquiring the Patient's name and place of habitation; then erecting a figure; after that, passing a judgment of the disease and event thereof; then prescribing remedies, &c.'[64] The intention of this passage was presumably to paint the College as a paragon of good medical practice, as opposed to Forman's ridiculous efforts. Forman's books take on a more sinister nature in *Sir Thomas Ouerburies Vision*, a pamphlet by Richard

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[64] Charles Goodall, *Historical Account of the College's Proceedings Against Empiricks and Unlicensed Practisers* (London: 1684), sig. Xx2^r.

Niccols (1583/4–1616) concerning the Thomas Overbury murder plot. Although Forman had been dead for two years at the time of the murder of Overbury, he was implicated during the 1615–1616 trial because of his professional association with conspirator Frances Howard (Countess of Essex and the wife of Overbury's one-time friend Robert Carr), and Howard's supposed accomplice Anne Turner.[65] In Niccols's account, Forman appears as

> that fiend in humane shape,
>
> That by his art did act the deuills ape:
>
> Oft there the blacke Inchanter, with sad looks
>
> Sate turning ouer his blasphemous bookes,
>
> Making strange characters in blood-red lines [...] [66]

These accounts differ in their precise interpretation of Forman's practice; in the one, the figures he casts in his books—presumably horary charts—are part of his quackery, and in the other, they are evidence of demonic power. Furthermore, it is more than likely that these accounts are framed in such a way as to make ridiculous or sinister practices that would have been considered innocuous in a less controversial physician. Nevertheless, both of Forman's critics cited here—and Forman himself—would have agreed that astrological practice that utilised paper and ink was an essential part of his day-to-day work in answering questions posed by his patients and himself.[67] These questions, as we have seen, included the interpretation of dreams.

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[65] Traister, pp. 181–190.

[66] Andrew Hadfield, 'Niccols, Richard (1583/4–1616), poet and literary editor', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20082> [Accessed 22 April 2023]; Richard Niccols, *Sir Thomas Ouerburies Vision* (London: 1616).

[67] Kassell considers Forman's astrological records to be more unusual in terms of quantity than quality. See Lauren Kassell, 'Casebooks in Early Modern England: Medicine, Astrology, and Written Records', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 88 (2014), 595–625, pp. 609–10.

The extent to which Forman's working practices were aberrant compared with those of his contemporaries is unclear. While physic and astrology had been fellow travellers historically, Kassell notes that 'the use of horary astrology'—the type which predominates in Forman's casebooks—'was generally frowned upon by learned physicians' in the early modern period.[68] In the specific case of Forman she observes that, of irregular practitioners brought before the College whose details are known, 'Forman alone asserted a singular expertise in astrology'. However, given that the membership of the College included astrological experts such as Robert Fludd, Arthur Dee, and Mark Ridley, it was likely the relatively uneducated Forman's 'presumptions' to learning and a professional identity as a practitioner that were found offensive, along with his specific astrological practices, rather than his use of astrology *per se*.[69] Forman's purchase of clothing that mimicked College dress may have inflamed matters further.[70] Indeed, other evidence suggests that Forman's demeanour and practice might have been interpreted by hostile contemporaries as a prime example of a particular type of deceitful astrologer. Kassell highlights the satirical text *Astrologaster* (1620) by John Melton, whose title page features an astrologer sitting before an open book, and whose text refers to the practitioner's use of 'a huge Booke in *Folio*, wide open, full of strange Characters', as well as listing 'Doctor *Fore-man* at *Lambeth*' among its rogues' gallery.[71] This rogue astrologer's practice was thus characterised by the use of 'strange characters', words used to describe the contents of Forman's volumes by both

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[68] Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (London: Harper Collins, 1997) pp. 115–6; Kassell, 'Casebooks', p. 606.

[69] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, pp. 88–9.

[70] See Traister, p. 82: 'In 1600, Forman reported buying "my purple gowne my veluet cote my veluet breches my taffety cloke my hate." His attire seems to be closely modeled on the official dress of the hated "doctors."'

[71] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, p. 125.

Niccols and Forman himself (if we consider the 'strang bockes […] written in Karactes' that appeared in his dream of 6 September, 1599; see above).

Forman gives his own account of his practice in *The Astrologicalle Judgmentes of Phisick and other Questions*, composed between 1606 and 1609–11. The document synthesises other astrological texts with Forman's own ideas and experiences.[72] According to the *Judgmentes*, the astrologer's job is to situate their client and their inquiry within the various influences of the twelve astrological houses. As editors Robert Ralley, Lauren Kassell, and Michael Hawkins put it, 'A particular house might have significance for particular parts of the body, the illness and its cure, and the process of consultation itself [...] Mastering the complex relationships between these factors allowed the astrologer to come to a judgment about the patient's problem and how it might be best dealt with'.[73] The charts which fill Forman's casebooks represent the use of pen, ink, and paper to contain and manage this complexity. In Kassell's words, 'Horary charts, based on the moment the question was asked, were sketched during the consultation. All forms of astrology required written computations. Astrologers needed to work on paper, while medical practitioners did not.'[74] The process of diagnosis was not simply *recorded* through the words and astrological charts on the page—putting pen to paper *was* the diagnostic process.

In the *Judgmentes*, Forman claims astrology as a superior method to physical observation in determining truth:

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[72] In their introduction to an online edited version of the text, Robert Ralley, Lauren Kassell, and Michael Hawkins note that 'Although it was clearly prepared for dissemination, its structure is occasionally inconsistent and it may have remained unfinished or been partially revised.' Robert Ralley, Lauren Kassell, and Michael Hawkins, 'Introduction to Forman's *Judgmentes* and Napier's *Defence'*, in *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/astrological-medicine/forman's-astrologicalle-judgmentes/introduction> [Accessed 12 April 2020].

[73] Ralley, Kassell, Hawkins, 'Introduction'.

[74] Kassell, 'Casebooks', p. 606.

Physick sayth allwayes take away the Cause, it sayth not take away the disease but take away the Cause, and the effect is eradicated [...] But how can any take away the Cause when they know not what it is, nor by all the skill and cunning they haue can they learne, for the Urin, the Pulse, […] the sweate the Complexion, no nor the sick themselues can not tell them the Cause thereof[.][75]

The astrological process was also essential to weed out deception: both by practitioners who pretended to knowledge and skill that they did not possess, and on the part of the patient. Forman scorns 'Physicions that are Ignorant In Astrolgie' as 'worse then Spiculators and menslayers', as they do not know that giving a medicine at the correct time is essential for a successful treatment: 'in one hower the Course of heauen a man will giue a Medicin shall cure a diseaze, that missing such a tyme, a man may giue a hundred medicins and not cure it'.[76] He concludes that 'he that is Ignorant In Astrologie' is 'not worthie to be called a Phisicion but an Impostor or an Intruder'.[77] In another passage of the *Judgmentes*, Forman turns to the issue of deceitful patients, who

bring a Mans urin & say it is a Maydes or Womans, some bring a Maydes Urin or Womans and say it is a Mans, some will not sticke to bring a beasts water, and say it is a Mans or Womans, some cast out the vrin they are send withall and pisse in it themselfes, and sometymes they breack the glasse by the way, and buy a New & tacke the horse pisse, or Mares pisse, or their owne, and so licke Deceiptful knaues and Cogging mates they come to ye physicion, thinking to deceiue the physician[.][78]

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[75] MS Ashmole 363, fol. 6ᵛ, transcribed in Forman, 'Judgmentes', in *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/transcriptions/TEXT5> [Accessed 10 April 2020].

[76] Transcription of MS Ashmole 363, fol. 6ᵛ, *Casebooks*.

[77] Transcription of MS Ashmole 363, fols. 8ʳ–8ᵛ, *Casebooks*.

[78] Transcription of MS Ashmole 363, fols. 2ᵛ–3ʳ, *Casebooks*.

In both passages, Forman asserts that the fundamental truth of a patient's condition—and indeed, their identity—is to be found not within the body's properties or products (for the Urin, the Pulse, […] the sweate the Complexion), but through the use of astrology to determine the higher influences and sources of information outside the body.

The same astrologically-informed philosophy applies, in Forman's practice, to dreams. For example, in the *Judgements* a passage outlines how 'If [Jupiter] be Dns ascend. Dns horæ, and in 9° or Lord of the 9. house, and in [Sagittarius]', this

> giveth good lucke, and prosperity in longe journeis, and stronge faith, true dreames, and many uisions, and makes one apt to see fairie spirits and Angels, and to conuerse with them, and to be uerie religious and to obteyne holie and sacret things, and to obteyne fauour of god and Angells, men and spirits, and it cureth all diseases[.][79]

Other combinations are associated with divine inspiration: 'god shall showe thee the thinge or making therof in slepe by drems & Reuelations'; 'the good Angells of god. shall showe thee in Drems and Reuelations helpe & the knowledg therof.' However, astrological factors might also leave one prone to deceptive dreams: in such cases 'evill sprit*es* will appeare vnto thee in dremes & Reuelations & deceiue thee by showing thee the wronge waie'.[80] It appears, therefore, that astrology is an indispensable component of dream interpretation; astrological factors even determine the accessibility of the sleeping subject to divine or demonic influence.

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[79] Transcription of MS Ashmole 363, fol. 70ʳ, *Casebooks*.

[80] Transcription of MS Ashmole 389, p. 638, *Casebooks*.

Forman's *Judgmentes* also describes how the act of reading his casebooks, as well as writing in them, formed an essential part of the astrological physician's working process. Following his description of writing down details so as to counter deception, he continues:

> And again I aske the Name for an other Cause also and that is because I will not forgett, what euerie once diseaze is and what counsel I haue giuen them, for hauing their Names on my booke, I can allways tell thereby, what thyr diseases be, and what counsel I haue giuen them […] If I had not their names, and disease on my booke, how could I tell what their diseases were, or what to doe vnto them, or what to giue them[.][81]

Forman's tone is unapologetic: he is not so much excusing himself for having to rely on a written record as advocating such records as an essential component of practice. To reiterate, in both the process of diagnosis, and the follow-up of a patient's case, note-taking can be considered not just a record of the work, but the very means through which the work is completed. In the following section of this chapter, I consider this process of Forman's textual production, collation, and editing—in both his astrological and non-astrological texts—as an additional way in which he bridged the gap between his dream and waking selves through a process operating *outside* the body, with reference to the modern-day but (I argue) historically applicable concept of the extended mind.

'The little bock of all my drems': Forman's writing practice and dream interpretation

As formulated by Andy Clark and David Chalmers in 1998, extended mind theory posits that cognition is not a process sealed up within the brain, but one that works via 'coupled' systems—that is, through the use of materials and objects external to the body. These may

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[81] Transcription of MS Ashmole 363, fols. 3ʳ–3ᵛ, *Casebooks*.

consist of notes, props, or other parts of the environment utilised to carry out cognitive tasks. As Clark and Chalmers put it, 'If, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, were it done in the head, we would have no hesitation in recognizing as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world is (so we claim) part of the cognitive process.' Or, more pithily, 'Cognitive processes ain't (all) in the head!'[82]

This proposition that, in certain cognitive processes, the mind may be considered to extend beyond the boundaries of the body has been applied to early modern culture by a handful of scholars. For example, Evelyn Tribble has used the principles of the extended mind to address questions of early modern theatrical practice, exploring how the complete environment of the theatrical space might have formed part of the actors' cognitive system. This may have included, for example, the use of 'plots', large pieces of card hung backstage that contained select and necessary pieces of staging information (such as entrances). While the precise details of 'plots' are hard for the modern scholar to understand, they would have worked seamlessly as part of the players' informational environment, supporting the actors' ability to stage a different play every day without having to hold every detail inside their heads. As Tribble writes, 'In an environment as cognitively demanding as the early modern playhouse, every incentive would have been to minimize any additional cognitive burdens.'[83] Seeing the cognitive processes of early modern stage actors as coupled with—and thus inseparable from—their theatrical environment provides a plausible mechanism for their apparently prodigious memory and versatility. From Tribble's perspective, the early modern

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[82] Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers, 'The Extended Mind', in *The Extended Mind*, ed. by Richard Menary (Cambridge MA & London: MIT Press, 2012), pp. 27–42 (pp. 28–9).

[83] Evelyn B. Tribble, *Cognition in the Globe: Attention and Memory in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 32.

theatre was not so much a space in which actors performed as a complex machine supporting the cognitive tasks underlying performance.

But is it appropriate to apply a twenty-year-old theory of cognition to early modern England? Cognitive scientist John Sutton argues that 'Since there's nothing particularly "posthuman" about EM [extended mind]—since, if we are cyborgs now, we always have been—there should be room for […] a "historical cognitive science"'.[84] In other words, the universal and persistent use of tools by human beings means that it is not anachronistic to consider individuals throughout history as having formed coupled cognitive systems with objects in their immediate environment. To support his proposition, Sutton cites two examples from the early modern period: early modern theatre as conceptualised by Tribble, and mnemonic methods that used the external environment (e.g. the architectural layout of a building) as the structure with which to build an internally visualised system to store information (so-called memory palaces). It is, of course, obvious to state that humans have long used tools to support their cognitive and physical processes. But extended mind theory reframes this point to posit that these tools are not so much wielded by the mind as they are *part* of the mind.

The issue of anachronism—that while as Sutton argues, one *can* apply extended mind theory retrospectively, it is not necessarily useful or appropriate to do so—is addressed in detail by Miranda Anderson in her monograph *The Renaissance Extended Mind.* Anderson proposes that extended mind theory represents not so much a novel formulation of the relationship between mind, body, and environment as a new iteration of early modern ideas that emphasised the permeability of the body, and the role of tools such as the written word in

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[84] John Sutton, 'Exograms and Interdisciplinarity: History, the Extended Mind, and the Civilising Process', in Menary, *The Extended Mind*, pp. 189–225 (p. 193).

the thinking process. For example, in the case of John Donne's and Michel de Montaigne's self-reflective texts:

> the mind through being objectified for itself on the written page produces the subject which in turn produces the book, demonstrating that through the use of objects as part of our mind we not only may extend our mind onto the space of the page but also extend the capacity of our mind to build thoughts upon thoughts that lead to the higher reasoning faculties, which in turn improves the book, and so on and on in spiralling developmental cycles through the aid of these cognitive artefacts.[85]

Anderson argues that there is 'a two-way relationship between the shaper of words and the words' shaping of the shaper'.[86] A 'self' is not simply expressed on the page, but the act of text production is itself also generative of the self. On the one hand, Anderson's reading of Donne and Montaigne is primed by the knowledge of extended mind theory (as is my reading of Forman). There is the risk of reading the extended mind *into* texts that were produced and understood in a completely different context and manner. Furthermore, even if some forms of writing were indeed constitutive of the self, this does not mean that this was the case for *any* given form of early modern writing. However, at the very least, Anderson's analysis does provide evidence that the notion of blurred boundaries between the inward self and the words written on the page would not have been an entirely alien concept in early modern England. This increases confidence that application of the extended mind concept to this cultural moment is, even if an imperfect fit, not entirely inappropriate.

Furthermore, Anderson's work opens up new possibilities for reading early modern texts. Given that, as shown above, Forman's writing is often concerned with both a self-

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[85] Miranda Anderson, *The Renaissance Extended Mind* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 141–2.

[86] Anderson, *Renaissance Extended Mind*, p. 144.

consciously subjective perspective and the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and

that note-making was vital to his astrological practice, extended mind theory may be an apt

and productive framework to apply to his notebooks. In using this framework, I am

developing further the work of historians of science such as Ursula Klein, who coined the

term *paper tools* to describe the use of chemical symbols in the work of chemist Jacob

Berzelius (1779–1848), and Anke te Heesen who described the scientific notebook as an

example of what she termed *paper technologies*. Early modern historians Carla Bittel, Elaine

Leong, and Christine von Oertzen write that the concepts of paper tools and technologies

highlight 'paper as a central notation device external to the mental process'. However,

extended mind theory would posit that if paper can be considered a tool or a technology to—

in Bittle and colleagues' words—'note, keep track of, organize, memorize, and condense

written observations' and hence draw general conclusions from the raw stuff of experience

and observation, this should not be considered 'external to the mental process' but rather part

of the mental process itself, and thus profoundly enmeshed with the inward self.[87]

    In the remainder of this chapter I argue that extended mind theory provides important

new perspectives on Forman's notebooks, and specifically his dream records. The process of

drawing the numerous horary charts that were used to answer individual queries—outlined

above—might be considered an example of the extended mind in action. As we have seen,

both Forman and his enemies recognised that the use of pen and paper was essential to his

form of astrological medical practice, whether to manage the complexity of the diagnostic

process or to support his memory. One of the questions that extended mind theory poses is

where 'inwardness' and the 'self' ends, if cognitive processes are not held exclusively within

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[87] Carla Bittel, Elaine Leong, and Christine von Oertzen, 'Paper, Gender, and the History of Knowledge' in
Working With Paper: Gendered Practices in the History of Knowledge, ed. by Carla Bittel, Elaine Leong, and
Christine von Oertzen (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019), pp. 1–14 (p. 9).

the brain, but extend into the environment. The intense degree of identification with his books that Forman expressed in certain dream records—as described above—provides further, if indirect, support for the notion that we might consider Forman's written records of his astrological practice and his dreams to be the surviving, externalised part of his cognitive processes. In the same way that a modern-day individual might feel incomplete and anxious without the mind-extending functions of a mobile device, the presence of pen, paper, and written records was an essential part of Forman's persona as an astrological physician. My analysis thus far has suggested that Forman related his dream self to his waking self not by delving into his psyche, but by determining his position in the eyes of God and relative to the position of the stars. I further propose that he carried out this process by extending his mind outward onto the pages of his notebooks, for example by constructing horary charts and keeping dream records.

It is with Forman's dream and other records in prose that the remainder of this chapter is concerned. By analysing his writing, editing, and rewriting practices, this chapter will demonstrate that, while a procedure of interpretative calculation is not as obvious in these records as it is in Forman's horary charts, the ways in which they were written and arranged might nevertheless be evidence of a meaning-making process. While, as noted above, the content of Forman's dreams (notably those of tempestuous waters and the Queen) has been the main focus of critical inquiry, examining the process through which dreams are recorded is arguably as important as, or at least indispensable to, the consideration of dream content. As critic Stephen Prickett writes of dreams in general:

> As we all know, whatever someone may report about a dream, there is no way of confirming their account. Though it is wildly possible (if most unlikely) that advances in brain research might change this, there is no category of what was 'really dreamed'. Memories may be edited consciously or unconsciously. In other words, all dreams

may properly be described as 'fictional'–whether created as part of a story or ostensibly reported from memory.[88]

Forman's written records, as outlined below, cannot provide a definitive answer as to what he 'really' dreamed; however, they can supply pointers regarding issues of interest to this chapter and this thesis as a whole, namely how Forman related his dream life to his waking life, and what this process might have revealed about the structures that defined and contained his selfhood.

I have identified seventy-nine dreams that Forman recorded over a period of almost two decades, from 1589 to 1607. These dream records vary widely in form. In addition to horary consultations, the *Life*'s description of the 'great waters', and prose accounts, Forman wrote down his dreams as stand-alone events, as part of narratives that then continued to cover waking events following the dream, and, in one case, as an annotation to a medical textbook.[89] In some instances, he recorded more than one dream in the same night. It is not clear how long Forman waited between waking up and writing down his dreams. The level of detail in some dream records could indicate that there was almost no gap between his return to consciousness and the act of documentation—a few moments, perhaps, to recall the salient elements of the dream, transfer them to his long-term memory, and hence put them on the page. Applying principles from modern-day dream science, it is possible that Forman's tendency to record and reflect upon his dreams enhanced his ability to recall them, and it is also possible that bizarre, vivid, and striking dreams—including those perceived to hold deep personal significance—were the most likely ones to be remembered and recorded.[90] Forman's

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[88] Stephen Prickett, *Secret Selves: A History of Our Inner Space* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 40.

[89] The dream recorded as an annotation in MS Ashmole 1478, fol. 48ᵛ, is discussed further below.

[90] Michael Schredl, *Researching Dreams: The Fundamentals* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 11–34.

habit of documenting the time of the dream, whether simply the date and details of whether it was morning or night (e.g., 'Anno 1607 the 22 aprill wensdai night'), or a more precise estimate of the hour (e.g. 'Anno 1602 the 28 Deceb [symbol for Tuesday] Ante m about 2'), might indicate that a rough contemporaneous record was made and later worked up into a fuller account.[91] However, the possibility that Kassell notes in interpreting Forman's *Diary* and casebooks—that he could have worked backwards from astrological events to ascertain the dates on which events had occurred, rather than simply making a contemporaneous record—is a warning that the reader cannot take apparently precise details such as the time of an event, or an exhaustive description of a dream, as tokens of contemporaneous note-taking.[92] That is not to say that Forman's dreams were wholly or even substantially contrivances of his waking life. However, it is very possible that they are refined, rather than raw textual material. In the following pages, I analyse the *Diary* and Forman's *Bocke of Plaies* for what they might reveal about Forman's life-writing practices, and how this can in turn inform our interpretation of his dream records.

Editing, rewriting, and juxtaposition in the **Diary** *and the* **Bocke of Plaies**

Is order to critically approach Forman's notebooks, an initial analysis of early modern life-writing is necessary; however, this is complicated by the form's resistance to clear definition and categorisation. As Thomas Mayer and D. R. Woolf point out, the fact that 'no society prior to the middle of the seventeenth century developed a word for "biography"' is

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[91] MS Ashmole 1472, p. 807.

[92] See below for discussion of the *Diary*, including Kassell's interpretation.

indicative of the instability of life-writing as a genre.[93] So, for example, while in the nineteenth century James Orchard Halliwell referred to the document I call the *Life* as the *Autobiography*, the usage is anachronistic: the word 'autobiography' was not employed in English until the late eighteenth century.[94] Alongside these difficulties of definition, a critical commonplace held until the end of the twentieth century that the diary form, and the types of subjectivity it generated and expressed, were essentially Reformed in nature. Protestantism, it was argued, encouraged spiritual self-reflection in order to identify in oneself the characteristics of the elect. Science historian Roger Smith summarises this position in his description of the diary as 'the book written by oneself as a means of self-reflection and self-control.'[95] However, in the same volume as Smith, Peter Burke writes that the notion of the diary as a uniquely Protestant phenomenon 'is weakened if not completely undermined by the many Catholic examples of the genre [...] Introspection and self-examination were not Protestant monopolies at this period'.[96] Elizabethan English-language Catholic manuals on penance, which recommend self-interrogation prior to confession, lend support to this view.[97] Whether the object was, for Catholics, to identify thoughts and deeds that required confession, or, for Protestants, to detect thoughts and deeds that were indicative of one's elect status, the structure and process of such self-reflection was not necessarily vastly different.

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[93] Thomas F. Mayer and D. R. Woolf, 'Introduction', in *The Rhetorics of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV*, ed. by Thomas F. Mayer and D. R. Woolf (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 1–38 (p. 7).

[94] See 'autobiography, n.', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/13379> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

[95] Roger Smith, 'Self-Reflection and the Self', in *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present*, ed. by Roy Porter (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 49–57 (p. 55).

[96] Peter Burke, 'Representations of the Self from Petrarch to Descartes', in Porter, *Rewriting the Self*, pp. 17–28 (p. 27).

[97] See, for example, *A Brief Fourme of Confession* (Antwerp: 1576) and *A Short and an Absolute Order of Confession* (Unknown: 1577).

While the model of the diary as a uniquely Protestant cultural product of the early modern period has been undermined, Reformed ideas might, nevertheless, have been indirectly connected with diary-keeping. For example, Jürgen Schlaeger points to the educational theories of French scholar Petrus Ramus (1515–72, a Protestant convert who died in the Massacre of St Bartholomew's Eve), who dismissed mnemonic techniques in favour of systematic recording on paper.[98] Adam Smyth, meanwhile, links diary writing with early modern double-entry accounting; the spiritual audit taking its cue from financial auditing practices.[99] Looking at a variety of material—financial accounts, notes jotted in almanacs, and commonplace books—Smyth notes that material was moved, revised, and expanded between various paper records. Apparently spontaneous records of public and intimate events, emotions, and thoughts, were in fact part of complex networks of personal record-keeping, characterised as an 'accumulative, ongoing, deliberate practice'. As Smyth puts it, 'early modern life writing was as much about writing as it was about life.'[100] The eventual development of the single, lengthy, coherent account of an individual's life might therefore be considered less a de novo innovation than a consolidation of scraps of information and evidence that were previously distributed, network-like, through that individual's various notes and papers.

Early modern life-writing therefore cannot be thought of as a single form, nor explained by a single mechanism such as Protestant self-reflection. However, to extend Smyth's argument, we might consider early modern note-taking, diary-keeping, and other

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[98] Jürgen Schlaeger, 'Self-Exploration in Early Modern Diaries', in *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms: Diaries in European Literature and History*, ed. by Rachel Langford and Russell West (Amsterdam & Atlanta GA: Rodopi, 1999), pp. 22–36 (p. 23; pp. 25–6).

[99] Adam Smyth, *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 67–8.

[100] Adam Smyth, 'Diaries', in *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose 1500–1640*, ed. by Andrew Hadfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 434–51 (p. 445).

forms of life-writing as practices which—in the terminology of the extended mind—offloaded cognition from the brain to the environment, supporting memory and facilitating chains of thought. My analysis of Forman's *Diary*, *Bocke of Plaies*, and prose dream records therefore concentrates on his writing practice from the extended mind perspective, rather than the framework of a Reformed (or otherwise) religious perspective or practice. The focus on Forman's writing from the vantage point of the extended mind also enables an enhanced understanding of subjectivity and embodiment within his professional practice and dream-interpretation process.

Forman's so-called *Diary*—the term used by both Halliwell and Rowse—consists of the first 76 folios of MS Ashmole 208. While Rowse's transcriptions are arranged, as a modern readership would expect of a 'diary', in discrete paragraphs of varying length, dated and in more or less chronological order, the manuscript itself intersperses astrological figures with the prose (Figure 2).[101] These suggest that it is not a 'diary' in the modern sense of the word; to build on Smyth's point above, it might be more productive to read these pages as a network of life-writing texts, rather than to treat it as a coherent, consolidated block of prose. Indeed, Smyth uses Judith Cook's popular biography of Forman as an example of how the modern-day diary-like features of Forman's notes may lead to misinterpretation of this text, due to misunderstanding of Forman's intentions and writing practice:

> Judith Cook declared the text 'a maddening document', precisely because Forman
> 'shares with young children…an inability to differentiate between what is important
> and what is not'. Cook's frustrated demand for distinctions between trivial and
> 'serious…concerns', and her infantilisation of Forman's life-writing, are fascinating

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[101] For example, see MS Ashmole 208, fols. 17ʳ and 55ᵛ.

for what they reveal about the forceful and ahistorical expectations contemporary

readers bring to early modern diaries, and, in particular, about the craving of modern

readers for narrative.[102]

Smyth's criticism of Cook's interpretation is somewhat harsh given that Cook's work is not intended as a scholarly investigation of Forman's work, but rather a colourful narrative of his life aimed at the general reader. Nevertheless, Smyth's point is supported by both the arrangement of Forman's text on the page itself—when transcribed without the astrological figures, important context is lost—and the content of the prose, which suggests that the *Diary* material was selected and copied from another source (or sources), rather than being an undisciplined outflowing of trivia.

For example, there is an error in the ordering of the events recorded in 1595. Forman starts a new line for each date, and the sequence runs 18 June, 30 June, 25 July, 29 July, *18 June*, 'this yere', 15 September, 23 September, 24 September, 25 September. It is therefore likely that Forman copied these entries from another record, and—maybe by accident—wrote out the events of 18 June twice. It is also notable that the two entries for 18 June are not entirely consistent with one another. In the first, Forman records that he 'went from hom', followed by the symbol for Mercury/Wednesday, 'and on [symbol for Jupiter/Thursday] I rod into wilshire to Sar[u]m'. A few lines below, he records that on 18 June 'I rod to Sarum to see my frendes wher I had not bin in 7 yers before'. So there are two versions of events, or at least, two versions that prioritise different features: in one, he leaves home on 18 June, and goes to Sarum the following day; in the other, he simply goes to Sarum on 18 June. This discrepancy indicates that if Forman was indeed copying entries from another source, he was also altering their contents. With this in mind, the document looks less like a diary in the

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[102] Smyth, *Autobiography*, pp. 33–4.

modern-day understanding of the term as contemporaneous record, and more like a modified selection of events for a purpose that is not immediately apparent.

While the rationale for Forman's assembly of these incidents on the page is not clear, it is reasonable to assume that it served some function. As noted above, the pages of written text alternate with horary castings such as, on the verso of the folio that concludes the events of 1595, a consultation headed '1595' and including, in the right-hand margin, a prediction about the conception of a child.[103] Kassell suggests that the '*Diary*' represents 'a series of astrological experiments', and was compiled 'in order to study the influences of the motions of the stars and planets on his life'. She speculates, moreover, that some inconsistencies and contradictions in dating indicate that Forman 'probably worked backwards from an astral configuration to calculate the specific date and time of an event.'[104] In other words, the evidence of selection, editing, and rewriting, as well as the juxtaposition of text with horary figures, suggest that Forman's *Diary* reflects a writing practice that was not exclusively about recording events, but also about using the action of pen and ink to contextualise these events in their astrological framework. It is tempting to compare Forman's *Diary* with early modern printed almanacs in which, as Smyth notes, temporal and meteorological information interacted with the annotations made by their owners in the spaces or margins of the printed page, or in blank, interleaved pages bound into the volume. Perhaps when looking at Forman's prose records, we as modern readers should not always expect explicit meaning, but be sensitive to the possibility that *implicit* meaning is being made through the selection and arrangement of material. In the same way that Tribble uses extended mind theory to suggest that some of the more obscure features of backstage 'plots' from the early modern theatre are understandable (if not completely comprehensible) if we consider them as part of

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[103] MS Ashmole 208, 55v.

[104] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, p. 22, p. 24.

the players' cognitive processes, extended mind theory might make Forman's *Diary* more

intelligible in terms of our broad conception of the text, if not in specific details.

The process of textual selection, editing, rewriting, and arrangement is also apparent

in Forman's *Bocke of Plaies*, a text which has long been of interest to scholars of early

modern drama. The *Bocke* describes four plays which Forman saw in performance: an

unidentified play about Richard II, and William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *Macbeth*, and *The

Winter's Tale* (an account of another play, *Cox of Cullinton*, is recorded separately).[105] The

collection begins with a separate title page reading 'The Bocke of Plaies and / Notes therof

per formans / for Common Pollicie'.[106] The plays themselves are recorded out of sequence;

the Richard II play is dated Tuesday, 30 April, 1611; *The Winter's Tale* Wednesday, 15 May,

1611; *Cymbeline* is undated; and *Macbeth* Saturday, 20 April, 1610.[107] This might be because

of haphazard arrangement of the folio leaves in the notebook binding; it might also indicate

that the surviving accounts of the plays were copied from another source. It certainly seems

unlikely that these long and detailed prose accounts written on large sheets of paper were

completed in situ at the Globe. The four plays are written about in a way that is consistent

with Forman's picking over their content for personal significance, and even utility; he uses

the imperatives 'obserue' and 'beware' in his descriptions. In *The Winter's Tale*, for example,

Forman fixates on the character of Autolycus the roguish peddler, concluding that one should

'beware of trusting feined beggars or fawninge fellonse'.[108] We should be careful in

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[105] MS Ashmole 208, fols. 200ʳ–207ᵛ; MS Ashmole 236, fol. 77ʳ.

[106] MS Ashmole 208, fol. 200ʳ.

[107] The Folger Shakespeare Library website suggests '1610' is a mistake, and the date should read '1611'. Certainly, 20 April, 1611 was a Saturday, rather than 20 April, 1610 which was a Friday. Folger Shakespeare Library, *Forman's Account of Seeing Plays at the Globe:* Macbeth, Cymbeline, Winter's Tale. Web. <https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/formans-account-seeing-plays-globe-macbeth-cymbeline-winters-tale> [Accessed 30 July 2022].

[108] MS Ashmole 208, fol. 202ʳ.

assuming that we can find consistency in Forman's attitudes given the diversity of times and situations covered by his manuscript collection as a whole. Nevertheless, it is striking that this line echoes his preoccupation with deception in the *Judgmentes*, which was completed in the early 1610s, around the time that Forman saw these plays.

It is unclear whether Forman's careful note of the day that three of the plays were performed is of importance, given his tendency to orient events according to astrological factors. True, he records 'Tuesday', 'Wednesday', and 'Saturday' with the appropriate astrological symbols (for Mars, Mercury, and Saturn respectively), but this could simply have been a form of shorthand without implying any specific horary practice. Nevertheless, the unlikelihood, as noted above, of Forman's having produced these folio pages in situ at the Globe, and their collection as a 'Bocke' with an explicit statement of utility ('for Common Pollicie') suggests that these manuscripts can be considered as texts selected, edited, and rewritten with a functional design, rather than as records for their own sake. Besides its meaning of the general and shared, 'Common' was also used in the 1500s to refer to the act of conversation, or the use of vernacular language.[109] 'Pollicie', meanwhile, is presumably used in the sense of strategy and public conduct, with an additional implication of cunning, that the word held in the early modern period.[110] Forman was, by his own admission, using his writing process to sift through the public performances at the Globe and select and extract material that could be repurposed for use in everyday interactions with others, and perhaps protect him from trickery. The broader question of the degree of agency the playgoer might have had in generating the theatrical experience will be discussed at length in Chapter 4 of

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[109] 'common, *n.1*', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/37214>; 'common, *n.2*', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/37215> [Both accessed 22 April 2023].

[110] 'policy, *n.1*', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/146842> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

this thesis. For the present, the important point is that examining both the *Diary* and the *Bocke of Plaies* using the concept of the extended mind opens up the possibility of reading these and other texts produced by Forman not as verbatim records of fleeting sensory impressions, but as both the products of, and most important, the *means* of reflective thought directed towards pragmatic purpose. It is with this consideration in mind that I now turn to Forman's dream records, to investigate the role that a cognitive process that extended from the brain and onto the page played in a dream-analysis method that, as demonstrated above, was built on contextualisation of the dream in the exterior, rather than the inward world.

Organising texts to find and construct meaning: the philosophers' stone and dreams of Elizabeth

Forman's notebooks include a collection of twenty-one dreams spanning seven pages, the fourth page of which is headed 'Of Certaine Dremes and Visions that I have sene totching the ph*ilosoph*ors stone'.[111] While some of the dreams in this collection are recorded in chronological order, others are not. Whatever the intended sequence, analysis of the text's form and content suggests that these dream accounts were probably not recorded contemporaneously, but were derived from an initial draft that is now lost. First, the texts are largely free of errors and corrections. Second, one of the dreams in the 'philosophers' stone' group—that of 18 May, 1591, in which Forman meets 'an old co*m*panion of min that studied the making of the ph*ilosoph*ors stone' also appears elsewhere in the manuscript collection, as a single dream recorded under the heading 'De visions Vel Somne'—possibly representing an abortive start of another selection of dreams.[112] One inference might be that both versions of

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[111] MS Ashmole 1472, pp. 807–813; p. 810.

[112] MS Ashmole 1472, p. 812; MS Ashmole 390, 132ᵛ.

this dream derive from a common source, now lost, in which Forman recorded his dreams and then selected and transferred them as individual units with which to construct meaning, whether regarding a topic as specific as the philosophers' stone, or a broader category such as visions or sleep.

A possible reference to this hypothesised common source may be found in another of the 'philosophers' stone' dream collection:

> 1594 29 of march I dremt that wth moch a doo I did fly up a very big great mountain at whose top was a howse and yt was long before I could fly up or rise into the ayer yet at last I did fly soo hye that I totched the heauens and did bear them up lik a cloth with my hed the heauens did hang flag upon my hed lyke a cloth and had the heauens bin higher I could have flogen up unto them and I was soo highe that I could not tel howe to com downe again, but at last by lyttle and lyttle wth moch a doe I cam dow*n* again but as I was com*m*ing downe I was alwaies caried up again & lok in my lyttle bock of all my drems[.][113]

There are several possibilities as to what Forman meant by 'my lyttle bock of all my drems'. It might have been the rough, first record of initial impressions left by Forman's dreams, written down a few minutes after they occurred, from which he subsequently extracted the fully-formed accounts now found in the Ashmolean collection.[114] The word 'lyttle' could suggest a small notebook, more suitable for keeping near or in the bed than the larger folios that make up Forman's surviving manuscripts. One element of this specific record suggests a feature of the immediate material circumstances in which the dream occurred. Forman describes how 'the heauens did hang flag upon my hed lyke a cloth', by which he presumably

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[113] MS Ashmole 1472, p. 813.

[114] Kassell speculates that there is a lost book of Forman's dreams: see Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, p. 58.

means that they hung loosely on him.[115] This could indicate that Forman, emerging from sleep into wakefulness, interpreted the sensation of a bedcap or similar headwear as the heavens draped across his head; this feature of the dream, recorded seconds or minutes after waking, was jotted down in a bedside notebook and subsequently found its way onto the folio page which survives.[116] Alternatively, this 'lyttle bock of all my drems' may have been a collection transcribed from primary notes, whether in the form of a now lost or destroyed set of papers. These might have been brief notes, more elaborate prose records, or even horary figures. The term 'lyttle bocke' may also be misleading, priming the modern-day reader to expect a volume of bound pages, perhaps of relatively small dimensions (for example, quarto or octavo). However, Forman uses the term 'bocke' very broadly elsewhere in his manuscripts, to refer to texts such as the brief autobiographical account of the *Life* ('the Bock of the life and generation of Simon'), and the descriptions of four plays seen at the Globe ('The Bocke of Plaies and Notes therof p*er* formans for Common Pollicie').[117] The 'lyttle bock of all my drems' might therefore have been another collection of manuscripts, the 'lyttle' denoting that it consisted of a collection of relatively small number of pages, rather than the dimensions of those pages.

Whether or not there was a single volume in which Forman's complete dream record was gathered, the formatting of the 'philosophers' stone' collection, the reappearance of one of its dreams elsewhere, and the reference to the 'lyttle bock' suggest that Forman copied, recopied, and moved some dream accounts from page to page. Moreover, the phrase 'and

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[115] This is the meaning of the single instance of usage I have been able to identify in print from this period: William Barksted's translation of Juvenal's description of old age: 'It makes his cheekes hang flag, wrinckles his brow / Hollowes his eyes, and makes his shoulders bow'. Juvenal, *Satura 10*, transl. by William Barksted (London: 1617), sig. B1ʳ.

[116] I am grateful to Lauren Kassell for suggesting the bedcap as a possible source for the sensation of draped cloth.

[117] MS Ashmole 208, fol. 136ʳ; fol. 200ʳ.

lok' suggests that Forman might have made meaning of his dreams not only through horary consultations, but by reviewing his dream collection, perhaps looking at how the content of different dreams fitted together. It is therefore unlikely that Forman's dream records represent a raw impression of the images, sensations, and narratives that flitted through his brain during sleep. Rather, they are likely to be redrafted texts, and thus open to alteration, embellishment, and invention. New dreams may have been interpreted with reference to older dreams in the 'lyttle bock'; dreams in turn were extracted and juxtaposed with each other on the page.

Admittedly, the connection between the events of the dream of 29 March, 1594 and the philosophers' stone is difficult to ascertain. This is the case for many dreams in this particular collection. Kassell notes that while a few 'philosophers' stone' dreams are actually about the stone, 'most foretold his fortune in finding a wife, discovering hidden treasure, or securing invitations to dine with important people.'[118] As modern-day readers, we may experience difficulties in finding a common thread or theme in these dreams, or in understanding how Forman's theme of the philosophers' stone might apply to them. However, this does not mean that no such thread or theme existed from Forman's point of view. Using the extended mind as a framework, we can consider the possibility that Forman selected and assembled these dreams on the page in a way that supported his own process of reasoning. The precise nature of that reasoning may be obscure to us, because to understand this, we would need to retrieve the long-expired component of the process that occurred within Forman's head. Nevertheless, the records that remain suggest that the meaning-making process as a whole was at least partially externalised on the page, and could have consisted of Forman assembling relevant material from a—now lost—collection of his dreams. It is perhaps relevant that the workings of the mental faculty of 'phantasy' (also

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[118] Kassell, *Medicine and Magic*, p. 59. Traister also considers these dreams to have been brought together by Forman as part of a single collection (Traister, p. 110).

'fantasy' or 'fancy') were believed to operate through a similar, internalised process of collage, cutting up and remixing stored visual impressions to produce novel experiences and images.[119] It may be going too far to suggest that Forman's practice was an attempt to mimic the workings of the mental faculties, to reverse-engineer, as it were, the process of dream formation. The point remains, however, that the gathering, editing, juxtaposition, and rearrangement of text in his notebooks is another example, in addition to the horary figures, of how Forman's dream interpretation practice is characterised by a focus on, and use of, outward space. In the final section of this chapter, I return again to Forman's dream of Queen Elizabeth, to analyse how another form of textual juxtaposition—this time of sleeping and waking lives—might have been used not simply to record dreams, but also to aid interpretation and identify links between Forman's nocturnal and daytime selves.

MS Ashmole 226, in which the Elizabeth dream appears, consists mostly of horary consultations (with some geomantic consultations) covering 1597–8. With appropriate caution—to reiterate, there was not necessarily any logical system in the collation of the various papers of Forman's into a bound volume—it is possible to re-contextualise Forman's prose account of the dream of the Queen and other events on 23 January, 1597. As noted above, Rowse's transcription removes the events of the following day, effectively cutting out a substantial portion of Forman's record. While Rowse summarises the second half elsewhere in his Forman biography, and notes that the events recorded happened on the same date as Forman's dream of Queen Elizabeth, he draws no connection between the sleeping and waking experiences of Forman that day.[120] It is therefore worth reconsidering Forman's

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[119] The workings of fantasy are explored in Chapter 4.

[120] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, p. 67.

complete account of 23 January, 1597, in its totality. The remainder of the entry for 23 January, 1597, reads:

> That morning soe sone as I was up cam m^r Sefton unto me to entrete me to forgive him and to end his matter but he wod not pay my charge nor mak me any
>
> recompence nor have any man to heare the matter & after more talk I told him no & soe wth moch a doe we dep*art*ed. ther was nothing ells fell out that dai but at afternone Jane mi sister cam to me and I went to AAλ to see [?symbol for 'her'] and halk 50 p
>
> 3. quia tunc egrotavit diu ex me[n]sib[us].[121]

This entry reflects two of Forman's social preoccupations at the time of writing: his ongoing legal and financial disputes with Peter Sefton, a preacher and neighbour of Forman's at Billingsgate, and his affair with another neighbour, Avis Allen. The Forman-Sefton conflict, as outlined by Rowse, comprised financial disagreements, slander, and violence, and went on until at least 1601.[122] On the page preceding Forman's account of events on 23 January, 1597, he wrote 'A charge of the matter I hau in suet in the common plase [pleas] against Sefton', an itemised list of costs including 'For the tyme going to the quens attorney by water […] 3s'.[123] 'AAλ' is a reference to Avis Allen; 'halek' is Forman's code word for sexual intercourse.[124]

The pages which follow similarly report dream events followed by the waking events of the subsequent day. In his dream of 21 February 1597, Forman records that 'I drempt of the quene that she came to me all in black & a French hode. That dai I had anger by dority

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[121] Lauren Kassell translates the final line as 'because then she has been ill for a long time with menses'. Private correspondence, 15 June, 2020. Rowse reads the final lines as 'and halek, because shortly she will be sick for a time', followed by 'elaborate calculations whether she is pregnant' (Rowse, p. 67); however, I can find no reference in Forman's text to pregnancy, or any 'elaborate calculations'.

[122] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, pp. 141–5.

[123] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 43^v.

[124] Rowse, *Simon Forman*, pp. 51–69; Traister, p.149.

and mrs pennington that cam to see me about wordes my man spake'; he also documents a

dream of 'arrowes & honting', followed by a description of hearing 'slanderous speches'. On

23 February, Forman records a dream of a hill, followed by an account of how that day 'my

arbitrators sate at my chamber. to end matters between peter Sefton and my self.' His dream

of singing maidens and the attempted rescue of a drowning child on 25 February is followed

by another reference to Allen. A disturbing dream dated 28 February, in which 'one […] wth

a sword' slaughters men, women, and children, leads into a brief description of a dream about

Allen and her husband, and then a detailed account of allegations made by Sefton, who 'said I

stod in a weit shete [at] Sarum. & that I occupid a wench on a stolle wth many other fals

villainies for the wch I could haue kylld [him?] wth a good will.'[125]

The following page comprises dreams from March of the same year. In the dream

dated 3 March, Forman visits his 'mothers bridge in Quidha*mp*ton' and is confronted by

'mani of the quens men', Sefton among them. Two draw their daggers on him, but Sefton

warns them by testifying to Forman's power: 'Sefton said put up your daggers for he is able

to master a hundred of youe […] I could doo yt by magike'. The following day brings a visit

by Avis Allen. On 6 March, he notes briefly 'I drempt I sawe the [Sun] eclipsed'; this is

followed by blank space, as if reserved for subsequent material, but never completed.

Beneath is a dream of 29 March involving Forman's childhood sweetheart Anne Young,

following which he wakes and is visited by 'a contri man'.[126] The text here—a dream of an

eclipse, followed by a blank space as if text remains to be filled in, followed by the usual

night-followed-by-day sequence—may suggest that, as with the *Diary*, the *Bocke of Plaies*,

and the philosophers' stone collection, these pages were not a contemporaneous record of

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[125] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 44^v.

[126] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 45^r.

events, or at least, not the original copy of such a record. Rather, this could be a text that was selected and fitted together in a way that juxtaposed Forman's waking and sleeping experiences in a manner that held, or perhaps generated, significance. It may be important that, given Forman's belief in the prophetic power of dreams, the format used in this collection of pages is of a dream record *followed* by an account of waking events. While the association between waking events and the content of dreams is widely accepted today— whether by Freudians or neuroscientists—the temporal association is the opposite: dreams, today, reflect life, whereas for Forman, life might reflect dreams.

Further evidence for selectivity and re-writing comes from cross-referencing the events of Forman's prose account with briefer notes and horary figures elsewhere in his manuscript collection. In Forman's prose account of the events of 23 January, 1597—the day following his dream of walking with Queen Elizabeth—he writes that Sefton came to see him 'soe sone as I was up'. But according to his casebook, he carried out a consultation regarding 'Ellen Ferne' at 8:00 am that morning, before consulting about 'Peter Sefton best to Agre wth hm or no' at 9:00 am.[127] Similarly, while Forman simply records that he 'went' to Avis Allen that day, the casebooks show that he initially carried out a consultation regarding this visit, likely at around 1:17 pm: 'Questo ad hoc tempus Vtrūm w Aλ sit domi & Aλ', translated by the casebooks editors as 'Question at this time whether William Allen is at home and Avis Allen'. Beneath, he adds 'They wer at home bothe but at thre he [presumably Allen's husband] went forth'.[128] The reasons why Forman skipped the details of Ellen Ferne's

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[127] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 3ᵛ. Transcribed as 'CASE1124', *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE1124> [Accessed 1 June 2020] and 'CASE1125', *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE1125> [Accessed 1 June 2020]. It is unclear whether or not Ellen Ferne actually visited Forman; Hackett documents cases in which servants were sent to consult on behalf of their employers. Hackett, *Elizabethan Mind*, p. 178.

[128] MS Ashmole 226, fol. 4ʳ. Casebook entry transcribed and translated as 'CASE1127', *Casebooks* <https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/cases/CASE1127> [Accessed 1 June 2020]. The time of 1:17 pm is approximate: the text regarding Avis Allen is inserted between the figure and text of a consultation for another patient for whom this time is specified.

consultation and his own castings regarding Sefton and Allen in his prose account are unclear. It is possible that Forman used 'soe sone as I was up' imprecisely or rhetorically, rather than making a deliberate choice to alter the order of events, or that he performed horary consultations so frequently that he did not consider them worth mentioning when he came to write a full account of his day. It is also possible that he wrote the prose account without referring to the consultations of that morning, and simply forgot about them. Arguably, however, omitting the horary consultations in the prose account generates more consistency between Forman's sleeping and waking selves, at least for the modern reader. As with the dream-Forman's assertiveness in the face of royal power, the waking Forman does not hesitate to refuse Sefton, or to go to Allen. Whether this was Forman's intended effect (and if so, what might have been the purpose behind it) is unclear. Whatever the reason, these omissions highlight the gap between the raw material of Forman's notes, and the rich prose accounts that he presumably constructed by selecting and re-writing material that he saw as useful and relevant. While the meaning that Forman made of this process of selection is unclear, Forman's juxtaposition of sleeping and waking events, sometimes with figures and themes (Sefton, Allen, and issues of sexuality, knowledge, and power) crossing over between the two, suggests that *some* function was served by it. Furthermore, Forman's careful recording of the time of events—the time of the dream ('about 3'), and the time at which he had sex with Avis Allen ('50 p 3')—again indicates that he perceived and interpreted events, waking and sleeping, through an overarching astrological framework in which time was of the essence; a framework that contained and might make meaning of both sleeping and waking lives.

In brief, the material evidence suggests that Forman's prose dream collections—the philosophers' stone, and his dreams and life of early 1597—are, as with his *Diary* and *Bocke of Plaies*, unlikely to be the first, original accounts of his experiences, jotted down raw.

Rather, they are probably selected and rewritten with some distance of time between the event and the prose account. This might have been a relatively short period (a few hours, a couple of days), or a much longer one (years, with Forman referring back to a 'lyttle bock' of material). The reason that Forman selected and arranged his dreams thus is not certain and can perhaps never be known. However, if we consider extended mind theory and its potential applicability to early modern cognitive processes, we might interpret Forman's dream-writing practices, and, indeed, their inexplicable elements, in a new light. They are a material trace of Forman's cognitive process during his attempts to make meaning of his dreams, a process which, as we have seen, was characterised by his placement of his dreams within the context of remote and powerful forces such as the mind of God and the position of the stars. In this case, this contextualisation was facilitated by the exteriorised mechanism of pen, paper, and the written word on the page.

Outward-facing dream interpretation

Taking a Freudian approach to early modern dreams, such as Forman's dream of Queen Elizabeth, can and has produced rich material with which to consider cultural historical issues of sexuality and power. However, returning to the original source of our knowledge about the dream—Forman's manuscripts—suggests that such interpretations should be supplemented by the consideration that Forman used a very different framework to bridge the divide between his sleeping and waking selves. Forman's dream interpretation was characterised not by burrowing into the psyche, but by looking outwards. His method relied not on introspection for hidden biographical details and unfulfilled wishes, but on using pen and paper to arrange the spiritual and astrological context and events of his life in external space on the page. This difference between pre-Freudian and post-Freudian methods of managing the dream self does not imply radical discontinuity. Both Freud and Forman, following in the

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tradition of Artemidorus, saw dreams as messages that held meaning deeper than their manifest content; both went beyond this basic model with, to use a modern-day phrase, an personalised approach. The raw material of the dream was interpreted through the use of factors that were unique to the dreamer. In Freud's case, the dream was the subject of a talking therapy that used the psychoanalytic method to probe into the patient's past, to uncover powerful memories and desires suppressed by the subconscious. It was, to use Freud's analogy, like digging through the various historical strata that constituted the city of Rome.[129] In Forman's case, however, the factors unique to the subject comprised the role of the individual in the greater divine plan, and their specific astrological position in the cosmos. The gap between the dream and waking selves was not bridged by means of the psyche, but by subsuming both in greater external schemata. This relied on the use of pen and paper, an extended cognitive process which survives today as a frequently baffling, but nevertheless persistent, material trace.

My intention is not to dismiss Freudian readings as misguided or irrelevant. Just as Freud wrote that 'where a dreamer wants to use an "either … or" in recounting a dream […] what is present in the dream-thoughts is not an alternative but an "and", a simple addition tacked on', it is possible for multiple interpretations of Forman's dream to exist in a state of productive complementarity rather than contradiction.[130] The ways in which Rowse and subsequent critics and historians have read Forman's dream of Queen Elizabeth, for example, reveals something about both sexuality in the early modern period, and twentieth-century approaches to the mind. While my reading of Forman's notebooks cannot produce a similarly

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[129] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, transl. by David McLintock (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 7–9. [first published as *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (Leipzig, Vienna, and Zürich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1930)].

[130] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 241.

satisfying narrative explanation for this and other dreams, it does suggest that the process of manuscript production was central to his interpretative method. The extent to which Forman's approach was typical of the ways in which early modern astrologers—or early modern people in general—reconciled their dreaming and waking selves is open to question. Forman had a successful practice seeing many clients, and was not the only early modern individual to cast horary figures. Janine Rivière notes that astrologers John Dee, Samuel Jeake of Rye, Elias Ashmole and William Lilly recorded their dreams alongside astrological figures, as did Archbishop William Laud.[131] However, as described above, Forman's practice was ridiculed by the College of Physicians; and, as outlined in Chapter 1, dream books that relied on the simpler symbol-to-meaning formula were popular with the general public. The evidence is therefore mixed; but even if Forman's approach represents a form of dream interpretation that was relatively limited in terms of its use, this analysis provides a new way to look at texts such as his dream of Elizabeth, and demonstrates the extent of the potential contrast between pre- and post-Freudian models of the self.

This chapter has emphasised the importance of writing practices and manuscript production to Simon Forman's mediation between his dreaming and waking selves. In the next chapter, I turn from private notebooks to the public and popular form of cheap pamphlets, to explore how dream and waking selves were put in dialogue with one another through the medium of print.

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[131] Rivière, p. 59.

Figure 1: Geomantic consultation (left) and horary consultation (right). MS Ashmole 219, fol. 52ᵛ; MS Ashmole 219, fol. 146ʳ

Figure 2: A page from Forman's 'Diary' and its transcription by Rowse. MS Ashmole fol. 57ʳ, Rowse, Simon Forman, *p. 294*
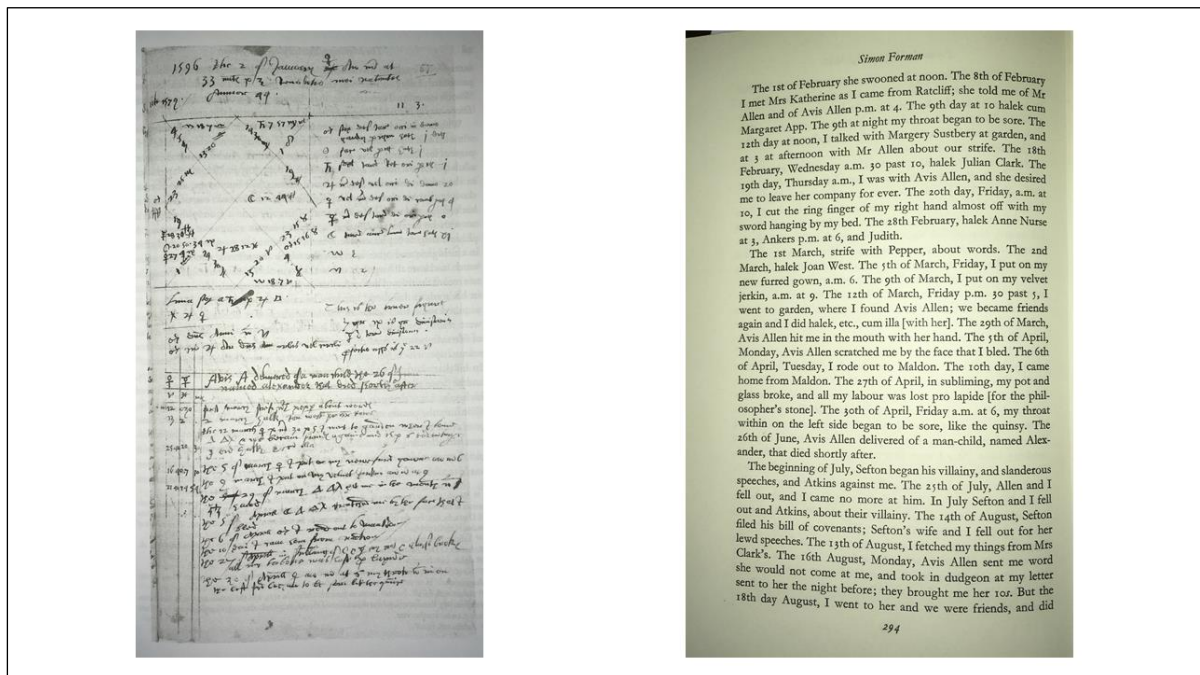
Chapter 3: Whose dream? Multiple identities in early modern dream pamphlets

More did I behold thus Sleeping, then euer I could before, when my eies were wide open.

      Thomas Dekker, *Dekker his Dreame*[1]

At the turn of the seventeenth century, medieval and early modern English authors regularly turned up in each other's dreams. In *Greenes Vision* (published 1592, but possibly written in 1590), Robert Greene gave an account of a dream encounter with Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower, whose posthumous storytelling forms a substantial part of the pamphlet.[2] After Greene's death, Gabriel Harvey wrote in *Foure Letters* (1592): 'When I begin to conflict with Ghostes, then looke for my Confutation of [Greene's] fine Quippe, or quaint Dispute'; but Greene did indeed return as a ghost in Henry Chettle's *Kind-Harts Dreame* (1592) in order to continue his feud with Harvey.[3] And despite his own demise sometime after 1603, Chettle came back to haunt the dreams of Thomas Dekker. Dekker's *A Knight's Conjuring* (1607) concludes with the dead author's noisy and disruptive arrival in the poets' Elysium, 'sweating and blowing, by reason of his fatnes'.[4] Dream pamphlets provided fantastical settings in which the dead could return; but I propose that they did much more than this. The self-alienating effect of the dream, the multiple personae and spaces that the dreamer inhabited (the waking, sleeping, and writing selves; the bed and the dream space), and ambiguity over

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[1] Thomas Dekker, *Dekker his Dreame* (London: 1620), sig. A4ʳ.

[2] Robert Greene, *Greenes Vision* (London: 1592); Henry Chettle, *Kind-Harts Dreame* (London: 1592), sig. E1ᵛ.

[3] Gabriel Harvey, *Foure Letters, and Certaine Sonnets* (London: 1592), sig. B3ᵛ; Chettle.

[4] Thomas Dekker, *A Knight's Conjuring* (London: 1607), sig. L1ᵛ; this is an expanded version of Dekker's *Newes from Hell*, published the previous year. Thomas Dekker, *Newes from Hell* (London: 1606).

authorial intention and agency provided the author with a potent means of splitting their voice between multiple different personae and perspectives within the same text. Authors could—and did—channel the voices of the dead. As this chapter shows, they also channelled different parts of the divided self that arose from the experience of sleeping and dreaming, unifying this self not through discovery of a common psychological thread, but through using the layout of the printed pamphlet. The dream pamphlets of Thomas Churchyard, Robert Greene, Henry Chettle, and Thomas Dekker are thus framed as part of a decades-long process of literary experimentation which prefigured the emergence of polyphony as a characteristic of modern European prose fiction.[5] The first half of this thesis has focused on aspects of the self-alienating experience and dreaming that may have been troubling and unsettling for the dreamer. I now turn to its creative possibilities, asking how dream-related disruptions to the self might have been used to literary purpose and effect by early modern English authors, whether or not the 'dreams' described in their work were literal records of dream experiences.

My use of pamphlets as source material means that I focus on the commercial side of the literary market. Scholarship and controversies around early modern authorship are discussed in detail below, but for the purposes of this introductory section, the contrast between pamphleteering and more elevated models of literary production is illustrated by two texts by Thomas Nashe, himself a pamphleteer. In his preface to the 1591 Newman edition of Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, Nashe argues that Sidney's work has entered the public sphere not because of authorial intention, but because of its extraordinary quality. Sidney's sonnet sequence, Nashe claims, 'breaks foorth in spight of his keepers'.[6] This was a model of

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[5] Polyphony in literature is discussed below, with reference to Mikhail Bakhtin, 'From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse', in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, 2nd edn, ed. by David Lodge and Nigel Wood (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 104–36.

[6] In Philip Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella* (London: 1591), sig. A3r.

authorship in which excellent work was created with almost self-conscious effacement, and certainly not with any desire for financial reward.[7] In contrast, in *Strange Newes* (1592)—his rejoinder to Gabriel Harvey's attack on the recently deceased Robert Greene in *Foure Letters*—Nashe writes affectionately that Greene's 'only care was to haue a spel in his purse to coniure vp a good cuppe of wine'.[8] By these standards, Nashe argues, Greene was highly successful; Nashe tells Harvey that 'in one yeare [Greene] pist as much against the walls, as thou and thy two brothers spent in three.'[9]

The flattering tone that Nashe adopted towards Sidney in his *Astrophel and Stella* preface, as well as his spirited defence of Greene in *Strange Newes*, were presumably related to cultural and commercial imperatives, as well as genuine admiration for his fellow writers. It was in Nashe's personal and financial interests to promote the popular image of Sidney. A year later, it was also in Nashe's interests to affirm and defend his own position alongside the now-deceased Greene in conflict with the Harveys. The two texts suggest that the self-effacing Sidneian model of authorship and the utilitarian Greenian model were both considered valid, and had their admirable points. The Greenian model, however, was praised more for its efficient generation of monetary return than its artistic qualities even—perhaps especially—if Greene's financial gains ended up being rapidly liquidated and redistributed against a tavern wall. 'In a night & a day', Nashe writes of Greene, 'would he haue yarkt vp a Pamphlet as well as in seauen yeare, and glad was that Printer that might bee so blest to pay

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[7] In addition, as Helen Hackett writes, 'in this period manuscript circulation could itself constitute a form of publication, as writings passed from hand to hand, were copied and often adapted, and potentially travelled beyond the immediate social circle and the control of the author.' Publication of this sort resulted in exposure and potentially elevated social status, but was decoupled from financial gain. Helen Hackett, *The Elizabethan Mind: Searching for the Self in an Age of Uncertainty* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2022), p. 296.

[8] Thomas Nashe, *Strange Newes, of the Intercepting Certaine Letters* (London: 1592), sig. E4ᵛ.

[9] Nashe, *Strange Newes*, sig. E4ᵛ.

him deare for the very dregs of his wit.'[10] The significance of the word 'yark' here is

uncertain; according to the *OED*, potential meanings in this period included striking,

producing, uttering in stops and starts, and having sexual intercourse. One possible meaning,

derived from shoemaking, is to stitch together, which would again have emphasised the

craftsman-like nature of patching together a pamphlet, in contrast with the unique, pioneering

quality of the Sidneian production.[11]

However, dream pamphlets—a genre linked with Greene both through his own use of

the form and his later appearances in Chettle's *Kind-Harts Dreame* and Dekker's *A Knight's*

Conjuring—belie this simple dichotomy of pioneering creativity versus commercial appeal.

Dream pamphlets are complex and often confusing pieces of work, mixing fact with fiction

and autobiography with invention. The relationship between these pamphlets and their

authors' lives is uncertain; authorial voices are divided and elusive; and it is frequently

unclear how precisely their narratives should be read, understood, and interpreted.

This chapter places dream pamphlets—including *Dauy Dycars Dreame*, *Greenes*

Vision, *Kind-Harts Dreame*, *A Knight's Conjuring*, and *Dekker his Dreame*—within their

literary and cultural context of commercial imperative and social and religiopolitical risk.

This contextualisation raises important questions about the agency of pamphleteers in early

modern England, and the very concepts of authorial persona and voice. Thus far, this thesis

has analysed the self-disruptive, self-alienating nature of dreaming with reference to Nashe's

Terrors of the Night, and shown how written texts such as Simon Forman's notebooks might

be seen as exercises in placing both dream and waking selves within a containing,

externalised framework. This chapter turns to the printed page as a method through which

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[10] Nashe, *Strange Newes*, sig. E4ᵛ.

[11] 'yark, *v.2*', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/231622>
[Accessed 22 April 2023].

dream-related disruptions of selfhood were not just contained, but exploited to creative effect. I propose that the early modern dream pamphlet was not an experimental aberration of a commercially-focused popular form, but rather a product that harnessed the full potential of the medium, from the construction of an authorial persona to the creative use of textual layout on the page. Finally, this chapter suggests that the dream pamphlet may have anticipated the developments of the polyphonic authorial voice as a characteristic feature of European literature. The first section examines an apparently simple dream pamphlet, and demonstrates how the cultural context of its publication and response point to the dream pamphlet as a rich and complex source of material with which to consider selfhood, agency, and authorship in early modern London.

Constructive ambiguity: **Dauy Dycars Dreame** *and the role of the reader*

Compared with the early modern dream pamphlets that followed, Thomas Churchyard's *Dauy Dycars Dreame* (*c.* 1552) is short and seemingly straightforward; nevertheless, it contains multiple and complex layers. *Dauy Dycars Dreame* is a 28-line 'when-then' prophecy printed on just one side of the sheet of paper; only its title indicates that it is a dream at all, and, for that matter, a dream of a persona distinct from that of Thomas Churchyard, who is credited at the foot of the page.[12] Concise though it is, Churchyard's *Dreame* generated a considerable amount of controversy with its final lines, which anticipated a time when 'Rex [Edward VI] doth raigne & rule the rost, & weeds out wicked men'—presumably the privy councillors at the time, including John Dudley, Earl of Warwick.[13] Around eight years after *Dauy Dycars Dreame* was published as a single-sheet

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[12] Thomas Churchyard, *Dauy Dycars Dreame* (London: 1552).

[13] Churchyard, *Dauy Dycars Dreame*, no sig.

broadside (and following a considerable change in political circumstances, with Elizabeth now on the throne following the death of Edward and the reign of Mary), documentation of the fallout was collected in *The Contention Betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell* (1560).[14]

Before addressing the specific content of the *Dauy Dycars* controversy, it may be noted that a comparison between the 1552 and 1560 publications illustrates the problems with defining the early modern pamphlet as a literary form. As noted above, the original *Dauy Dycars Dreame* took the form of a single sheet of paper, credited to a single author, Churchyard. The 1560 *Contention*, however, is a quarto booklet printed on eight folio sheets and credited to 'Churchyarde: Camell: and others mo'. It includes a preface, a reprint of the *Dreame* itself, a subsequent back-and-forth debate between Churchyard and his critic Thomas Camell, and an interjection from 'Westerne Wyll'. Both the 1552 and 1560 publications might be classified as 'pamphlets', but differ considerably from one another in length and format.

Modern-day scholars tend towards broad and inclusive definitions of the pamphlet form. Joad Raymond, for example, defines a pamphlet as primarily 'a short, quarto book' that 'typically consisted of between one sheet and a maximum of twelve sheets, or between eight and ninety-six pages in quarto' (a considerable range). Raymond notes that by the 1580s in England, such publications tended to be in the English language and 'engaged with social, political or ecclesiastical issues.'[15] Pamphlets were relatively inexpensive; at wholesale prices, works of up to four sheets cost 1d or 2d, while twelve-sheet works cost 6d; retail

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[14] Thomas Churchyard, *The Contention Betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell* (London: 1560). The controversy is outlined in Scott Lucas, 'Comment: The Visionary Genre and the Rise of the "Literary": Books under Suspicion and Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 46 (2007), 762–5.

[15] Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 5; p. 8.

mark-up might have been as high as fifty percent.[16] In terms of the extent of early modern

pamphlet readership, it is estimated that the number of copies printed ranged from a few

hundred to one and a half thousand. [17] Yet the ephemeral nature of pamphlets makes such

estimates uncertain, and even if an accurate idea of the print run of an individual pamphlet

were available, this figure would not reflect the actual number of people who were familiar

with its contents through obtaining it second-hand, borrowing it, having it read aloud to them,

or simply hearing it described and discussed by others. This imprecision in defining the

pamphlet in terms of form, cost, and reach also applies to content; a pamphlet might consist

of anything from a short and scurrilous poem to a closely argued religious tract. This wide

range of possibilities perhaps arises because the pamphlet is to a great extent a form defined

by what it is *not*: the pamphlet is not a book; it is not made to last; it is not entirely

respectable; and it has not been always been deemed worthy of collection in libraries, let

alone serious critical analysis.[18]

However, the complexity of the *Dauy Dycars* controversy indicates that cheap and

likely ephemeral literature—specifically that utilising the language and framework of

dreams—might be a valuable source with which to address questions of authorly identity and

selfhood in the early modern period. The publication of Churchyard's 1552 pamphlet, with its

reference to the 'wicked men' that Edward VI needed to weed out was followed by a reply

from Camell, criticising Churchyard for finding fault with his betters: 'eche should hym selfe

in order behaue | As baestes of lowe sorte, to be mek of theyr mynde, | To those that be

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[16] Jason Peacey, 'Pamphlets', in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture Volume 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. by Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 452–70 (p. 457).

[17] Peacey, p. 458.

[18] Raymond notes that in the sixteenth century, the word 'pamphlet' was often deprecatory; Thomas Bodley decreed that pamphlets were not worthy of preservation in the library collections of Oxford University. Raymond, p. 10; p. 5.

hygher, and greater of kynde.'[19] The *Contention* pamphlet is largely given over to defending

the *Dreame* from this attack. Central to this defence is the prophecy's supposed status as a

dream, and the diversity of interpretations which it therefore invites. Edward VI being long

dead by the time of the *Contention*'s publication, the pamphlet's appearance suggests that the

question of interpretation might have held some intrinsic interest in itself, regardless of

political circumstances (although concern about bad advisers misleading the monarch was a

common theme throughout the early modern period).

The *Contention*'s preface reframes the 'eche' of Camell's criticism—which presses

the author and reader into a single 'lowe sorte' grouping, who should defer to the 'hygher'—

as a diverse range of possible responders and responses. The anonymous narrator invites the

reader to

> Drawe nere gentill reader and harken to mee,
>
> Her stondes Dauid Dicar Dremynge as you see.
>
> He sleapethe, and wak's not, but dremethe on still.
>
> To scanne what he dremeth eche man hathe a will.[20]

The statement that 'eche man hath a will' to 'scanne' what Dycar dreams is key to

Churchyard's defence. 'Scanne', in the early modern sense, has connotations of active

interpretation. For example, a 1583 English translation of Calvin's *Sermon on Deuteronomie*

includes the line 'wee must rest wholely vppon that which God saith, and not stande scanning

after our owne fancies.'[21] Churchyard's defence is based on Camell's supposedly simplistic

analysis of an inherently enigmatic dream vision: 'In faith you mistake, Dauy Dicars, when, |

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[19] Churchyard, *Contention*, sig. A1ᵛ.

[20] Churchyard, *Contention*, sig. +2ʳ.

[21] 'scan, *v.*', *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/171869> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

you take chauke for chese, and day for darke night'.[22] Churchyard does not identify what the 'chauke' is to Camell's 'chese', nor the 'day' that he takes for 'darke night'; it is sufficient to say that, if 'eche man' can 'scanne' the dream in a different way, Camell has gone off on a folly of his own.

Similarly, Churchyard supporter 'Western Wyll' chips in with a dialogue between a printer and three sailors of Maldon, set among the booksellers of St Paul's. While the sailors all offer differing interpretations of the dream, they agree unanimously that Camell's reading is definitely wrong: 'The Camell semes to me to be, a great out landishe beast'.[23] Wyll's argument depends on his assertion that the prophecy should be treated as if it were a literal account of a dream: 'a Dreame is but a Dreame, a fansye of thee heade | And hee ne ment I hope that men, sholde it for gospell take | But as a sweuen or fantasie, that eche one shulde it reade'.[24] Again, the individuality of the reader's interpretation—'eche one'—contrasts with Camell's concept of 'eche' as simply being a way of fitting people into their appropriate social echelon, lower or higher. *Dauy Dycars Dreame* is not like the 'gospell', unambiguous truth, but is like a 'sweuen or fantasie', a confused melange of imagery that generates multiple interpretations depending on 'eche one' of its readers.

This multiplicity of interpretations is possible because another pillar of Wyll's defence, that a dream by its nature is 'a fansye of thee heade', implies that Camell is fundamentally mistaken about the amount of agency that Churchyard has enjoyed as an author. As described in previous chapters—and elaborated in Chapter 4—dreams were a point at which the higher faculties were overpowered by the mental faculty of

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[22] Churchyard, *Contention*, sig. A3ʳ.

[23] Churchyard, *Contention*, sig. D3ʳ.

[24] Churchyard, *Contention*, sig. D3ᵛ.

phantasie/fantasy or fancy, separating an individual's volition from the productions of his or her own mind. In his own defence, Churchyard goes further still, identifying the pamphlet as the product of Dycar, rather than himself. 'Good syr if I shulde you salute, as you saluted me,' he writes to Camell, 'Then shuld I call you, Dauy too, and so perchauce you bee. […] Churchiard I am, in Shrewisbury towne, thei say wher I was borne.'[25] In this dispute over identity, Churchyard falls back on external signifiers: evidence that he is 'Churchyard' rather than 'Dycar' comes from the fact that others, 'thei', will attest to his being the individual born 'in Shrewisbury towne'. The unambiguous truths about identity, in this schema, are those that exist outside 'thee heade' and are locatable in physical space ('Shrewisbury'), not from suppositions about the inward nature of the author. In other words, the self-alienating nature of the dream described in the Introduction of this thesis—and in this pamphlet as 'a fansye of thee heade'—is potentiated by the ability of the author to inhabit a different persona on the page. Dycar's words might have been written with Churchyard's hand, but Dycar is not the man born in Shrewsbury; and even so, Dycar has enjoyed limited agency, reporting the apparently independent productions of his 'fantasie'.

Dreams, and particularly the dreams signed by a fictional character, are thus inherently slippery in terms of the meaning derived by readers, the ownership that might be attributed to authors, and indeed whether they describe 'real' dreams at all. Whether or not Churchyard started out intending to use his prophecy's 'dream' status as a defence, the *Contention* pamphlet develops an argument that combines the diversity, and hence diverse reactions, of early modern London's pamphlet readership with the ambiguous status of the dream—which might be divine prophecy or nothing at all—to protect the author.[26]

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[25] Churchyard, *Contention*, sig. B3ᵛ.

[26] In 1593, the introductory words to Churchyard's poem 'A Dreame' in *Churchyards Challenge* again emphasise the multiple meanings contained within a dream: 'my Dreame hauing many significations, may grow

Churchyard's example suggests that early modern dream pamphlets may be a rich source of literary innovation in terms of anticipating and mediating readerly response, as well as in the development of the authorial persona. This is contrary to previous critical assertions. For example, Sandra Clark ascribes the persistence of dream narratives in early modern pamphlets to 'modes of thought inherited from the Middle Ages'. She notes that 'Conventional patterns and forms impose themselves readily; pamphlets which do not begin as dream visions although their subject matter is similar to dream vision material suddenly conclude with the narrator's awakening from a deep sleep'.[27] In his introduction to a critical edition of Dekker's *A Knight's Conjuring* (discussed below), Larry Robbins similarly dismisses Dekker's waking at the end of the narrative as 'a nod to medieval tradition'.[28] In this type of reading, the dream narrative is at best a convenient vehicle, and at worst an almost unconscious narrative tic.

It is, of course, possible that dream pamphlets might have simply represented the adherence of early modern writers to the familiar medieval template of the dream vision. Just as medieval poets such as William Langland and Geoffrey Chaucer drew upon classical precedents including Cicero's *Dream of Scipio* for their dream narratives, so too early modern writers may have utilised the tools used by their literary predecessors.[29] The literary function of the dream narrative might therefore have been relatively straightforward. Moments of sleeping and waking provided a neat and economical method to begin and end a

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on many causes, and hit on a nomber of Accidents fit for my humour'. Thomas Churchyard, *Churchyards Challenge* (London: 1593), sig. Bb^r.

[27] Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580–1640* (The Athlone Press: London, 1983).

[28] Larry M. Robbins, 'Introduction', in Thomas Dekker, *Thomas Dekker's* A Knight's Conjuring (1607)*: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Larry M. Robbins (The Hague & Paris: Mouton, 1974), pp. 11–66 (p. 39).

[29] A.C. Spearing, *Medieval Dream-Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

narrative; and the often fantastical nature of dreams allowed the narrator to visit other worlds

and converse with angels, demons, and the dead.

However, to dismiss the use of dream narratives in early modern pamphlets as mere

convention or expedience is to disregard the possibility that the medieval dream vision *itself*

involved exploration of the nature of authorship. In his survey of medieval dream poetry, A.

C. Spearing points out that

> Compared with other poems, [the dream poem] makes us more conscious that it has a
>
> beginning and an end (marked by the falling asleep and awakening of the narrator);
>
> that it has a narrator, whose experience constitutes the subject-matter of the poem;
>
> that its status is that of an imaginative fiction […]; in short that it is not a work of
>
> nature but a work of art.[30]

Spearing perhaps overemphasises the artifice of the dream narrative; after all, it is impossible,

by definition, to prove that a dream narrative did *not* take place, and hence such accounts will

always occupy an uncertain space between invention and reportage. If the reader is uncertain

where fiction ends and reality begins, a dream framework is unlikely to resolve that

uncertainty. This uncertainty, however, brings its own creative possibilities. Indeed, Spearing

qualifies his own argument by noting that 'a dream may be considered as the product of

divine inspiration or as the expression of a merely human mood or fantasy'; its ultimate

'author' and mode of composition are therefore ambiguous. Further ambiguity, Spearing

writes, stems from the fact that the author is necessarily positioned as the subject who

experiences the dream narrative; therefore, 'he also, by appearing in his dream, disappears,

since he becomes part of his own fiction'.[31] Medieval dream narratives, in Spearing's view,

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[30] Spearing, pp. 4–5.

[31] Spearing, p. 5.

not only offered a way for authors to readily access non-realist subject matter, but were also a means to explore the nature and complexities of the literary creator.

While a full discussion of the medieval precedents of early modern dream pamphlets is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that Churchyard's Dycar is himself a repurposed version of the character in William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, whose death is prophesied in a 'when-then' manner.[32] Given Churchyard's defence that he was an individual distinct from Dycar and thus not culpable for Dycar's dream, one might interpret his employment of Langland's character not only as a callback to middle English literature, but as a self-conscious recognition of Langland's work *as literature*, that is, as a form distinct from literally true, documentary texts for which the author might be held solely responsible. Scott Lucas argues that Churchyard's defence of *Dauy Dycars Dreame* represents the development of the literary as a privileged mode of discourse that afforded the author some distance from their published work, and hence personal and political safety.[33] If this is the case, then the specific use of an identifiable character from medieval literature was surely a significant part of this process. Churchyard is not only utilising a dream-generated 'when-then' prophecy in emulation of Langland; he is also using Langland's specific character to emphasise the distinction between author and text. This is, in other words, not unthinking utilisation of a medieval literary precedent, but a self-conscious recognition of it *as* a precedent, and the leveraging of the 'literary' as a form of self-defence and denial of authorial agency.

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[32] Lucas, pp. 762–3

[33] Lucas, p. 765.

It is unclear whether Churchyard's defence strategy actually worked; he was examined by the Privy Council, but there is no evidence that he was punished.[34] The cultural implications of the *Contention* pamphlet, however, are of greater consequence than whether or not Churchyard's arguments got him off the hook. Following medieval precedents, Churchyard utilises the dream as a literary form that creates considerable space within a text for the reader's agency in constructing its meaning, yet ultimately withholds that meaning. In the subsequent dream pamphlets of Robert Greene, Henry Chettle, and Thomas Dekker, to which this chapter now turns, the self-conscious creation of a gap between the author and the text, into which 'eche' reader might exercise their ability to 'scanne' the meaning of the dream events, is elaborated further. These texts were selected both as examples of dream narratives in pamphlet form, and for the ways in which—as outlined below—they played with their authors' self-conscious personae as well-known pamphleteers. The following section focuses on Henry Chettle's *Kind-Harts Dreame* as a pamphlet which self-consciously used the alienation of the dreamer from the dream, and the author from their work, to create a complex multitude of possible meanings.

'He onely deliuers his dreame': the elusive authorial voice in Kind-Harts Dreame

The opening pages of *Kind-Harts Dreame* make it clear that pamphleteering continued to be a risky business long after the publication of *Dauy Dycars Dreame*. They also show that Churchyard's denial of authorial agency, facilitated by framing the text as a dream, still operated as a line of defence. *Kind-Harts Dreame*'s prefatory material suggests the document in the reader's hand might hold great significance—a strong selling point—but that it may also be ephemeral and meaningless, thus protecting the author from controversy. In the

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[34] Lucas, p. 765.

dedication 'to all the pleasant conceited wheresoeuer', Chettle (as 'Kind-Heart')

acknowledges that he is 'hazard[ing] contemptible infamie by drawing himself into print'. [35]

In the specific context of *Kind-Harts Dreame*, Chettle's recognition of this 'hazard' is more

than a generic expression of concern. As discussed below, Chettle was suspected of being the

secret author of the recent and controversial *Greenes Groats-worth of Witte* (1592). This was

the pamphlet which—among other things—insulted the young Shakespeare as an 'vpstart

Crow'.[36]

Having established that publishing his *Dreame* is not a risk-free endeavour, Kind-

Heart proceeds to elaborate his response to readers who will take his account in bad faith. He

recounts the story of 'an eloquent Orator' who 'at the first meeting of the enimy fled with out

fight'. This Orator, Kind-heart writes, answered his critics by saying 'If I haue saued my selfe

in this battell by flight, I shal 177isd to chase the enimy in the next.' Thus Kind-heart

proposes evasion rather than resistance: 'If enuious misconsterers arme themselues against

my simple meaning, and wrest euery iest to a wrong sense', he will 'thinke it policy to fly at

the first fight, till I gather fresh forces to represse their folly.'[37] Chettle, writing as Kind-heart,

is setting up his relationship with the reader as a game of cat-and-mouse in which the author

must respond to 'the enimy' by being elusive. Just as one might avoid an enemy physically

by moving from spot to spot and never settling, a writer might evade 'enuious misconsterers'

by refusing to occupy a single, fixed position.

The identification of the pamphlet's narrative as a dream is a key component of Kind-

Heart's, and ultimately Chettle's, elusiveness. Chettle has Kind-Heart adopt a self-

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[35] Chettle, sig. B1ʳ.

[36] Robert Greene, *Greenes Groats-worth of Witte* (London: 1592), sig. F1v.

[37] Chettle, sig. B1ᵛ.

consciously alienated attitude to the text which bears his name. It is framed not as Kind-Heart's invention, but rather as something which has happened to him: 'Neither can they what euer they be, deale hardly with Kind-hart, for he onely deliuers his dreame; with euery Apparition simply as it was vttered.'[38] Chettle then offers an elaborate narrative of how Kind-Heart comes to sleep and hence receive the ghostly letter. On a page with the heading 'The Dreame', Kind-Heart describes how 'Sitting alone not long since […] in a Taphouse of Antiquity' he was overcome with drowsiness; his hostess removed him 'to a pleasant parlor, the windows opening to the East' where he was 'laid softly on a downe bed, and couered with equall furniture'.[39] A dream of five ghosts then follows.

This emphasis on the text as the product of a dream recalls Churchyard's defence; there are other examples of the same technique in roughly contemporaneous texts such as Greene's *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592) ('all the debate was but a dreame') and Puck's defence of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595), discussed in the next chapter ('you have but slumbered here, | While these visions did appear').[40] In all these cases, the author is eliciting collusion: readers and audiences are invited to play along with the fiction that literary material *might* have been a dream, for which the author bears no responsibility. These authors are self-consciously positioning themselves outside the text in the same way that the dreamer sits outside the dream, disclaiming agency and professing bafflement equal to that of the reader or audience member.

This positioning of both reader *and* author outside the generation and meaning of the text is made part of the embodied experience of reading Chettle's pamphlet. Substantial

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[38] Chettle, sig. B1ᵛ.

[39] Chettle, sig. B2ʳ.

[40] Robert Greene, *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (London: 1592), sig. A2ᵛ; William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. by Peter Holland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5.1.416–17.

portions of *Kind-Harts Dreame* are presented as what in modern-day terms might be classified as a 'found object'. In his dream, Kind-Heart is visited by five ghosts—balladeer Anthony Now Now, actor Richard Tarlton, piper William Cuckoe, Doctor Burcot, and Robert Greene—and the Knight of the Post, a professional perjurer who, in Nashe's *Pierce Penniless*, carries Penniless's letter to the Devil. The Knight, however, refuses the supplications presented by the five ghosts, 'for he had almost hazarded his credit in hell, by 179isdo a Broker 179isdom179 Pierce Penilesse and his Lord'; the ghosts therefore thrust their letters into Kind-Heart's hands instead.[41] Waking, Kind-Heart finds 'the fiue papers, which confirmed my dreame to bee no fantisie' are still in his grasp.[42] At this point—where the pamphlet shifts to supposed reproductions of the dream-letters—the typeface changes. While the first two signatures of the 179isdom179at (A–B) are entirely set in Roman and Italic faces, black-letter is used for the remainder (C–H), with Roman type reserved for the headings. Chettle's pamphlet was shared between two printers, John Danter and William Wolfe; but the move from Wolfe to Danter occurred at sheet E, indicating that the typographical change might have had functional significance, rather than simply reflecting a change in the printing house.[43]

Clearly, the typographical shift in *Kind-Harts Dreame* distinguished the framing device of the dream from the documents that it had supposedly delivered. It might also have cued the reader to adjust their response to the text as they made their way through the pamphlet. Black-letter type was common in sixteenth-century pamphlets, although its use was largely phased out in the first two decades of the seventeenth century; it both resembled

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[41] Chettle, sig. B3ᵛ.

[42] Chettle, sig. B4ʳ.

[43] John Jowett, 'Johannes Factotum: Henry Chettle and Greene's Groatsworth of Wit', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 87 (1993), 453–86 (p. 467).

handwriting and may have connoted authority.[44] It is possible that, like Kind-Heart waking from the dream, the reader is cued to 'find' the papers written by the ghosts as a material reality in their hands. On the other hand, other pamphlets such as Greene's *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592) also move from Roman type in the prefatory material to black-letter in the main body of text. It is therefore by no means certain that the black-letter of *Kind-Harts Dreame* would have carried the connotation of a hand-written, 'real-world' text; and it is highly unlikely that Chettle was setting out to deceive his readers into a *literal* belief in the story of the dream, and the letters of the five ghosts. However, the combined effect of the shift in both narrative voice—from Kind-Heart to the ghosts—and the corresponding change in typeface might have highlighted a shift in the nature of the text, underlining that it was now something alien not only to the reader, but also to the author. This is the point in the pamphlet at which authorial distance from the text works in full synergy with the dreamer's distance from the dream. Kind-Heart is now positioned with the reader of the pamphlet, as both parties try to make sense of the text.

This process of meaning-making is, to quote the precedent of *Dauy Dycars Dreame*, the individual prerogative of 'eche man'. The diversity of possible responses to a text is described in Tarleton's letter in *Kind-Hartes Dreame*, in which he discusses the pros and cons of stageplays, and how their ultimate balance might be elusive, based on both the response of the consumer and the complexity of a work considered in its totality:

> Euery thing hath in it selfe his 180isdom and his vice: from one selfe flower the Bee and Spider sucke honny and 180isdom. In plaies it fares as in 180isdo, vice cannot be reproued, except it be discouered: neither is it in any play discouered, but there followes in the same an example of the punishment: now he that at a play will be

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44 Raymond, p. 74.

delighted in the one, and not warned by the other, is like him that reads in a booke the description of sinne, and will not looke ouer the leafe for the reward.[45]

This image, of the text as a garden in which both poison and nourishment were on offer, and in which the nature of the reader—as 'Bee' or 'Spider'—would influence what they received, was by no means original to Chettle. The idea of the reader as analogous to a garden insect is, as John Kerrigan notes, 'highly conventional', and 'based on commonplaces derived from Seneca and Horace.'[46] He cites, for example, George Gascoigne's statement in his *Poesies* (1575) that the interpretation of the text depends on the nature of the reader, from 'the industrious Bee' gathering 'honie out of the most stinking weede' to the 'malicious Spider' that can 'gather 181isdom out of the 181isdom181 floure that growes'.[47] Tarleton's statement, in the context of the evasive prefaces by both Chettle and 'Kind-Heart', suggests that while the reader is free to stand alongside the author in guessing at the meaning of the dream, it might not be possible to arrive at a definitive interpretation. If one reader gathers 'honny', another will gather 'poyson'; if one finds 'sinne', one might be missing its counterbalancing virtue over the page. It is not feasible to break the text—or the dream—down to its individual elements for analysis. The text must be taken as whole, its inconsistencies working in balance with each other rather than representing contradictions. There is no single identifiable voice. In both 'plaies' and 'bookes', the essence of a text is its ability to contain *multiple* voices: 'honny' and 'poyson'; 'vice' and 'punishment'; delight and warning.

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[45] Chettle, sig. E4^r.

[46] John Kerrigan, 'The Editor as Reader: Constructing Renaissance texts', in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 102–24 (pp. 109–10).

[47] George Gascoigne, *The Poesies* (London: 1575), sig. ¶¶3^v.

Kind-Harts Dreame itself embraces the idea of multiple perspectives within its content and structure; although the pamphlet is nominally by 'Henry Chettle', the reader is presented with multiple documents from a variety of individuals without being given a clear steer as to which is to be privileged above the others. Each 'letter' is followed by a commentary by Kind-Heart, and the pamphlet concludes with his thoughts on the text as a whole, written in an ironic and evasive tone. For example, Kind-Heart disbelieves the complaint of Anthony Now Now against 'lasciuious ballads': 'I beleeue none are so desperate to hazard their goods in printing or selling anything y^t is disallowed. Or if there be some such, I perswade my selfe the Maiestrates diligence is so great, they would soone be weeded out.'[48] This is a confusing critique. Kind-Heart cannot credit that anyone would sink their money into a risky venture such as lewd ballads—which might be a sly reference to the profitability of such publications. He praises the diligence of the magistrates; but by implication, as the ballads clearly exist, the magistrates must be less than diligent. It is unclear exactly what Kind-Heart's (or Chettle's) precise meaning is here, which is possibly the point.

Similarly, Kind-Heart writes of his encounter with Greene's ghost that 'With *Robin Greene* it passes Kindharts capacity to deale; for as I knowe not the reason of his vnrest'; but of course, both Kind-Heart and the Greene of *Kind-Harts Dreame* are Chettle's inventions (and this might well not been the first time Chettle had channelled Greene's voice; see below).[49] If the reader ends up scratching their head at the meaning of Greene's various

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[48] Chettle, sig. G4^r. Anthony Now Now is thought by some critics to be a version of Nashe's contemporary, Anthony Munday. D. Allen Carroll writes that '*Now now* seems to play on the Latin for *Monday* rendered with a tilde as a kind of plural of *modo: modi*, or *modo…modo*, meaning "just now" or "now now." see D. Allen Carroll, 'Preface', in Robert Greene, *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit*, ed. by D. Allen Carroll (Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies: Binghampton, 1994), pp. 1–31 (p. 12). Notably, in *Kind-Harts Dreame*, Chettle admits to having written an epistle to Munday's *Gerileon* that was attributed to Thomas Nashe, but claims this was because of an honest error: 'by the workemans error T. N. were set to the end [of the epistle]: that I confesse to be mine, and repent it not' (Chettle, sig. A4^r).

[49] Chettle, sig. G4^v.

allusions in *Kind-Harts Dreame*, Chettle is not going to help them; assuming the persona of Kind-Heart, he simply joins them in their bafflement, detached from the knowledge that Chettle possesses and reserves for himself. Again, the alienation of the dreamer from their dream and the author from their text is used to multiplicative effect. As with *Dauy Dycars Dreame*, the reader is encouraged to join in the construction of meaning from the texts with which they are presented—only to have that meaning held back, indeed, to have the sense that there is a single meaning on which they *could* alight seriously undermined.

By using the dream to inhabit multiple positions at once, Chettle manages to maximise his own elusiveness, stirring up trouble but nevertheless able to 'fly at the first fight'. In the following section, I contextualise the Greene-related controversy that may have triggered this elusiveness on Chettle's part. I examine Greene's own use of the self-alienating effect of the dream narrative to create an authorial voice as a literary 'character' distinct from the embodied individual putting the words on the page, which provides further important background to both *Kind-Hearts Dreame* and the broader development of the dream pamphlet as a literary form.

'An Omnigatherum': the many voices of Robert Greene

Further complicating *Kind-Harts Dreame*'s confluence of voices is another factor to which Chettle draws attention in his first preface: the unreliability of the named author's identity. In his address 'To the Gentlemen Readers', Chettle alludes to the then-recent controversy over the authorship of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit.* 'I protest it was all *Greenes*, not mine nor Maister *Nashes*, as some uniustly have affirmed'.[50] And yet, only pages after Chettle's denial

that he masqueraded as Greene in the *Groatsworth*, the ghost of Greene comes to the sleeping Kind-Heart to encourage Thomas Nashe to respond to an attack from Gabriel Harvey. This attack was presumably Harvey's *Foure Letters and Certaine Sonnets* (1592) published after Greene's death.[51] '[T]he longer thou 184isdom, the more greefe thou 184isdom to thy frends, and giuest the greater head to thy enemies', Greene's ghost warns.[52] To follow up an impassioned denial of having ventriloquised Greene's voice with a ventriloquy of Greene's voice is a strange authorial move indeed. And yet, as I show in this section, it was perhaps a logical development from Greene's own precedent in using the dream narrative to effect a separation between the individual writing the pamphlet, and the author manifested within the text. Churchyard used the language of the dream, and the difficulty of dream interpretation, to separate himself from 'Dauy Dycar'; Greene, I suggest, used it to separate himself from 'Robert Greene'. In order to understand this process, it is necessary to put *Kind-Harts Dreame* in the context of both the *Groatsworth* controversy, and dream pamphlets by Greene himself, in particular *Greenes Vision* (probably composed in 1590, but published in 1592).

Greene himself published three dream narratives in the final two years of his life. These were *Greenes Vision*, *A Maidens Dreame* (1591), and *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592). In *A Maidens Dreame*, Greene dreams of a garden in which various figures mourn the

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[50] Chettle, sig. A4ᵛ. The 1593 edition of Nashe's *Pierce Pennilesse* (first published in 1592) contains a similar denial: he protests that he had nothing to do with 'a scald, triuial, lying pamphlet cald *Greens groats-worth of wit*'. Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Pennilesse*, 2ⁿᵈ edn (London: 1593), sig. ¶ᵛ.

[51] Elisabeth Chaghafi suggests that *Kind-Harts Dreame* was published *after* Nashe's response (in the form of *Strange Newes*). She proposes that *Kind-Harts Dreame* was a way in which Chettle could formulate his own response to Gabriel Harvey, and broaden his defence from Greene to all professional writers (while reminding Nashe that 'he too [was] a professional writer, even if he had not chosen to portray himself in this manner'). Elisabeth Chaghafi, 'The Posthumous Career of Robert Greene', in *English Literary Afterlives: Greene, Sidney, Donne and the Evolution of Posthumous Fame* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 49–82 (p. 66).

[52] Chettle, sigs. E1ᵛ–E2ʳ.

death of Lord High Chancellor, Christopher Hatton.[53] *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, meanwhile, consists of a narrative in which 'damped with a melancholy humor', Greene goes 'into y*e* fields to cheere vp my wits with the fresh aire'. Here he dreams of an argument between Cloth-breeches (representing traditional values) and Velvet-breeches (new money). In the process, Greene insults Richard Harvey as 'a Physitian or a foole' who 'spoiled 185isdom185 with his Astrological discourse'.[54] However, it is *Greenes Vision*, with its theme of the penitent author and its pastiche of other authorial voices, that contains the material of most relevance to Greene's use of the dream form to alienate a text from its author. This pamphlet also provides an important development on the road to the *Groatsworth* authorship controversy and hence Greene's return in *Kind-Harts Dreame*.

Greenes Vision directly addresses the subject of its author's changing literary style and content. As Arul Kumaran puts it, in his final two years Greene moved from 'euphuistic and Arcadian romances' to 'explicitly repentant stories'.[55] But although he promised repentance, Greene never quite managed it in what Meredith Skura describes as a 'soap opera'-like process.[56] While it is possible that Greene was genuinely torn between penitence and dissolution, his unfulfilled promises to repent might also have been something of a literary performance. Effectively, Greene created a doppelgänger who shared his name and many of his personal qualities and biographical details, yet who related mental and emotional journeys that were not—or at least not *consistently*—his own. In addition to its lengthy

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[53] Robert Greene, *A Maidens Dreame* (London: 1591).

[54] This fuelled Greene's conflict with the Harveys which is alluded to in *Kind-Harts Dreame*. Greene, *Quip*, sigs. E3ᵛ–E4ʳ.

[55] Arul Kumaran, 'Robert Greene's Martinist Transformation in 1590', *Studies in Philology*, 103 (2006), 243–63 (pp. 243–4).

[56] Meredith Anne Skura, *Tudor Autobiography: Listening for Inwardness* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 202.

pastiches of Chaucer and Gower, *Greenes Vision* demonstrates the self-conscious construction of an authorly persona. 'Robert Greene' was developing as a character who had a foot in the realms of both fact and fiction. 186isdom186andd how this 'Robert Greene' evolved, it is necessary to review greene's version of how *Greenes Vision* came to be written—which is itself most likely a mixture of real and fictional events.

The process that led to the publication of *Greenes Vision* began with the anonymous dream pamphlet *Tarltons Newes out of Purgatorie* (1590).[57] It was followed by another anonymous pamphlet, *The Cobler of Caunterburie Or An Inuectiue against Tarltons Newes out of Purgatorie* (1590).[58] The *Cobler*'s main objection to *Tarltons Newes* was that the *Newes* did not do a good enough job in its pastiche of Tarlton's voice: 'there is pretty stuffe in it, but vnworthy Dicke Tarltons humour: some where too low for Iestes, somewhere too hie for stile'. The *Cobler* in turn was a self-conscious imitation of the *Canterbury Tales*, albeit one that recognised the inadequacy of its pastiche; its author acknowledged that 'syr Ieffrey Chaucer' was 'hie aboue my reach'.[59] Richard Dimmick notes that the *Cobler* is more an 'unofficial sequel' to *Tarlton's Newes* than an invective against it, and speculates that one and the same author might have been behind both: namely, Robert Greene. Supporting evidence comes from the fact that 'the *nom de plume* given on the title page of *Tarltons Newes* is "Robin Goodfellow"—Greene's initials—and it quotes a couple of passages *verbatim* from Greene's works.' As Dimmick puts it, 'This war of the pamphlets begins to look suspiciously stage-managed'.[60] It is an intriguing point that, if Greene was indeed making mischief with a different persona in a dream pamphlet, he should use the same name

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[57] *Tarltons Newes out of Purgatorie* (London: 1590).

[59] *The Cobler of Caunterburie* (London: 1590), sig A2ᵛ, sig. A3ʳ.

[60] Jeremy Dimmick, 'Gower, Chaucer and the Art of Repentance in Robert Greene's *Vision*', *The Review of English Studies*, 57 (2006), 456–73 (pp. 457–8). In *Foure Letters*, Gabriel Harvey satirically refers to Greene as 'good Robin-good-fellow'. Harvey, sig. A3ᵛ.

as the troublemaker of folklore later employed by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. While not a detail that constitutes indisputable proof of Greene's authorship, it might be an indication of a mischievous spirit behind the pamphlet's composition.

Whatever the truth of the authorship of the *Cobler* and *Tarltons Newes*, at least some early modern readers came to a similar conclusion to Dimmick. In the opening pages of *Greenes Vision*, Greene paints a picture of his despair at being 'burdened with the penning of the *Cobler* of *Canterbury*'. The sorrow that Greene expresses in its opening pages is driven not so much by a sense of injustice at the false attribution, as the apparent realisation that the trivial, secular *Cobler* was the sort of material that he *could* have written. Thus, '[I]n a discontented humor', he writes, 'I sat me down vpon my bed-side and began to cal to remembrance what fond and wanton lines had past my pen'.[61] Having composed a classically-themed ode that considers the pros and cons of love poetry, Greene considers his dissolute life, falls asleep in bed, and dreams of a 'faire medowe' where he meets Chaucer and Gower. Both are helpfully labelled with their names, highlighting, as Elisabeth Chaghafi points out, their 'textual nature'.[62] Indeed, even in describing their bodies, Greene suggests a pair of men defined, literally, by the book: Chaucer wears an ink horn and carries a book, while Gower's face is 'wan' like those 'that plyen their booke'.[63] The poets enter a dispute that pits the merits of comic writing (Chaucer) against more moralistic texts (Gower). As part of the dispute, a Chaucerian and a Gowerian tale are presented as if related directly by the authors. Thus Chaucer is used to present a Chaucerian tale; Gower to present a Gowerian one. But what use does Greene makes of 'Greene'?

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[61] Greene, *Vision*, sig. B1ʳ.

[62] Greene, *Vision*, sig. B1ᵛ; Chaghafi, p. 76.

[63] Greene, *Vision*, sigs. C1ʳ–C1ᵛ.

Greenes Vision ends as Solomon arrives to deliver judgement; terrified and chastened, Greene wakes and vows 'to leaue all thoughts of loue, and to applye my wits as néere as I could, to séeke after 188isdom so highly commended by Salomon'.[64] With the end of the dream, the text comes as near as it can to the unification of the various authorial 'I's that have appeared during the pamphlet's narrative: the present Greene, vowing to seek wisdom; the past Greene; the dreaming Greene; the Greene ventriloquising classical modes; and the Greene pastiching Chaucer and Gower.[65] And yet we never get to read the theological work that the reformed Greene promises, here or elsewhere in his output. The voice of the author that should resolve and unify the many voices of the *Vision* is delayed indefinitely.

Suspicion that there is something fictional about Greene's penitence, and indeed the penitent Greene, in the *Vision* is supported by publisher Thomas Newman's dedication. Newman claims, intriguingly, that 'Manie haue published repentaunces vnder his name, but none more vnfeigned then this, being euerie word of his owne: his own phrase, his own method.'[66] Dimmick writes that 'Newman might be taken to imply that feigning is relative, on a sliding scale—and he also leaves it a little ambiguous whether "vnfeigned" implies the sincerity of the author's repentance as well as the fact of his authorship.'[67] Newman's qualification might even be taken to suggest that Greeneian repentance had, by 1592, become a genre of its own; that Greene's voice was becoming detached from its original subject, and was therefore a quality that could be more or less feigned. Just as Greene assumed the personae of Chaucer and Gower on the page, so too 'Greene' was in 1592—and beyond—

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[64] Greene, *Vision*, sig. H4ʳ.

[65] There is also, of course, also the possibility that the disguised Greene of *Tarleton's Newes* and *The Cobler* might be lurking in the background.

[66] Greene, *Vision*, sig. A3ʳ.

[67] Dimmick, p. 466.

one who might in turn have had his words and persona appropriated by others for their purposes. Indeed, Chaghafi suggests that Newman is alluding to *Groatsworth*, the 'vnfeigned' nature of the *Vision* standing in contrast to another 'Greene' pamphlet that might really have been Chettle's creation.[68] Whatever was the case, Newman's dedication suggests that, at the point of his demise, Robert Greene was both a mortal man, and the penitent 'Robert Greene' character who would survive to write and publish several more pamphlets. Death was not so much the end as a further separation of Greene from 'Greene'. That dream narratives allowed for dramatic, outlandish, supernatural events is obvious. What is perhaps less obvious (but a factor that I have highlighted in this chapter) is that they also allowed for considerable ambiguity regarding authorial agency, to the point that the voices in the pamphlet operate autonomously of the author *even when they are supposedly the author's own voice*. Robert Greene the waking writer was not necessarily the same as Greene the sleeping dreamer, and the 'Greene' that was the protagonist of the dream pamphlet might be another entity altogether. In these circumstances, the response to seeing a pamphlet signed by Robert Greene should not be 'Did Greene really write this?', but 'Which Greene wrote this?'

Indeed, the *Vision* pamphlet itself might mark the beginning of 'Greene' as an authorial voice appropriated and used by writers other than Greene himself. After promising that *Greenes Vision* is (almost) unfeigned, Newman presents the reader with an address supposedly by Greene. It states that 'in a vision before my death, I foresee that I am like to sustaine the shame of many follies of my youth', and ends with 'speake well of me when I am dead', signed '*Yours dying:* Robert Greene.'[69] It is not impossible that, two years after completing *Greenes Vision*, Greene returned to the manuscript to add these notes before

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[68] Chaghafi, p. 70.

[69] Greene, *Vision*, sigs. A4^r–A4^v.

expiring; that the pamphlet was, as it claimed, 'Written at the instant of his death'.[70] But it is also possible that Greene, after ventriloquising Chaucer's and Gower's characteristic styles in the main text of *Greenes Vision*, was to have his own style ventriloquised in the preface of very same pamphlet after his death, possibly by Newman.

That Chettle should provide the character of the penitent 'Greene' with a posthumous existence in *Kind-Harts Dreame* would seem a logical extension of this process by which 'Greene' the authorial persona came to outlive Greene the man. A dream narrative provided the opportunity for the dead to return in defiance of natural laws (and anti-purgatorial Protestant doctrine); it also catalysed the separation of the pamphlet's writer from its material and the 'author' manifesting on the page. The following section of this chapter returns to the *Groatsworth* authorship controversy alluded to in the preface of *Kind-Harts Dreame*. While it does not come to any new conclusions regarding Chettle's possible authorship of the text, it argues that *Kind-Harts Dreame* may be considered a logical development of the *Groatsworth*, in terms of its use of multiple voices, and the dissociation of the writer from those voices. Chettle—whether or not he was inspired by *Greenes Vision* or any other dream pamphlet—may have recognised that the dream narrative offered the ideal tool with which to achieve these literary effects.

The concept that, via the medium of the dream narrative, 'Greene' the literary persona developed a life of his own in *Greenes Vision* provides new context for the mysteries surrounding the authorship of *Groatsworth*, and the question of what precisely Greene was doing in Chettle's dream. 'Greene' went on to have a prolific literary career; besides his appearance in *Kind-Harts Dreame*, Sandra Clark notes the appearance of several posthumous Greene pamphlets originating from other hands: *Greenes Newes both from Heaven and Hell*

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[70] Greene, *Vision*, title page.

(1593), *Greenes Funeralls* (1594), John Dickenson's *Greene in Conceipt* (1598), and *Greenes Ghost Haunting Conie-Catchers* (1602).[71] It is perhaps significant that the only extant image of Greene is that on the title page of *Greene in Conceipt*, in which the shrouded spirit of Greene sits at his desk: a literal case of ghost writing.[72] Elisabeth Chaghafi points out that 'nearly all' the references to Greene's personal notoriety were posthumous, while 'there is little evidence that Greene's person attracted a lot of attention during his lifetime.'[73] 'Robert Greene' the literary character might continue to overshadow modern early modern scholarship at the expense of Greene himself. The penitent Greene of the *Vision* and *Kind-Harts Dreame* could be said to have escaped from the dream world to inhabit the space where the flesh-and-blood Greene once stood.

The controversy over whether or not Chettle imitated Greene and produced the *Groatsworth* himself is long-ranging, and has encompassed subjective assessments of both authors' characters, computer analysis of text, and even circumstantial evidence such as Chettle's printing skills and personal finances.[74] To make a definitive judgement is beyond the scope of this chapter. Admittedly, it would be useful to scholars trying to characterise the initial response to Shakespeare, in order to determine if the 'vpstart Crow' was an insult representing, as Jowett puts it, 'the disappointment of the old generation falling to the new' if

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[71] Clark, *Elizabethan Pamphleteers*, p 240; p. 289.

[72] Nandini Das, 'Critical Introduction', in Robert Greene, *Robert Greene's* Planetomachia *(1585)*, ed. by Nandini Das, pp. ix-lv (p. ix).

[73] Chaghafi, p. 52.

[74] For an overview, see Carroll. Character assessments can be found in Harold Jenkins, 'On the Authenticity of *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* and *The Repentance of Robert Greene*', *The Review of English Studies*, 41 (1935), 28–41, and Jowett. For computer-aided textual analysis, see Richard Westley, 'Computing Error: Reassessing Austin's Study of *Groatsworth of Wit*', *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 21 (2006), 363–78 and Donna Murphy, 'Did Gabriel Harvey Write *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit?*', *Notes and Queries*, 54 (2007), 249–53 (pp. 252–3). For Chettle's printing skills, see Robert Sawyer, 'Re-Reading "*Greenes Groatsworth of Wit*"', *Alicante Journal of English Studies*, 35 (2012), 67–79; for Chettle's debts, see Neil Carson, *A Companion to Henslowe's Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 62–3.

it came from Greene, or if, originating from Chettle as Shakespeare's contemporary, it '[fed] off envy.'[75] However, reading the *Groatsworth* not alongside the works of Shakespeare, but alongside its predecessor *Greenes Vision* and its successor publication *Kind-Harts Dreame*, suggests that it is equally if not more important as part of a sequence of pamphlets posing a significant challenge to the notion of a unified, consistent, and coherent authorial voice that is bound up in the body of a single named writer.

This challenge must, of course, be put in the context of early modern conceptions—if any—of what a 'coherent authorial voice' actually *was*. Ongoing scholarly dispute over what constituted an author in the early modern period, and indeed what constitutes an author now, stem from two major provocations of the late 1960s. These were Roland Barthes's proclamation of the 'death of the author', and Michel Foucault's claim that in the pre-modern period the identity of the author was deeply important to what would now be termed scientific publications, while 'texts that we today call "literary" (narratives, stories, epics, tragedies, comedies) were accepted, put into circulation, and valorized without any question about the identity of their author'.[76] The advent of modernity, Foucault added, inverted this relationship, such that the identity of the author now matters far less with regard to the reception of scientific texts, and far more to literary ones.[77]

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[75] Jowett, p. 483.

[76] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in Lodge and Wood, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, pp. 145–50; Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in Lodge and Wood, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, pp. 173–87 (pp. 179–80).

[77] The nature of scientific literature is outside the scope of this chapter; however, it is worth noting that modern-day scientific debate is not unaffected by individual identity and authority. Physicist J. E. Hirsch developed the so-called '*h*-index' which provides a metric for productivity and citation impact, and might be taken as an implicit measure of the reliability of an individual scientist's work. See J. E. Hirsch, 'An Index to Quantify an Individual's Scientific Research Output', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 102 (2005), 16569–16572.

Pushback against Barthes and, particularly, Foucault has come from scholars such as Brian Vickers, who has pointed to the condemnation of plagiarism by both classical and early modern authors. Vickers claims to find additional support for his argument in the appearance of author names on the title pages of early modern English books; however, as Lukas Erne has documented, the proportion of plays crediting their authors on the title page rose markedly only in the first years of the seventeenth century.[78] It is possible that this simply marks printers exploiting the commercial potential of an author's name, as opposed to recognition of authorly ownership of a text; after all, publishers still retained what would now be termed the copyright in the texts that they handled.[79]

It is anachronistic to apply ideas of authorship based on modern copyright law to early modern texts, and difficult to parse out in what precise manner the 'identity of the author' would matter to an individual's appreciation of a text. Evidence such as Greene's use of Gower and Chaucer to present specific types of narrative, and the posthumous 'Greene' publications suggests that sometimes an author's name mattered to readers inasmuch as it was a 'brand name' that promised a certain type of text. However, Chettle's disavowal of the *Groatsworth* indicates that, when an author offended, their identity—narrowly defined as the hand that held the pen—might come to matter a great deal. This chapter's analysis of the dream pamphlet suggests that when asking questions about the nature of early modern authorship, one is unlikely to find a single answer, but rather a range of possibilities dependent on the form and content of the text, its commercial imperatives, its religiopolitical nature, and the desires and intentions of the specific reader.

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[78] Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 71.

[79] See Christopher Burlinson, 'Manuscript and Print, 1500–1700', June 2016 in *Oxford Handbooks Online*, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.86 [Accessed 14 July 2021].

In this context, Steve Mentz's description of the *Groatsworth* as 'an unusual form of collaboration' is instructive. As Mentz puts it, 'this collaboration operates between a living author who claims to be merely an editor (Chettle) and a dead author whose role cannot be firmly fixed.'[80] The use of the penitent 'Robert Greene' character as the framing narrator for the *Groatsworth* may itself have functioned as an alternative to the dream narrative as a tool with which to introduce and hold multiple voices in balance. Following the common thread of Greene's (fictionalised) persona, the text speaks from several different perspectives as it moves through different genres from fable, to song, to proto-autobiography, to private correspondence. Indeed, Mentz considers *Groatsworth* as a sort of greatest hits compilation of Greene's various genres: 'Farewell to Folly', 'Greek romance', 'Cony catching', 'Lylian romance', 'Novella', 'Satire/Invective', and 'Repentance Tract'. It is, he writes, 'not an arbitrary collection of scraps and leftovers but a complete and strategic *summa* of Greene's multifaceted career as a prose author.'[81]

Whether or not one reads the *Groatsworth* as being quite so systematic a collection of Greene's various styles, it is certainly a text which speaks with many different tongues. Indeed, Elisabeth Chaghafi identifies the moment at which the narrative shifts from the tale of Roberto to the supposed autobiography of Greene as passage that 'actively blurs the distinctions between the three personae of "Roberto", "I" and "Greene"': 'Heereafter suppose me the saide *Roberto*, and I will goe on with that hee promised: *Greene* will send you now his groatsworth of wit'.[82] This passage both makes it unclear who is speaking, and suggests that the author might be manifest in the three different voices performing diverse functions:

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[80] Steve Mentz, 'Forming Greene: Theorizing the Early Modern Author in the *Groatsworth of Wit*', in *Writing Robert Greene: Essays on England's First Notorious Professional Writer*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 115–32 (pp. 117–18).

[81] Mentz, p. 119.

[82] Chaghafi, pp. 72–3.

Roberto relating the allegorical tale of the dissolute poet; 'I' drawing back the curtain on proceedings; and 'Greene' waiting to step up and inhabit the remainder of the pamphlet. A single sentence effects and contains an authorial quick-change act.

The appearance of Greene in *Kind-Harts Dreame*, in addition to the other voices Chettle produces on the page, means that Chettle's pamphlet could be seen as a logical sequel or companion piece to the *Groatsworth*, rather than a partial attempt to contain the fallout of the earlier pamphlet. In both, the penitent 'Robert Greene' persona appears, regardless of the involvement of Greene himself. Living up to Gabriel Harvey's posthumous description of Greene as 'an Omnigatherum', the *Groatsworth* manifests multiple voices through the use of self-conscious, fabular storytelling, as well as a supposed final letter to Greene's wife.[83] *Kind-Harts Dreame* is also an 'Omnigatherum', one in which Chettle combines the shifting narrative voice of *Groatsworth* with the possibilities for pastiche and separation of author from text offered by dream narratives such as *Greenes Vision*. The distancing effect of the Kind-Heart persona, combined with the self-alienating effect of the dream narrative, allows Chettle to position himself outside the texts he presents, puzzling over their meaning alongside the reader.

The dream pamphlet, in brief, provided not only the escape route of plausible deniability of responsibility that Churchyard employed, but also a structure in which multiple voices could be channelled with a mode and volition of their own independent of the author. Paradoxically, one of these dissociated voices even might be a version of the author: for example, a 'Robert Greene' sleeping, dreaming, and vowing penitence in the case of the *Vision*. In the following section, I explore how another prolific pamphleteer, Thomas Dekker,

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[83] Harvey, sig. D2[r].

manifested multiple voices—including multiple authorial voices—and multiple spaces on the

page in his 1620 pamphlet *Dekker his Dreame*.

'Ten thousand Soules': multiple spaces and voices in Dekker his Dreame

Thomas Dekker's *Dekker his Dreame* is, superficially at least, a very different pamphlet from

Chettle's *Kind-Harts Dreame*. While the title page of Chettle's pamphlet advertises itself as

the product of 'Kind-Heart', with Chettle's own name reduced to the initials 'H. C.', the

equivalent page of *Dekker his Dreame* offers no such mediating persona.[84] This dream

belongs to Dekker, whose image sits a little below his name. While *Kind-Harts Dreame*

breaks down—following the initial narrative of Kind-Heart's tavern visit—into a series of

letters, each attributed to a different author, Dekker himself remains the narrator guiding the

reader through his voyage to the underworld. However, *Dekker his Dreame* has an important

core feature in common with *Kind-Hart's Dreame*: it, too, utilises the dream as a literary

device to achieve effects of interpretive ambiguity and altered authorial agency, splitting the

author's voice into several different, possibly autonomous, entities.

    Dekker his Dreame begins with two dedications that immediately present the reader

with questions of readerly interpretation and authorial agency and identity. The first is to

Endymion Porter, a rich and influential member of the Duke of Buckingham's entourage.[85] In

this, Dekker offers a simile for his writerly approach that superficially claims the qualities of

clarity and plain-speaking, but proves more ambiguous on closer examination:

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[84] Dekker, *Dreame*, title page.

[85] Ronald G. Asch, 'Porter, Endymion (1587–1649)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 3 January 2008. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb:22562> [Accessed 2 April 2021].

> If you aske why, from the heapes of Men, I picke out you onely to bee that *Murus ahaeneus [wall of brass],* which must defend mee, let me tell you (what you know already,) that Bookes are like the *Hungarians* in *Paules,* who haue a Priuiledge to holde out their *Turkish* History for any one to reade. They beg nothing, the Texted Past-bord talkes all; and if nothing be giuen, nothing is spoken, but God knowes what they thinke[.][86]

The mention of the '*Hungarians* in *Paules*' is likely a reference to Hungarian refugees from the Ottoman empire. Documentary evidence suggests that some were permitted to beg for funds in London, presumably for their own relief or to free their kinsfolk being held hostage.[87] The 'Texted Past-bord' might refer to a strategy used to overcome the language barrier: i.e. a printed or written card which summarised their plight. Use of such a card may have been an ideal strategy in the St Paul's area, where the presence of booksellers ensured a steady stream of literate and possibly comfortably-off passers-by.

So far, so clear: if we take Dekker's statement at face value, the text of the Hungarians' signs bridges a linguistic and cultural gap to give the English passer-by a concise and unambiguous account of the individual Hungarian's biography and circumstances; books presumably offer a similarly transparent messaging system. However, complications immediately arise. Who is who (and what) in Dekker's simile? The simplest explanation is that he, Dekker, is the Hungarian; the paste-board is the book; the passer-by is the reader (or patron). But Dekker has already likened books themselves to the Hungarians—suggesting that the author is either nowhere in the equation, or that the identity of the author is somehow elided with the physical matter of the text itself (a concept used by Dekker elsewhere, and

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[86] Dekker, *Dreame*, sig. A2[r].

[87] Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (London & New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 183; p. 186.

outlined below). In any reading of Dekker's simile, the freedom of the reader—the one

passing by, with no more obligation to engage with the paste-board than with any of the other

textual products on display at St Paul's—is nevertheless circumscribed by something

reserved behind the text: 'God knowes what they thinke'. While everything is apparently on

display—in both paste-board and book—there is still a hidden agenda, known only to the

Hungarian (and hence, possibly, the text itself), and God.

Dekker, then, uses a sight that must have been well-known to the book-buyers of

Paul's to illustrate the patron-author contract; or, rather, to explore how mysterious such a

contract might be in terms of obligation, appreciation, and reward. In the ambiguities of this

simile, we might find the suggestion of a relationship between reader and author similar to

that defined in *Dauie Dycars Dreame* and *Kind-Harts Dreame*. The reader can make of the

text what they will, with the caveat that they can never know if they have arrived at the

correct interpretation. The dream narrative with its use of cryptic language and imagery

licences readerly speculation while ultimately undermining readerly authority.

The message to Dekker's patron is followed by a second address, this time 'To the

Reader', in which he immediately shifts into an allegorical framing of his recent

imprisonment, foregrounding the obscure and dream-centred nature of the narrative. The

reader is implicitly cued to read the pamphlet in a translational, interpretative mode:

imprisonment is not mentioned, nor is the Kings Bench prison named (where Dekker was

held for debt from 1613–c. 1619), but rather Dekker describes 'seuen yeares' of 'a long

Sleepe' in 'a Caue strongly shut vp by most Diuellish & dreadfull enchantments'.[88] The

reader is, effectively, invited to join Dekker in the process of dreaming as it is framed on the

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[88] John Twyning, 'Dekker, Thomas (*c.* 1572–1632)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 3 January 2008. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7428> [Accessed 27 January 2021]; Dekker, *Dreame*, sig. A4ʳ.

title page: 'rapt with a Poeticall *Enthusiasme, the great Volumes of Heauen* and Hell to Him were opened, in which he *read many Wonderfull Things*'.[89] Dreaming here is an act of *reading* that, if approached in the correct frame of mind, enables engagement with religious mysteries. As with Wyll's distancing of Churchyard from the dream attributed to Dycar, or Kind-Heart's theatrical bafflement at the letters he is given by the ghosts in the tavern, the reader is invited to join the author in a position apparently *outside* the creation of the text: it is there on the page to be speculated upon by author and reader alike. Ultimately, 'God knows' what the correct interpretation might be.

While the vivid yet cryptic nature of dream imagery naturally lends itself to multiple interpretations, this is not the sole way in which the dream pamphlet cultivates an aura of ambiguity as to the intentions of the author. Indeed, the framing of the dream pamphlet as a form (or reportage of) a found document prompts the reader not only to question what the author means, but to ask if the author is present at all. Greene uses the dream to both present, and detach himself from, the voices of Gower, Chaucer, and even 'Robert Greene'; Chettle reproduces manuscripts left behind by the various ghosts who visited Kind-Heart's dream in the tavern; and, as we shall see, Dekker develops the potential of the dream narrative to divide the authorial voice further in his *Dreame*. Arguably, the dream pamphlets of Greene, Chettle, and Dekker discussed in this chapter are all characterised by a polyphonic effect, a term whose critical use was pioneered by Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin himself saw polyphony as a characteristically modern development of European literature, tracing its origins to parodic medieval texts in which 'boundary lines between someone else's speech and one's own speech were flexible, ambiguous, often deliberately distorted and confused'.[90]

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[89] Dekker, *Dreame*, title page.

[90] Bakhtin, p. 125.

Bakhtin claimed that polyphony developed into an essential characteristic of the novel, which he conceptualised as 'a system of intersecting planes' composed of 'internally dialogized images—of the languages, styles, world views of another'.[91] Subsequent critics such as John Twyning have also found polyphony in early modern urban literature, where 'the author's voice is just one of many competing and unmerged voices in the text'.[92] But dreams are also a source of textual polyphony. In the case of *Greenes Vision* and *Kind-Harts Dreame*, dreams summon the voices of the dead to appear as if unmediated on the page, and the author moves to sit with the reader and puzzle over their significance. Polyphony is, of course, not a feature unique to dream pamphlets. Other narrative frames, such as the *Canterbury Tales* model of travellers' stories, also provided a ready means to bring multiple voices into a literary space, where they might be contained in conversation without necessarily requiring resolution. The dream, however, is particularly well suited as a catalyst for polyphony, in that it affords the pamphlet author the opportunity to effectively split and redistribute the authorial 'I'; like the dreamer, the author is simultaneously the point around which all the events and characters revolve, and not physically present at all.

In *Dekker his Dreame*, we observe a development of polyphony such that the multiple voices are produced and presented not sequentially (as a series of tales or letters), but simultaneously on the same page. Dekker himself was an author especially well-positioned to explore the literary possibilities of polyphony; his 'I' has proved notoriously difficult to situate religiously, politically, and personally. In the early twentieth century, Kate Gregg concluded that 'When Dekker thought of religion in connection with the state, he was a staunch Anglican; when he considered abuse in the church, he was a Puritan; when he

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[91] Bakhtin, p. 111; p. 109.

[92] John A. Twyning, 'Literature of the Metropolis', in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 119–132 (pp. 128–9).

considered the relations between man, God, and the universe, he was a Calvinist'; towards

the end of the century, Julia Gasper's selective reading of his plays led her to conclude that he

was a 'militant protestant'.[93] The un-pin-downable nature of Dekker's content also applies to

his style. In his critical edition of *A Knight's Conjuring*, Larry Robbins notes that 'attempts to

force [Dekker's] works into clear-cut categories have been tentative and unsuccessful

because of the unmanageable variety of form, content, and style', and quotes Marie Jones-

Davies's pithy summary: 'il n'y pas "un" style unique, mais "des" styles'.[94] The variety of

Dekker's output, both between plays and pamphlets, and within the pamphlet form itself,

further complicates the picture. As Sandra Clark puts it, 'He wrote verse, a romance,

anecdotes and short tales, entertainments, allegories, sensational reportage, rogue pamphlets,

a mock behaviour book, dream visions, and even a mock almanac.'[95] Since the turn of the

twenty-first century, critical attention has tended to treat this indefinability as a characteristic

feature of Dekker's writing, rather than a writerly weakness to be puzzled over. Peter Lake

describes Dekker's pamphlet output as 'Half jeremiad, half joke-book' and adds that

'Dekker's pamphlets occupied […] a middle ground, not stably located between, but rather

(unstably) composed of both the religious and the secular, the godly and profane.'[96] As noted

above, John Twyning uses Bakhtin's concept of polyphony in drawing attention to Dekker as

a producer of 'grab-bag' of voices, of a 'multiconsciousness'.[97]

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[93] Kate L. Gregg, *Thomas Dekker: A Study in Economic and Social Backgrounds* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1924), p. 96; Julia Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 3.

[94] Robbins, p. 19; p. 41.

[95] Clark, *Elizabethan Pamphleteers*, p. 29.

[96] Peter Lake, 'Religion and Cheap Print', in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture Volume 1: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. by Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 217–41 (p. 228).

[97] Twyning, 'Literature of the Metropolis', pp. 128–9.

This polyphony, as Anna Bayman notes, had a commercial edge: given the (comparatively) broad pamphlet market, multiple viewpoints and contradictions not only within one writer's output, but within the same publication, were consistent with the demands of the form, which aimed 'to sell fast and to as wide an audience as possible; their appeal therefore was as inclusive as possible […] they were certainly given to internal contradiction and multiplicity.'[98] And yet Bayman also detects something more than the commercial imperative in Dekker's pamphlets:

> Dekker wrote with a heightened awareness of what it meant to be a professional writer—and specifically, to be a writer of prose pamphlets—repeatedly indicating the distinctive ways in which the pamphlet form and the trade in cheap books shaped his material and the ways in which his readers might engage with it, and construing a public discursive sphere in which meaning was unstable and contested, and claims to authorship and authority were frail at best and, often, positively deceitful.[99]

Bayman, however, refrains from exploring this quality in *Dekker his Dreame*, which she describes as 'most obviously autobiographical' of his works, saturated with 'exhaustion and pessimism' which may 'be attributed to the draining experience of imprisonment.'[100] In this, she agrees with Twyning's assessment:

> With its hitherto rare appearance of the author's name, the title exemplified both his own personal sense of suffering and the significant role which the fear of Hell played in the imagination. It is a deeply personal account in which the author appears at the centre of the narrative. […] In his *Dreame*, Dekker attempts to draw upon an inner

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[98] Anna Bayman, *Thomas Dekker and the Culture of Pamphleteering in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p. 36.

[99] Bayman, pp. 9–10.

[100] Bayman, p. 114; p. 54.

language to articulate himself, to use it as a crucial resource in order to reveal, to utter, the 'In-utterable Horrors' he found there. In that attempt he delved into his unconscious [...] Both prison and Hell, it seems, demanded a degree of subjective erasure which renders Dekker's bitter and personal inquiry anomalous. The author openly presents himself as a conformist, as he appears suitably abject before heaven's might. […] Unlike his previous excursions into Hell, *Dekker his Dreame* proclaimed itself to be rigidly orthodox.[101]

However, examining the pamphlet as a whole—and informed by Dekker's previous treatment of the dream form in *Newes from Hell* and *A Knight's Conjuring*—may lead to a different conclusion. In *Dekker his Dreame*, Dekker uses the conventions of the pamphlet *form* (including textual layout) allied with the use of dream *content* to produce a work that contains and expresses a polyphonic and contradictory form of the self.

Dekker his Dreame was published just over a decade after Dekker's dream pamphlet *A Knight's Conjuring* (1607; a reworked version of 1606's *Newes from Hell*). Unsurprisingly, there are several thematic and stylistic connections between the *Conjuring* and the *Dreame*: *A Knight's Conjuring* is a sequel of sorts to Nashe's *Pierce Penniless*, detailing the author's journey with the Knight of the Post through the world and into Hell, carrying Penniless's supplication to the Devil. Nevertheless, *A Knight's Conjuring* is only revealed as a dream on the final page, in which the noise stirred up by Chettle's arrival wakes Dekker.[102] However, even if the dream nature of the narrative is not made explicit from the start, the title page of *A Knight's Conjuring* does generate some ambiguity as to the agency of the author. It states that

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[101] John Twyning, *London Dispossessed: Literature and Social Space in the Early Modern City* (Basingstoke & New York: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 188–9.

[102] This was altered in a late-seventeenth-century reworking of the pamphlet, *Poor Robin's Visions* (1677): the title page specifies that the text was 'Discouered in a Dream', and the opening pages include a moment when the narrator specifies 'on a sudden I fell into a Trance'. *Poor Robin's Visions* (London: 1677), title page; sig. A2ᵛ.

the *Conjuring* is 'Done in earnest: Discouered in Iest. By *Thomas Dekker*.'[103] The implication is not only that the pamphlet wraps serious intentions in a comic guise; it is that Dekker has both 'done' and 'discovered' the text.

The title—and title page—of *Dekker his Dreame* more explicitly advertises the text as product both actively produced and passively received by Dekker (Figure 3). The large lettering used for the author's name, and the investment of money in producing the accompanying image, indicate that the persona of Dekker was a selling point. Bayman notes that specially commissioned illustrations were used in other pamphlets by Dekker, such as the Bellman images, and that the picture of Dekker in bed is 'the only representation we have of Dekker himself'.[104] However, even as it promotes 'Dekker', the title page introduces the possibility of other voices and agencies involved in the pamphlet's creation. Dekker is pictured in bed, rather than in the act of writing; this reinforces the image of the author as a passive recipient of the text, framing him as 'rapt with a Poeticall *Enthusiasme*'. The dream is described as 'Volumes' which he '*read*', rather than material he created. Beneath this is a quote from Ovid's *Fasti*: '*Est Deus in Nobis, agitante calescimus Illo*' ('*There is a god within us, his stirring warms us*'). While Dekker's persona is stamped firmly onto the title page, it undermined by the suggestion that he is not solely responsible for the text within, or rather, that multiple authors might be contained in the name of 'Dekker': writer and observer, man and god within.

Once the pages of the pamphlet were cut, the layout of the pamphlet would have reinforced this impression of multiple voices at work under the broad umbrella of the name 'Dekker'. The main narrative takes the form of a poem, but it is interspersed with explicatory

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[103] Dekker, *Conjuring*, title page.

[104] Bayman, pp. 6–7.

prose, which in turn is annotated by further text in the margin. This gives the superficial impression of utility, suggesting that the text is supporting the reader in their efforts at interpretation. This structure, however, might in fact result in further mystification. For example, take Dekker's description of the river around Hell (Figure 4):

> This *Flaming Kingdome* hath *One Ferriman*,
>
> And he *One Boate*: he rowes through *Acheron*
>
> *Styx*, and *Cocytus*, Riuers that in *Hell*
>
> Spread all the *Countrey* ouer: *Fogges* still dwell
>
> Stinking and thick, vpon them, and there growes
>
> Vpon their *bankes* (in wild disordered rowes)
>
> The *Poplar* (white and black) with blasted *Ewgh*,
>
> The deadly *Poppy*, *Cypresse*, *Gall*, and *Rew*,
>
> (Emblems of *Graues*, *Tombes*, *Funerals*, and *beeres*)
>
> And on the boughes no other Bird appeares,
>
> But *Schriches*, *Owles*, and *Rauens*, and the shrill throates
>
> Of *Whistlers*; death still listning to their Notes.[105]

This is followed by a prose section in which the reader is instructed how to read the preceding passage.

> These *Riuers* of *Hell*, *Poetically* inuented, cary a *Morall* and *Mysticall* Interpretation: for *Acheron* (the first water) signifies *Bitternesse*: *Styx*, a detestation; and *Cocytus*, a Sorrow or *Repentance*, and are thus applyed. When *Soules*, by reason of their *Sinnes*, are to passe ouer the troublesome *Riuers* of *Death*, being tormented with remembrance of the losse of worldly *Honors*, *Riches*, &c. then they passe *Acheron*, it

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[105] Dekker, *Dreame*, sigs. C3ᵛ–C4ʳ.

is a bitter draught: *Styx* is the next, for when they see no remedy, but they must passe

ouer to their last shoare, they begin to haue a loathing of their *Ante-acted* life: and

then comming to ferry ouer *Cocytus*, they mourne and howle: so that all the conflicts,

combats, and earthly wrastlings about the time of a *Mans* departure, are figured vnder

those *Three Riuers*.[106]

To the right of the page, a marginal note provides still further guidance: 'A pardon for these

Poeticall Fictions, may (without much begging) bee giuen, if the Curious Censor makes but

true vse of the Inclusiue moral, no way derogating from Diuinity.'[107]

Over the space of two pages, then, the reader is offered multiple methods of

interpretation. They are given the vivid and emotionally stirring description of Hell's rivers,

which are lined with vegetation that is symbolic in itself of death; the reader is instructed that

the rivers themselves are symbolic, with a description of how each stands for the various

stages of repentance; and the whole picture is revealed as one of Dekker's 'Poeticall

Fictions', for which he both begs pardon and grants his own absolution. The reader might

choose the order in which to move through these various layers of literary reality; for

example, by reading the marginalia first, last, or not at all. Alongside this degree of choice,

the reader is implicitly invited to form their own interpretation of Dekker's dream, and to test

it against that of the author. But it is unclear which part of the page—poetry, prose, or

marginal note—represents the final, unambiguous authorial perspective.

Similarly, on a later page, the 'Poeticall' author describes 'The Darknesse of Hell' as being

greater than any darkness that can be conceived:

Not all these *Darkenesses* together glowd,

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[106] Dekker, *Dreame*, sig. C4ʳ.

[107] Dekker, *Dreame*, sig. C4ʳ.

And ten-times-ten *Redoubled* and *Renewde*,

Are halfe so dismall as the *Night* infernall,

Black, *Stinking*, *Stiflling*, *Poysning*, and *Eternall*.

The scholarly Dekker adds Biblical sources in a line of prose beneath: 'See for this

Darkenesse *Math*.22.13. Iud.13. Iob 10. Prou.4.14. Psal.107.10.' Meanwhile the author,

aware of the status of the text as a 'Poeticall enthusiasme' adds a note in the margin: 'The

darknesse of Hel (no way to bee described) is heere notwithstanding by comparison of others,

made fearefull vnto Humane vnderstanding by such things as we know.'[108] This is an

acknowledgement of the limitations of text in describing the indescribable, a brief pulling

away of the curtain concealing the author devising solutions to these challenges. And yet, the

horror of Hell's darkness remains, artifice or not.

Dekker, as an authorial 'I', is both all of these voices and none of them: or it might be

more accurate to say that the 'I' emerges in the totality of the complementary and

contradictory voices on the page. The idea that the page might be elided with the author

himself was not original to the *Dreame* or even to Dekker. It was employed, for example, by

Nashe in his introduction to *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) in which his 'Jack Wilton'

persona plays on his identity as a 'page' of the court and the physical pages of the pamphlet,

giving instructions as to how he will permit them to be utilised—for kindling tobacco,

wrapping clothes, and stopping pots—according to his preference. What is done to the 'page'

made of paper somehow also affects the 'page' himself. For example, he objects to the use of

the pamphlet's pages for wrapping mace, 'a strong, hot, costly spice […] which above all

things he hates'; mace additionally, as J. B. Steane points out, represents the weapon of the

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[108] Dekker, *Dreame*, sigs. D3ʳ–D3ᵛ. Over the page from the long main marginal note cited here there is, presumably for reference, the brief marginal note 'The properties of hells darkenesse'.

sergeant or bailiff, potentially capable of doing violence to the body of the page.[109] Dekker also identifies his sense of self as an author with the physical structure of the pamphlet in *The Wonderful Yeare* (1603), describing 'a man in Print' as 'he that dares hazard a pressing to death'.[110] The tortures of the paper making its way through the process of printing, and those of the author whose words undergo oppressive scrutiny on that paper, are as one. It is perhaps not coincidental, at least in the case of the *Dreame*, that while the page is impressed with the text, it is not the *producer* of that text, in the same way that the dreamer/author is the passive recipient of the dream. The pamphlet form makes Dekker both eminently locatable—he is not only on the page, he *is* the page—and highly elusive, as he exists in several different areas of the page at once, speaking with different voices.

This elusive, fissiparous authorial voice is appropriately matched by the narrative content of *Dekker his Dreame*, which constructs a sense of multiple co-existent realities. To fully appreciate this aspect of the pamphlet, we must first return to its predecessor, *A Knight's Conjuring*, and examine how this dream narrative presents a fantastical voyage that is nevertheless profoundly anchored in the experience of London, Dekker's familiar, and probably lifelong, environment.[111]

It is particularly instructive to compare Dekker's approach in *Conjuring* with that of Nashe in *Pierce Penniless*, to which *Conjuring* is a belated sequel. Nashe describes 'the scituation of [Hell] in respect of heauen' by writing that

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[109] Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), sig. A3ᵛ. For the multiple meanings of 'mace', see Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works*, ed. by J. B. Steane (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 253, footnote 6.

[110] Thomas Dekker, *The Wonderfull Yeare* (London: 1603), sig. A3ʳ.

[111] Twyning, 'Dekker'.

I can no better compare it than to Callis and Douer: for as a man standing vpon Callis Sands may see men walking on Douer Clyffes, so easily may you discerne Heauen from the farthest part of hell, and behold the melodie and motions of the Angels and Spirits there resident[.][112]

A known topographical feature is thus employed to give the reader a sense of distance and scale. Dekker, however, juxtaposes the geography of England—and specifically London— with that of Hell in a way that is both more immediate and more confusing. Hell's heat is 'like the Glasse-house *Furnace* in Blacke-friers, the bone-fires that are kept there, neuer goe out'.[113] As for the Styx, 'looke howe *Moore-ditche* shewes, when the water is three-quarters out, and by reason the stomack of it is ouer-laden, is readie to fall to casting, so does that, it stincks almost worse, is almost as poysonous, altogether so muddie, altogether so blacke'.[114]

Nashe uses the geography of Calais and Dover to make a simple point about distance; he is not necessarily saying that France is like Hell and England like Heaven (although this may be implied). Dekker, however, conveys the idea that physical aspects of London are indistinguishable from Hell. It is unclear, for example, whether the 'bone-fires' he refers to are those of Blackfriars or Hell; the 'there' might be read as a reference to either. Similarly, it is uncertain whether the Styx or Moorditch is more poisonous; they are so similar that they might be composed of the same substance. Dekker also writes 'of Brokers, there's a Longer lane in Hell, than there is in *London*.'[115] Both Hell and London have a Long Lane: that in Hell just happens to be longer. Hell even mirrors London socially: 'You haue of all Trades, of

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[112] Thomas Nashe, *Pierce Penniless* (London: 1592), sig. G2^r.

[113] Dekker, *Conjuring*, sig. C4^v.

[114] Dekker, *Conjuring*, sig. F3^v.

[115] Dekker, *Conjuring*, sig. H3^r.

all Professions, of all States some there: you haue Popes there, as well as here: Lords there, as well as here: Knights there, as well as here: Aldermen there, as well as here: Ladies there, as well as here: Lawyers there, as wel as here'.[116] It becomes hard to tell where Dekker's description of Hell ends and that of London begins, and vice versa: where is 'here', and where is 'there'.

In addition, Dekker compares the entry-point of Hell to the doors of the playhouse. In *A Knight's Conjuring*, he writes that 'It was a Comedy, to see what a crowding (as if it had bene at a newe Play,) there was vpon the *Acheronticque Strond*'; in *Dekker his Dreame* he recycles this comparison, stating that 'As at some direfull *Tragoedy* (before Not Acted) men prease round-about the dore'.[117] On one level, as with Nashe, Dekker is using London's familiar sights to give his reader access to the unseen and indescribable. But these descriptions also lend the physical landscape of London a Hell-like aspect, such that it is simultaneously the solid physical structure known to readers, and a space that contains the unseen underworld. Another use of the playhouse device in *Conjuring* reinforces this impression that the city and the afterlife are being elided, and that multiple realities are being conjured into existence in the same literary and physical spaces. In his description of the reluctance of the Devil to engage in a public fencing display, Dekker writes that '*Hell* beeing vnder euerie one of their *Stages*, the Players (if they had owed him a spight) might with a false trap-dore haue slipt him down, & there haue kept him as a laughing-stock to all their yawning Spectators'. He makes a similar play later on the 'hell of their owne' that tailors keep 'under their shopboard'—a space for discarded scraps. Hence there are no tailors in Hell

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[116] Dekker, *Conjuring*, sig. D1ʳ.

[117] Dekker, *Conjuring*, sig. F2ᵛ–F3ʳ; *Dreame*, sig. D1ᵛ

itself, as 'there lye their tettered soules, patcht out with nothing but rags.'[118] The colloquial 'Hells' of the playhouse and tailor's shop also serve as real iterations of a literal Hell.

In *Dekker his Dreame*, Dekker develops this aspect of *A Knight's Conjuring*; the multiple realities of Dekker's *Dreame* are produced in the single location of the author's immediate surroundings. The *Dreame* thus complicates the boundary between sleeping and dreaming, and between the authorial 'Dekker' persona and that of the writer imprisoned in the King's Bench for seven years. As noted above, Dekker does not mention the King's Bench directly in his address to his patron or readers. However, it is possible that this is a subtext that the reader could reasonably have brought to the pamphlet, especially as Dekker is listed (and pictured) so prominently as the author; presumably his long stay in prison would have been common knowledge in London. Furthermore, the Hell which Dekker describes shares specific characteristics with—and is finally revealed to be indistinguishable from— prison.

For example, Dekker's description of Hell's temperature generates ambiguity as to how distinct the Hell of the dream is from the prison cell in which the dreamer sleeps. As Clark points out, '*Dekker his Dreame* is one of the few pamphlets to use the idea of extremes of temperature [in Hell], which so caught the imagination of Dante.' These extremes include 'infernal cold'.[119] Dekker himself indicates awareness that an explanation for his freezing— as opposed to boiling—version of Hell is warranted. He gives a poetic narrative of icy torments: '*Death* from his earthy hands flung here and there | Cold *Snakes*, and *Scorpions*, which did piece-male teare | *Frost-bitten Soules*'; but it is broken off for elucidation in prose:

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[118] Dekker, *Conjuring*, sigs. C1ᵛ–C2ʳ; sig. H4ʳ.

[119] Clark, *Elizabethan Pamphleteers*, p. 156.

When thus farre I was transported by my *Dreame:* I called to minde (me thought) that

vpon earth I had heard many great Schollers defend, that there was no Cold in hell:

But then (turning ouer the leaues of my memory) I found writteu [*sic*] there,

that *Iob* once spake thus.

They shal passe from the waters of *Snow,* to too much *Heate.* And that vpon those

wordes Reuerend *Bede* did inferre, that *Iob* seemed to point (with his finger as it

were) at *Two Hels,* the one of *Fire,* the other of *Cold.* And that *S. Hierome* vpon the

tenth of *Mathew,* did auouch the same thing: And againe, that *Hugo Victorinus,* in his

Booke *De Anima,* had set downe, that in *Hell* there was a *Passage* from the waters

of *Snow,* to the heate of *Fire,* and both of these were Insufferable, &c. *Iob* 24. […]

These, & other *Fortifications* of *Reading* defending me, were Armors sufficient & of

proofe, that there was *Cold* in *Hell* […] considering with my selfe, that it was no

Pillar for Saluation to leane vpon, to beleeue that there was or was not any such thing,

it could (me thought) be no offence to *Perswade,* It was so, or not so: and the rather,

because it was but a *Dreame*.[120]

Dekker's defence for his unusual theological position again illustrates the advantages of the

dream narrative in providing a last line of defence when it comes to controversy (in this case,

religious dispute). He can cite Biblical precedent, but if this is not sufficient, the status of the

text as '*Dreame*' means that Dekker is freed from the obligation to stand by his position.

However, Dekker's cold Hell might also serve a specific function in uniting the poet's

dream and his physical position within the King's Bench prison, where he *spent* 'seuen years'

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[120] Dekker, Dreame, sigs. E1ᵛ–E2ᵛ.

of 'long Sleepe'.[121] Dekker had long associated prison with both Hell and freezing

temperatures. In his 1606 pamphlet *The seuen deadly sinnes of London*, Dekker describes the

city's prisons—the '*Thirteene strong houses of sorrow*'—as 'cold [in] their imbracements'.[122]

In *Jests to Make you Merie* (1607), he devotes a section to 'The miserie of a Prison, and a

Prisoner'; he describes prison as 'the very next doore to hell […] a bed of terror, no, no, it

stands not next doore to hell, but it is hell it selfe: for soules lye languishing and cannot dye.'

Prison keepers 'are churlish, and so are Diuills'; the prison itself is a 'cold Harbor'.[123] The

condition of cold in the *Dreame* therefore persists between Hell and the prison, between the

sleeping Dekker and his waking self. Of course, the idea that Hell and a prison were directly

comparable was not unique to Dekker; as Twyning records,

> Not surprisingly, common references to prison intersected with colloquial language
>
> about Hell. Dungeons were called 'limbo' or 'limboes'; prison officers at Newgate
>
> were called the 'Black Dog' after Cerberus the mythical gatekeeper of the
>
> underworld; and the worse [sic] place in prison, the deepest dungeon, was often called
>
> the 'hole' or 'hell-hole'. Another popular term was 'Counter Hell', or 'Compter Hell',
>
> which referred to debtor's prison. Even the customary, though not technically legal,
>
> bribe which had to be paid to crooked jailers for release, 1d, was the same as Charon's
>
> infamous one-way fee for ferrying the soul to Hell.[124]

However, Dekker seems to go further in the *Dreame*: here, the cold is a common physical

property that suggests prison and Hell are not just similar to one another, but actually share

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[121] Dekker, *Dreame*, sig. A4ʳ.

[122] Thomas Dekker, *The Seuen Deadly Sinnes of London* (London: 1606), sig. F3ᵛ.

[123] Thomas Dekker, *Jests to Make you Merie* (London: 1607), sig. G3ʳ; sig. G4ʳ.

[124] Twyning, *London Dispossessed*, p. 181.

certain aspects of their identity. The prison is not only *like* Hell; its chilly nature forms a characteristic part *of* Hell in the shivering, sleeping Dekker's dream.

It is not only the freezing temperature that bridges Hell and the prison, dreaming and wakefulness. The acoustic environment is also held in common. This is exemplified in *Dekker his Dreame*'s development of a popular literary device in which a noise within the dream wakes the dreamer. It is a moment in the pamphlet which merits in-depth exploration, both for its relation to the *Dreame*'s literary precedents, and for what it reveals about Dekker's leverage of a standard part of the dream narrative—the moment of waking—to generate a polyphonic effect. In ending his pamphlet with the moment when 'ten thousand Soules (rauing mad) Roard', Dekker employs a longstanding convention in which the dreamer is woken abruptly, and sets about writing the pamphlet which the reader holds in their hands.[125] Dekker uses a similar technique in *A Knight's Conjuring*, when the noise accompanying Chettle's arrival wakes the author: 'they made such a mad noyse, that all this *Coniuring* which is past, (beeing but a dreame,) I suddenlie started vp, and am now awake.'[126] In utilising this as the conclusion of his narrative, Dekker follows literary precedents including Robert Greene's *A Maidens Dreame*. Greene's pamphlet concludes its tribute to Lord High Chancellor Christopher Hatton with the noise of mourners rousing the narrator: 'For griefe the people shouted such a screame: | That I awooke and start out of my dreame.'[127] Greene also employs this device at the end of *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier*: 'At this verdict pronounst by the Knight, all the standers by clapt their hands, and gaue a mighty

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[125] Dekker, *Dreame*, sig. F2ʳ.

[126] Dekker, *Conjuring*, sig. L1ᵛ.

[127] Greene, *Maidens Dreame*, sig. C3ᵛ.

shout, where at I started and awaked, for I was in a dreame and in my bed, and so rose vp, and writ in a merry vaine what you haue heard.'[128]

This moment of waking is one that both separates and unifies the authorial voice. Seán Burke notes that the moment at which the author picks up their pen to write at the conclusion of any supposedly autobiographical narrative is when

> the past of the subject and the present of the writing draw ever closer, the text begins to talk of here, now, for the future. Yet this moment is always already a recession, the vanishing point at which the two subjects meet and as soon slip away […] It is at this point, and only at this point, that we can confidently say that we do not know which subject has written this page[.][129]

In dream narratives, this moment of unification of authorial subjects is potentiated by the act of waking, which bridges not only past and present versions of the author, but their sleeping and waking personae. A vivid example is the conclusion to the account of 'The Dreame' that follows *Kind-Harts Dreame*'s prefaces, in which Kind-Heart is woken by the noise of his dream visitors:

> in a round ring they compassed my bed, and thrusting into my hand all their papers, they at once charged mee to awake, and publish them to the world.
>
> This charge seemed to mee most dreadfull of all the dreame, because in that the distinguishing of their seuerall voices was heard, farre from the frequent manner of mens speach. In fine, Cuckoe with his pipes, and Antony with his Crowd, keeping

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[128] Greene, *Quip,* sig. F4ʳ.

[129] Seán Burke *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 56.

equall epuipage first left my sight; Tarlton with his Taber fetching two or three leaden friskes, shortly followed, and the Doctor and maister Greene immediatly vanished.

With this (not a little amazed as one from a trance reviued) I rouzd vp my selfe: when sodainly out of my hand fell the fiue papers, which confirmed my dreame to bee no fantisie.[130]

Chettle explicitly frames this as a moment when the polyphonic 'seuerall voices' that have visited Kind-Heart in his sleep reach a peak of loudness before they vanish sequentially from the author's field of perception, leaving behind a single 'I' to be roused to waking life. However, this return to a unified authorial self might be illusory: Kind-Heart holds the 'fiue papers' given to him in his hand, and it is at this moment that his narrative stops and that of the first ghost begins. From the point of the view of the reader, it is at the very moment of the singular, conscious author's manifestation that the authorial voice breaks down into polyphony.

In *Dekker his Dreame*, Thomas Dekker develops this effect further. At the conclusion of his visit to Hell, there is an exchange involving one of the damned souls, who states that he died at the age of thirty. Having spent five of his years in infancy, and fifteen asleep, he asks 'O must I aliue | Be held for Euer in *Damnations Iayle* | For poore *ten yeares*!' This argument, which admittedly carries the weight of logic, is answered by a voice 'tun'd to an *Angels Sound*' that refuses to see the protestor's point of view: 'Thou on the *bread* thy *Sins* did earne doest feede, | Not paying by the *Day*, but by the *Deede*.'[131] There is no resolution to this dispute; the angelic intervention prompts the other residents of Hell to cry out in protest at their fate:

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[130] Chettle, sigs. B3ᵛ–B4ʳ.

[131] Dekker, *Dreame*, sigs. F1ᵛ–F2ᵛ.

All *Hell* broke loose, and then were heard no Noyse

But *Vlulations, Shrikings, Horred Soundings*

Of *Ratling-Chaynes,* and thousand strange Confoundings

Of *Indisting guishable* dire-mix'd *Terrors:*

At which (I *Trembling) WAKDE;* and though the *Errors*

Of my *Sleepe-wandring-Soule,* were now left *Cleare,*

And that my cold hands had tane leaue of feare,

Yet my *Heart* panted, and my *Haire* turn'd *white,*

More through the *Ghastly Obiects* of this *Night,*

Then with the *Snow* of *Age:* And yet euen then,

Collecting vp my selfe, I read of *Men*

The *Volumes* ouer, and the world, so well

That I found *Here* worse *Diuels* then are in *Hell*.[132]

Dekker's *intellectual* comprehension that he has returned to wakefulness and his cell is not accompanied by *somatic awareness* of this fact. His heart is still thumping, and the dream has turned his hair white. The multiple spaces and personae of the dream narrative, in other words, are not resolved into a single space and authorial voice at the moment of waking. Moreover, as with his description of Hell's temperature, putting this passage in the context of Dekker's other work suggests that the noises of the damned in the underworld—'*Vlulations, Shrikings, Horred Soundings | Of Ratling-Chaynes*'—might be indistinguishable from those of the prison in which Dekker resides, again suggesting the persistence of multiple spaces. In *English Villanies*, Dekker's final publication in 1632, a chapter on 'The abuses done to Prisoners, by ouer-cruell Creditors' includes a description of the prison as 'a Magicall circle,

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[132] Dekker, *Dreame*, sigs. F2ᵛ–F3ʳ.

in which were raysed none but spirits of confusion, as Ululations, Deplorations, groanes, cries, sighes, and complainings.'[133] It is therefore unclear if Dekker at the conclusion of his *Dreame* is woken by noises generated within the dream, or by the soundscape outside his dreaming body, infiltrating his sleeping mind.

Indeed, in the early modern period external noises were recognised as one of the many factors that could penetrate the sleeping body and affect dream content: as Nashe writes in *The Terrors of the Night*:

> But other-while it fals out, that one Eccho borrowes of another: so our dreames (the Ecchoes of the day) borrow of anie noyse we heare in the night.

> As for example; if in the dead of the night there be anie rumbling, knocking, or disturbaunce neere vs, wee straight dreame of warres, or of thunder. If a dogge howle, we suppose we are transported into hell, where we heare the complaint of damned ghosts.[134]

This impression—of a multifaceted reality, in which the damned of Dekker's dream are also his fellow prisoners (playing the same role for Dekker as the howling dog does for Nashe), in which Hell and the prison are one, and in which his waking experience of reading 'The *Volumes* ouer' of men and the world is practically the same, if not worse, than perusing '*the great Volumes of Heauen* and Hell' in a dream—is anticipated by the evocative parallels between London and Hell in *A Knight's Conjuring*. But it is fully developed in the closing section of *Dekker his Dreame*. If we are not clear who is talking at the end of *Dekker his Dreame*—the past Dekker in the enchanted cave or the present Dekker, free and writing his

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[133] Thomas Dekker, *English Villanies* (London: 1632), sig. I3ʳ.

[134] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night* (London: 1594), sig. C4ᵛ.

account—we might also wonder if we are hearing the voice of the dreaming or the waking Dekker. Dekker does not even seem sure of this himself.

The dream narrative allows Dekker to generate an effect of multiplicity. In addition to the polyphonic experience of the early modern city noted in his other writing by Twyning, here Dekker is giving perceived reality, and the authorial 'I', a manifold quality. Dekker's vision of Hell in *Dekker his Dreame* is also, simultaneously, the waking experience of London, and, specifically, the King's Bench prison. As an authorial persona, Dekker is not simply framing himself as the passive recorder of a dream: he is suggesting that waking life offers an experience that is contiguous with and maybe indistinguishable from dreaming. There is no single reality. The text of the pamphlet allows him to hold these multiple truths— or multiple facets of the truth—within the same physical space, a development of Chettle's use of multiple, sequentially organised documents that persist from dream to reality in *Kind-Harts Dreame*. The result is a text attributed to an identifiable author—it being the dream of 'Dekker'—which is nevertheless unmoored from a single place or authorial perspective. Dekker is simultaneously the pamphleteer, the man waking up in the King's Bench prison, and the dream voyager to Heaven and Hell.

The dream pamphlet as a polyphonic text

The dream pamphlet, a literary form that has been subject to relative critical neglect, might be reconsidered as an active site of experimentation with the authorial voice in the seventy years between the publication of *Dauy Dycars Dreame* and *Dekker his Dreame*. The dream narrative represented more than the utilisation of a tried-and-tested medieval formula. Its cryptic nature seemed to invite active attempts at interpretation; yet the fact that such texts were framed specifically *as* dreams also reserved an important line of defence for the author.

Whatever the reader made of the dream pamphlet, the possibility remained that it may have *no* definitive interpretation or meaning. In any case, the self-conscious appropriation by the author of a dreamer's perspective enabled them to place a degree of distance between themselves and the dream, framing themselves more as reporters than as creators.

Even the brief twenty-eight lines of *Dauy Dycars Dreame* could yield conflicting interpretations; indeed, the ambiguity held within this sparse text was a significant factor in the dispute following its publication. Churchyard's defence did not depend on clarification of the pamphlet's content. It was only necessary to point out that many readings were possible, and that the hostile one proposed by Thomas Camell was wrong. Furthermore, the defensive arguments offered in *The Contention Betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell* emphasise *Dauy Dycars Dreame*'s nature as the product of both a dream and a literary persona, and hence that the text was not entirely within the control of the author. This approach to readerly agency that simultaneously invites interpretation but frustrates any attempt to reach a single 'correct' reading surfaces again in Greene's *Greenes Vision*, in which the dispute between Gower and Chaucer is interrupted by Solomon and left unresolved; Chettle's *Kind-Harts Dreame*, in which the reader is presented with the same documents as the sleeping Kind-Heart, who does not appear to have any privileged insight into their meaning; and *Dekker his Dreame*, in which the reader's attention is divided between poetry, prose, and marginal notes, none of which offers a conclusive interpretation.

The ambiguity of the dream form reflects the uncertainties of early modern dreaming itself. While, as described in the preceding chapters, books such as the popular *Exposition of Dreams* by Artemidorus, or pamphlets including Thomas Hill's *Most briefe and pleasant treatise of the interpretation of sundrie dreames* mapped relatively straightforward relationships between dream image and meaning, fundamental uncertainty remained as to whether a particular dream held significance, or was merely the by-product of bodily

processes.[135] Indeed, for some, the interpretation of dreams might have been far more complex than simply translating visual signifiers into their signified textual meaning (for example, Forman's notebooks, analysed in Chapter 2, record a process of dream interpretation involving the location of the individual within their unique and specific cosmological framework). The dream pamphlet borrowed from the actual experience of early modern dreaming a fundamental uncertainty not only as to the meaning of a particular dream, but also uncertainty as to whether such meaning existed, and if so, which framework was most appropriate for interpretation. The process of simultaneously granting readerly agency while destabilising the interpretive product of that agency was, as *The Contention Betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell* makes clear, partially a way of protecting an author from the consequences of religiopolitical and social controversy. Yet in its operation, this practice had profound consequences for the agency and selfhood of the author, both necessitating and facilitating a self-conscious distancing between the author and the production of the text.

This distancing between author and text is implicit in Churchyard's distinction between his own identity as the man born 'in Shrewisbury towne' and Davy Dycar, the author of the dream. It might also be detected in the moment in *Greene's Vision* at which Greene's dreaming 'I' is replaced by the narrative voices of Chaucer and Gower as they compete to influence his future style. In Chettle's *Kind-Harts Dreame* and Dekker's *Dekker his Dreame* we observe the further development of authorial distancing from text production, and see, as a consequence, the emergence of polyphony.

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[135] *The Judgement, or Exposition of Dreames*, transl. by ?Robert Wood (London: 1606); Thomas Hill*, A most briefe and pleasant treatise of the interpretation of sundrie dreames* (London: 1601); Janine Rivière, *Dreams in Early Modern England* (New York & Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2017).

Chettle was well positioned to exploit the peculiar ambiguities of authorial identity and agency implicit in the structure of *Kind-Harts Dreame*. Whether or not his experience of printing—of acting as the conduit for other authors' voices on their journey to the page—contributed to his own writing practices, he was recognised as a quick and versatile writer. It is in *Kind-Harts Dreame* that Chettle displays and utilises a polyphonic style, facilitated via the dream narrative. Of course, the dream format was not the only way in which a polyphonic style might be employed; for example, traveller narratives such as *The Cobler of Caunterburie* also allowed authors to bring together different voices on the page which might be held in creative tension, rather than requiring resolution into a single perspective. However, *Kind-Harts Dreame* not only demonstrates the potential that dream narratives held in terms of dividing a single authorial voice into multiple personae, but also the ways in which the dream might be exploited so as to lend these voices a quality of independent reality, distancing them further from a presumed status as creations of the author. Chettle cues the reader to treat the letters that form the main part of the pamphlet as found objects, material manifestations from the world of dreams that have come unbidden to Kind-Heart.

Furthermore, Chettle's authorial positioning as the character 'Kind-Heart', picking through the letters from the dream-ghosts in bafflement alongside the reader, is accompanied by a complex attitude towards the appropriation of others' voices. At the beginning of *Kind-Harts Dreame*, Chettle denies imitating Greene in the *Groatsworth*. However, he then goes on to imitate Greene in one of the ghosts' letters. In this, and possibly in the *Groatsworth*, Chettle was building on Greene's own experimentation with polyphony in *Greenes Vision*, a pamphlet in which the author divides his voice into several parts: Gower, Chaucer, and a literary construction called 'Robert Greene' who resembles, but is nevertheless not necessarily identical to, Greene the man.

Although *Dekker his Dreame* would seem at first to contradict the idea of the dream pamphlet as a catalyst for the development of literary polyphony—the author's name and image being prominent on the title page—on closer reading, it represents a sophisticated exploration of authorial identity. Polyphony in this case is manifest not only in the various voices heard in Dekker's voyage to Heaven and Hell—in, for example, the considered protest of the damned soul and the inflexible response of the punishing angel that provokes the final cry of the damned—but in the 'Dekker', or rather 'Dekkers' presented on the page, and in the geographical spaces through which Dekker moves in the pamphlet's narrative. The authorial 'I' is divided between poetry, prose, and marginal notes; these 'I's exist in an uncertain relationship with fiction, reality, and one another. The location of the author is also in a state of uncertainty, being simultaneously London, Hell, his prison cell, and the waking and sleeping worlds. While the polyphonic quality of Dekker's writing has been associated by critics such as John Twyning and Anna Bayman with his portrayal of the richness and confusion of the early modern metropolis, *Dekker his Dreame* is a text in which a polyphonic literary style is applied to the divided consciousness of the sleeping versus the waking self, and to the producer of the text versus the author manifest on the page. *Dekker his Dreame* undermines the idea that the author might be reduced to a single identifiable voice.

It would be an oversimplification—not to say an overstatement—to claim the dream pamphlets of Churchyard, Greene, Chettle, and Dekker as significant and influential milestones in the development of polyphony as a characteristic feature of European literature, and thus instrumental in polyphony's ultimate manifestation within the modern novel. However, these pamphlets may be read as the products of a culture in which a medieval literary precedent—the dream narrative—was taken up and modified by authors at a fraught religiopolitical and social moment, and in which there was ongoing uncertainty about the source, nature, and significance of dreams. The result was a literary form in which reader

agency could be both liberated and confined by the withholding of a single clear meaning, and in which the gap between author and text could be self-consciously defined and widened. Polyphony was the product of this gap, as authors divided their voices into multiple, distinct entities as opposed to a single identifiable 'I'. As *Dekker his Dreame* demonstrates, the dream pamphlet not only allowed a single author to divide their selfhood into multiple independent voices; it also demonstrated that multiple independent voices might in turn constitute the author.

14   Dekker his Dreame.

In hoopes of Iron,then were they bound vp strong,
(Shrikes being the Burden of their dolefull Song.)
Scarce was the Sentence breath'd-out,but mine eies
Euen saw (me thought) a Caldron,whence did rise
A pitchy Steeme of Sulphure and thick Smoake,
Able whole coapes of Firmament to choake :
About This,Diuels stood round,still blowing the fire,
Some,tossing Soules,some whipping them with wire
A-crosse the face,as vp toth' chins they stood,
In boyling brimstone,lead,and oyle,and bloud.
Millions were here tormented,and together
(All at this Sessions doom'd) were condemn'd hither.
My frighted Soule (me thought) with terrors shooke
To see such Horrid Obiects : bloud forsooke
The conduite-pipes of each Exterior part,
And ran to comfort and defend the Heart.
But the worlds Glorious Frame being rac'd in fire
And none aliue left,I had then desire
(Me thought,)to see That black Infernall Court,
Whither (in thousands) Soules did so resort.
The way was quickly found : paths numberlesse
(Beaten with feete which thither fast did presse)
Lay trodden bare,but not One Path returning,
Was euer seene from this dark house of Mourning.
This Flaming Kingdome hath One Ferriman,
And he One Boate : he rowes through Acheron
Styx, and Cocytus,Riuers that in Hell
Spread all the Countrey ouer:Fogges still dwell
Stinking and thick, vpon them,and there growes
Vpon their bankes (in wild disordered rowes)

Marginal notes: Soules tormented.   Facilis descensus Auerni.   Vestigia nulla retrorsum.

The

Dekker his Dreame.   15

The Poplar (white and black) with blasted Ewgh,
The deadly Poppy, Cypresse,Gall,and Rew;
(Emblems of Graues,Tombes,Funerals,and beeres)
And on the boughes no other Bird appeares,
But Schriches,Owles,and Rauens,and the shrill throates
Of Whistlers;death still listning to their Notes.

These *Riuers* of *Hell,Poetically* inuented, cary a *Morall* and *Mysticall Interpretation*: for *Acheron*(the first water) signifies *Bitternesse*: *Styx*,a detestation ; and *Cocytus*, Sorrow or *Repentance*, and are thus applyed. When *Soules*, by reason of their *Sinnes*, are to passe ouer the troublesome *Riuers* of *Death*, being tormented with remembrance of the losse of worldly *Honors, Riches*, &c. then they passe *Acheron*,it is a bitter draught : *Styx* is the next,for when they see no remedy; but they must passe ouer to their last shoare, they begin to haue a loathing of their *Ante-acted* life: and then comming to ferry ouer *Cocytus*, they mourne and howle : so that all the conflicts, combats, and earthly wrastlings about the time of a *Mans* departure,are figured vnder those *Three Riuers*.

I hollowed to the Ferriman (me thought)
And with a stretch'd voyce,cry'd a Boate,a boates
Hee came at first call,and when neere he drew,
That of his Face and Forme,I had full view,
My bloud congeal'd to ice with a cold feare,
To see a Shape so horribly appeare :
His eyes flash'd fire,grizled and shag'd his Haire,
(Snarl'd all in felt-lockes) Terror and Despaire

Marginal notes: A pardon for these Poeticall Fictions, may (without much begging) bee giuen,at the Curious Censor makes but true vse of the Inclusiue morall,no way derogating from Diuinity.   Death terrible in countenáce.

C 4   Lay

Chapter 4: 'You have but slumbered here': sleeping selves in the early modern theatre

> If we shadows have offended,
>
> Think but this, and all is mended:
>
> That you have but slumbered here,
>
> While these visions did appear;
>
> And this weak and idle theme,
>
> No more yielding but a dream[.]
>
> William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (5.1.414–19)[1]

This thesis began by outlining the self-alienating process of dreaming, through which an individual may lose their sense of agency over their own thoughts and feelings and, hence, themselves. The final moments of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595) propose that the play's audience might have undergone a similar process, losing track of their internally-generated perceptions versus the external stimuli of the performance, and mistaking their own inventions for those of another, namely, Shakespeare himself. In this chapter, I argue that Puck's suggestion that the audience may dreamed up the play is more than a mischievous conceit that avoids responsibility for offence. These closing remarks also provide a glimpse into the complexity of the early modern playgoing experience, and how it affected the audience's sense of possession of their own thoughts, perceptions, and agency. In order to explore this issue, I ask who slept, and why, in the early modern theatre. This analysis is informed by the parallel phenomenon of sleeping churchgoers; the similarities and distinctions between the expectations of sermon auditors and theatre audiences provides

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[1] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. by Peter Holland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). All references are to this edition unless otherwise noted.

evidence regarding the nature of attention and the characteristic mental processes activated in either setting.[2]

The dream-like mental state of playgoing is then explored by looking at sleeping and dreaming audiences in plays-within-plays (Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* [1592], the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* [1594], and Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* [1638]), with a focus on the self-alienating and transformative aspects of the theatregoing experience. Finally, the inward faculty of fantasy or fancy is identified as a specific mental process that was involved in both playgoing and dreaming. Taking the role and function of fancy into account, and in the light of new ways of thinking about dreams informed by modern neuroscience, both dreaming and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* can be placed in a new context. The disruptions to perception and sense of agency caused by the operation of fantasy in both dreams and playgoing can be conceptualised not as a source of anxiety—such as that experienced by Nashe's tormented sleeper in *The Terrors of the Night*—but in a more positive framework. The self-alienation of the dreamer and the theatregoer might be not so much a temporary aberration as a functional strategy to avoid overfitted rigidity of thought and behaviour, and to effect permanent, positive transformation.

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[2] The literature search for this chapter's primary sources consisted of text searches for references to sleeping and theatrical performance in: text creation partnership-encoded books on Early English Books Online; Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012–ongoing); Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Thomas L. Berger, and Sonia Massai, eds, *Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

'All is mended': dreams and deniability

Hermia's dream that 'a serpent ate my heart away' while Lysander 'sat smiling' (2.2.155–6) is, writes Sukanta Chaudhuri, the sole 'actual dream' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[3] This is only the case if the narrowest definition of a dream is applied; that is, in the words of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'A series of images, thoughts, and emotions, often with a story-like quality, generated by mental activity during sleep'.[4] Or, as described in physician Timothy Bright's *Treatise of melancholie* (1586), dreams are a phenomenon that occurs 'In sleep' when although the soul is 'without instrument', it 'lacketh not the practise of senses'. Hence in dreams 'we see with our soules, heare, talke, conferre […] as if the very obiect of these senses were represented vnto vs brode awake at noone day.'[5] However, while Hermia's experience is the only dream that the audience can clearly delineate as such—they witness her in the act of dreaming and subsequently waking—the play is filled with subjective phenomena that *could*, from the point of view of those experiencing them, be dreams. Indeed, Stephen Prickett's claim that 'the only real dream within the story concerns Bottom's enchantment where, complete with ass's head, he becomes the lover of Titania, the fairy Queen' illustrates the point that the boundaries between dream and non-dream are by no means hard and fast; different critics can confidently point to the 'real dream', but they are pointing in different directions.[6]

The metamorphoses, extremities of emotion, and nocturnal journeys in the play are, like dreams, unquestioned by the protagonists as they occur, but sit uncertainly in the

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[3] Sukanta Chaudhuri, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Arden Shakespeare Third Series, ed. by Sukanta Chaudhuri (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 1–115 (p. 77).

[4] 'dream, n.2 and adj.', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/57600> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

[5] Timothy Bright, *Treatise of Melancholie* (London: 1586), sig. H3ᵛ.

[6] Stephen Prickett, *Secret Selves: A History of Our Inner Space* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 43.

memory and are considered almost indescribably bizarre in retrospect. External realities are mixed up with the protagonists' own thoughts and inventions. Titania wakes to tell Oberon 'what visions have I seen! | Methought I was enamoured of an ass' (4.1.75–6). The audience knows that she has first mistaken the derangement of her senses for reality in seeing Bottom as handsome and desirable; now she mislabels her encounter with the weaver as having been a dream. Lysander gives a broken and patchy account of the night's events in the woods to Theseus: 'My lord, I shall reply amazèdly, | Half sleep, half waking. | I cannot truly say how I came here' (4.1.145–7). Bottom, meanwhile, finds that recent events defy verbal description altogether: 'I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was' (4.1.202–3). In this broader sense, the *Dream* is filled with incidents so dream-like as to be indistinguishable from dreams; indeed, viewing the play itself is one such experience, if we return to Puck's final address to the audience:

> If we shadows have offended,
>
> Think but this, and all is mended:
>
> That you have but slumbered here,
>
> While these visions did appear;
>
> And this weak and idle theme,
>
> No more yielding but a dream,
>
> Gentles, do not reprehend.
>
> If you pardon, we will mend.
>
> And, as I am an honest puck,
>
> If we have unearnèd luck
>
> Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
>
> We will make amends ere long,
>
> Else the Puck a liar call.

So, good night unto you all.

Give me your hands, if we be friends,

And Robin shall restore amends. (5.1.414–29)

Like the characters of the play, then, Puck implies that the playgoer has mixed up inward and outward worlds, failing to distinguish reality from objects of their own mind's creation. This section examines the precedents of Puck's speech in literary sources and stage plays, and explores what it suggests about the agency of the author and playgoer in the creation of dreamlike theatrical work.

Puck's speech is, of course, a characteristically mischievous disclaimer: a way of simultaneously denying responsibility for offence and inviting applause for the performance. It is the theatrical equivalent of the 'a Dreame is but a Dreame' line of defence for dream pamphlets such as *Dauy Dycars Dreame* (1552), used as a strategy to uncouple the author from controversial material (see Chapter 3).[7] Helen Hackett notes that the need to evade responsibility would have been particularly acute in the case of the *Dream*, given its implication that female rule, represented by Titania, is 'not only wrong but funny'.[8] Furthermore, Louis Montrose has argued that the ultimate assertion of Oberon's authority over Titania means that the play 'symbolically neutralizes the forms of royal power to which it ostensibly pays homage'.[9] Whether or not one agrees with these assessments, the *Dream* deals with a number of fraught subjects (such as female power, royal marriage, and the potentially undesirable nature of virginity) that are open to dangerous construction even in

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[7] Thomas Churchyard, *The Contention Betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell* (London: 1560), sig. D3ᵛ.

[8] Helen Hackett, 'Dream-visions of Elizabeth I', in *Reading the Early Modern Dream: The Terrors of the Night*, ed. by Katharine Hodgkin, Michelle O'Callaghan, and S. J. Wiseman (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 45–65 (p. 61).

[9] Louis Adrian Montrose, '"Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture', *Representations*, 2 (1983), 61–94 (p. 85).

the absence of a coherent underlying message. Oberon's passing reference to 'a fair vestal thronèd by the west' (2.1.158) who is impervious to Cupid's arrows may well have been insufficient to distance the play from politically subversive implications, in which case Puck's speech provided a belt-and-braces approach. It is unlikely that Puck's conceit would have stood up in court as a defence (or indeed been used in such a situation). However, the character's wry tone nudges the audience towards framing the play as a harmless trifle, rather than a serious commentary on political power, while gently reminding them of the subjectivity of their perspective.

Puck's use of this defence had precedent not only in dream pamphlets, but also on the stage. Editors have noted the influence of John Lyly, playwright for the Children of Paul's, on the themes, atmosphere, and structure of Shakespeare's *Dream*.[10] A number of plays written by Lyly for a courtly—as opposed to a public—audience in the decade before Shakespeare's *Dream* provide further insight into the use of the play-as-dream as an ironic form of insurance policy. In his treatment of dreams in prologues and epilogues, Lyly blurs the boundary between performers and spectators, making it unclear where responsibility for both production and interpretation ultimately lie. For example, in the Prologue at the Court to *Sappho and Phao* (1584), Lyly pronounces:

> Whatsoever we present, whether it be tedious (which we fear) or toyish (which we doubt), sweet or sour, absolute or imperfect, or whatsoever, in all humbleness we will, and I on knee for all, entreat that your Highness imagine yourself to be in a deep dream that, staying the conclusion, in your rising your Majesty vouchsafe but to say, 'And so you awaked' (Prologue at the Court, 12–18).[11]

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[10] Chaudhuri, p. 48; pp. 69–70; Holland, 'Introduction', in Shakespeare, *Dream*, ed. by Holland, pp. 1–117 (pp. 17–18; pp. 100–1).

[11] John Lyly, 'Sappho and Phao', in *Campaspe* and *Sappho and Phao*, ed. by G. K. Hunter and David Bevington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 197–300; John Lyly, *Sappho and Phao* (London: 1584).

Unlike Puck, who slyly invites applause while avoiding blame, the actor speaking the prologue here is happy to hand over responsibility to the audience—specifically the Queen—for *all* aspects of the play, both those likely to win favour, and those that might elicit disapproval. Indeed, the fact that this performance was specifically for the Queen might account for the extent to which Lyly relinquishes ownership of, and power over, his creation.

Sappho and Phao's prologue's use of a dream to deny authorial agency is reflected in the events of the play itself, specifically 4.3 in which in which Sappho's attendants dissect her dream of a bird, mostly using the Artemidorian system of decoding symbols (see Chapters 1 and 2). Amid the discussion as to the signs and significations of this dream, Eugenua argues that 'Dreams are but dotings, which come either by things we see in the day or meats that we eat, and so the common sense preferring it to be the imaginative' (4.3.49–51). By including a character proposing the case for so-called natural dreams, that is, experiences epiphenomenal to bodily processes such as digestion, Lyly gives space to the argument that dreams might have no discernible message at all. The disclaimer of the Prologue at the Court might therefore not only imply that Lyly disowns responsibility for the content of the play—if it is Queen Elizabeth's dream, it is not his fault—but also that this content may be devoid of meaning altogether. The play's Epilogue reinforces this point: 'We fear we have led you all this while in a labyrinth of conceits […] And so we wish every one of you a thread to lead you out of the doubts wherewith we leave you intangled, that nothing be mistaken by our rash oversights nor misconstrued by your deep thoughts' (Epilogue, 2–3, 11–14). 'Deep thoughts', in other words, are not necessarily an appropriate response to this play; indeed, they risk misconstruing its meaning.

Similarly, Lyly's *Endymion* (1588) begins with a Prologue that attempts to encapsulate the meaning of the play within the boundaries of the stage:

It was forbidden in old time to dispute of chimera, because it was a fiction. We hope in our times none will apply pastimes, because they are fancies; for there liveth none under the sun that know what to make of the Man in the Moon. We present neither comedy, nor tragedy, nor story, nor anything, but that whosoever may say this, 'Why, here is a tale of the Man in the Moon.' (Prologue, 6–12)[12]

That is to say, sometimes a tale of the Man in the Moon is just 'a tale of the Man in the Moon'. In the Prologue of *The Woman in the Moon* (1588), Lyly applies this non-judgemental model to the production of drama, as well as to its reception: 'Our poet, slumb'ring in the Muses' laps, | Hath seen a woman seated in the moon [...] And as it was, so he presents his dream' (Prologue, 1–4).[13] Lyly is simply a witness, content to see and record, but not offer interpretation; like, perhaps, Thomas Dekker as described on the title page of *Dekker his Dreame* (1620), 'rapt with a Poeticall *Enthusiasme*', reading '*the great Volumes of Heauen* and Hell' (Chapter 3).[14] However, this apparently self-effacing gesture also contains traces of self-aggrandisement: *The Woman in the Moon* cannot be considered a completely spontaneous event that just happens to have appeared on the stage, as it was transmitted through the specific means of 'Our poet', who enjoys the special privilege of inspirational dreams.

Lyly's conception of the poet's dream, while not necessarily a truthful description of his own subjective creative experience, is largely congruent with George Puttenham's idea of the poet in his *Art of English Poesy*. In his account of '*How poets were the first priests, the first prophets, the first legislators and politicians in the world*', Puttenham writes that the poets of antiquity

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[12] John Lyly, *Endymion*, ed. by David Bevington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

[13] John Lyly, *The Woman in the Moon*, ed. by Leah Scragg (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).

[14] Thomas Dekker, *Dekker his Dreame* (London: 1620), title page.

came by instinct diuine, and by deepe meditation, and much abstinence (the same assubtiling and refining their spirits) to be made apt to receaue visions, both waking and sleeping, which made them vtter prophesies, and foretell things to come. So also were they the first Prophetes or seears, *Videntes*, for so the Scripture tearmeth them in Latine after the Hebrue word, and all the oracles and answers of the gods were giuen in meeter or verse, and published to the people by their direction.[15]

Puttenham's editor, Gavin Alexander, notes that *Videntes* is the plural of the singular *videns* found in the Vulgate Bible, and that it is translated in 1 Chronicles 9:22 and 2 Chronicles 29:25 as 'seer'. He finds it 'surprising that Puttenham does not make the connection here to the Latin word *vates*', as used by Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy* (1595).[16] Sidney employs the term in his own discussion of the status of poets in antiquity:

Among the *Romanes* a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a diuiner, foreseer, or Prophet, as by his conioyned words *Vaticinium*, and *Vaticinari*, is manifest, so heauenly a title did that excellent people bestowe vppon this hart-rauishing knowledge, and so farre were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chanceable hitting vppon any of such verses, great foretokens of their following fortunes, were placed.[17]

Sidney emphasises that poets are not simply individuals who see and report visions, but have the ability to verbalise these experiences in precise and significant ways: poets construct their verse, he writes, 'not speaking table talke fashion, or like men in a dreame, words as they

[15] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: 1589), sig. C2ᵛ–C3ʳ.

[16] Gavin Alexander, 'Notes', in *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (London: Penguin, 2004), pp. 316–442 (pp. 361–2).

[17] Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*, sig. B3ᵛ.

chanceably fall from the mouth, but peasing each sillable of eache word by iust proportion, according to the dignitie of the subiect.'[18]

There are marked similarities between Lyly's description of 'Our poet' and these models proposed by Puttenham and Sidney. The poet is a channel to the divine, their skill resting in their sensitivity and receptivity to visual stimuli seen during their spiritual transports, which they subsequently translate skilfully into words. However, in contrast to Puttenham and Sidney, Lyly is equivocal as to the meaning of the visions the poet reports. Where Puttenham writes of 'all the oracles and answers of the gods', and Sidney of 'great foretokens of […] following fortunes', Lyly suggests that, if the matter of the play is offensive, it might be considered meaningless and insubstantial: 'If many faults escape in her discourse, | Remember all is but a poet's dream' (*The Woman in the Moon*, Prologue, 16–17). Like Shakespeare's Puck, who is happy to receive applause but direct opprobrium elsewhere, Lyly will accept the status of seer and divine vessel, but use both the passivity this implies and the potentially insubstantial nature of dreams to evade responsibility.

Was there more to Puck's speech, though, than a cheeky get-out-of-jail-free card? Puck's suggestion raises profound questions concerning the contract between author, player, and audience; topics which are both prominent in the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (for example, the Mechanicals' discussion of staging logistics in 3.1), and emerge in the act of performance (Oberon's announcement that 'I am invisible' at 2.1.186 presumably cues spectators to interpret their visual perceptions appropriately). The inventions of the author and players blurred, or were intended to blur, into the inward inventions of the audience member, perhaps to the point where the boundary and distinction between the two were indistinct; rather like, as we have seen, the self-alienating effect of dreaming. In order to

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[18] Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*, sig. C3ʳ.

parse the implications of Puck's speech, this chapter turns first to its literal meaning; the following section asks whether audiences did indeed slumber in the theatre, and, through comparison with the similar phenomenon of sermon-sleeping, examines what this implied about audience attention and, crucially, agency in the playhouses of early modern London.

'As tedious to me, as a Sermon': bored to sleep in church and playhouse

A panel held at the Young Vic in 1988 addressed the question 'Does Shakespeare's Verse Send You to Sleep?' with regard to modern theatre audiences; the answer was a definite 'yes'.[19] Theatre critic Michael Billington, the panel chair, claimed that 'at Stratford, I have seen people asleep'. Actor Sheila Allen admitted to being one such audience member, stating 'You've had a tiring day, you're in the warm and you drop off'.[20] It was taken for granted in the discussion that disengagement from the events on stage, for whatever reason, was the necessary prelude to falling asleep. One attendee claimed that 'nine out of ten productions of Shakespeare I see are dreadfully boring'. Explanations suggested for the phenomenon of somnolent audiences included modern pronunciation 'blurring verse and prose' into 'a hypnotic throb'; physical tiredness in the warm, dark auditorium; the mental effort needed to understand the richness of the language; and the tedium induced by what certain audience members saw as 'narcissistic', 'stylized' productions.[21]

Billington argued that 'it's not Shakespeare's verse that sends you to sleep, but those horrendous package tours where you do Oxford in the afternoon and Stratford in the

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[19] Sheila Allen, Alexander Anikist, Tony Church, David Thacker, and Michael Billington, 'Does Shakespeare's Verse Send You to Sleep?', in *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?*, ed. by John Elsom (London & New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 99–113.

[20] Allen et al, p. 103.

[21] Allen et al, p. 111; p. 99; p. 112.

evening.'[22] Thus, sleepiness on one's own part was because of factors out of one's control (lighting, temperature, the density of the language, or staging choices that did not align with one's preferences). Sleepiness on the part of others, however, was because they were not appropriately attentive towards the play; if they were on one of 'those horrendous package tours', perhaps they should not have been in the theatre in the first place. In summary, sleeping audiences were symptomatic of theatregoing and performance practices of which a panel of late twentieth-century critics, actors, and directors disapproved.

Critical focus on sleeping in the early modern theatre, meanwhile, has been comparatively sparse. Studies of audience behaviour have focused on active disruption of the performance, for example, through brawls, pickpocketing, nut-cracking, and obnoxious behaviour by gallants sitting on stage, with little written about those who simply dropped off.[23] In his monograph on *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, Andrew Gurr includes a reference to sleeping audiences from the prologue of Aston Cockayne's *The Obstinate Lady* (1632). His discussion of the passage focuses on the 'contrast between amphitheatre plays and the fare for ladies and gentlemen which Cockayne's hall playhouse provides', rather than sleep itself.[24] However, the text also reflects on socially-related expectations of wakefulness among the indoor theatre audience, humorously indicating that with social and financial clout came the self-given licence to use the playhouse as a place to sleep off overindulgence:

> And many Gallants hither come (we think)
>
> To sleep, and to digest their too much drink:
>
> We may please them; for we will not molest

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[22] Allen et al, p. 113.

[23] See Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642, 3rd edn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 222–9, and Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London 1574–1642 3rd edn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 51–7.

[24] Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 92; see also pp. 295–6.

With drums or trumpets, any of their rest.[25]

Cockayne's joke hinges on the conceit that the playhouse is so refined, eschewing 'drums or trumpets', that it might be mistaken as having been designed for sleep. While he recognises the privileges of gender and social position (explored further below), he also creates collusion between himself and those playgoers who have come to pay an appropriate degree of attention to the drama. Cockayne's witticism is similar to that made in the epilogue of William Shakespeare and John Fletcher's *Henry VIII* (1612): 'Some come [to the playhouse] to take their ease | And sleep an act or two; but those, we fear, | We've frighted with our trumpets' (Epilogue, 2–4).[26] While the 'we' refers to the players, it implicitly creates a cooperative relationship with those audience members who have stayed awake and enjoyed the sound effects as part of the performance, rather than as an unwelcome noise rousing them from sleep.

Richard Brome's induction for the 1638 revival of Thomas Goffe's *The Careless Shepherdess*, which was performed at Salisbury Court, similarly utilises a joke about sleeping audience members to nudge its audience into both an alliance with the playwright, and an appropriately attentive attitude towards the play.[27] The induction takes the form of a conversation between archetypal audience members arriving at the playhouse; Landlord, 'a Country Gentleman', announces that he has come to occupy a prestigious, expensive seat and that he has 'found fault with very good Sermons | In my daies, and now I desire that we | May passe our sentences upon this Play.'[28] Landlord sees the theatre as primarily a vehicle for

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[25] Aston Cockayne, 'The Obstinate Lady', in *A Chain of Golden Poems* (London: 1658), sig. V1ʳ–sig. Dd5ᵛ (sig. V2ʳ).

[26] William Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*, ed. by Jay L. Halio (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[27] Thomas Goffe, *The Careles Shepherdess* (London: 1656); Nova Myhill, 'Taking the Stage: Spectators as Spectacle in the Caroline Private Theaters', in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama 1558–1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 37–54 (pp. 44–7).

mirth: he 'would have the Fool in every Act | Be't Comedy, or Tragedy'.[29] When he is informed that the style of drama has moved on, that 'The Poets now have with their heavenly fire | Purg'd their inventions of those grosser follies', Landlord is displeased. He complains that 'the Comedy | Will be as tedious to me, as a Sermon, | And I do fear that I shall fall asleep.'[30] In doing so, Landlord undermines both sermons themselves and his own judgement: either he slept through the 'very good Sermons' he claims to have 'found fault with', or the act of sleeping was itself a form of criticism.

Clearly, the words of Cockayne, Shakespeare, and Brome cannot be accepted unquestioningly as literal descriptions of audience behaviour. Producers of plays had an obvious motivation for singling out certain types of (perhaps exaggerated or imagined) audience member—gallants, or unsophisticated out-of-towners—as an out-group against which playwright, playgoers, and audience could form an alliance. And undermining the status of would-be critics was an effective way to pre-empt and devalue their opinions. As Nova Myhill points out, the remainder of the *Shepherdess* induction—as a member of the audience wrests control from incompetent actors and rude stage-sitters who will not 'do the author justice'—may imply that 'the self-conscious wits who occupy the stage, far from serving as models of superior judgement, ultimately serve as distractions from the play'.[31]

However, it is unlikely that jokes about sleeping audiences, and identification of certain groups (young gallants, older wealthy men) as being likely to fall asleep would have succeeded if they were completely outlandish. These texts, at the very least, provide evidence

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[28] Goffe, sig. B2ʳ.

[29] Goffe, sig. B2ᵛ.

[30] Goffe, sig. B3ʳ.

[31] Myhill, p. 47.

that audiences could fall asleep in the playhouse, and they supply clues as to the factors that were associated with this sleepiness. Evidence regarding where, when, and why people fell asleep in the early modern theatre is partial and fragmentary. However, an investigation into what sent audiences to sleep, who was to blame, and the nature of attentiveness and engagement, might be enriched by collateral information from that other space of large gatherings in early modern England, the church.

Of course, there were significant differences between the church and theatre. Sermon audiences had not paid for the privilege of attending, and indeed, some were there under a degree of compulsion; the sermon itself was delivered by a single preacher, whose aim was primarily didactic and moralistic; and architecturally, the roofed and seated church was quite different from the open-air theatre with its groundlings, or even the intimate indoor playhouse. Yet, even though his point is that the two experiences should feel very different, Landlord's comment in the induction to *The Careless Shepherdess* indicates it was possible to consider both sermons and plays as experiences that invited audience critique. Furthermore, they were both communal experiences that raised issues of appropriate attentiveness and engagement for speaker and auditor.[32]

Certainly, early modern playwrights sometimes poked fun at sermons in a way that suggests the two experiences were perceived as rivals or mirrors of one another. Thomas Nashe's *Summers Last Will and Testament* (1592) revives Henry VIII's fool Will Summers as a stage character; dissatisfied with his part, he vows to 'sit as a *Chorus*, and flowte the *Actors* and [the author] at the end of euery Sceane'.[33] Thus, following a long disputation by Ver (representing Spring) on the benefits of poverty, Summers interjects 'I promise you truly,

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[32] Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences, 1590–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 60–116.

[33] Thomas Nashe, *Summers Last Will and Testament* (London: 1600), sig. B2ʳ.

I was almost asleep; I thought I had bene at a Sermon.'[34] The fact that *Summers Last Will and Testament* was likely first performed at the Archbishop's Palace in Croydon presumably amplified Summers's playful subversiveness.[35] A further reference to soporific sermons appears in Ben Jonson's *Epicene* or *The Silent Woman* (1610); there is a joke about 'a preacher that would preach folk asleep' with so reliable an effect that people with insomnia 'were prescribed to go to church, by an old woman that was their physician, thrice a week' (4.4.107–9).[36] Explicitly in Nashe, and implicitly in Jonson, the theatre is framed not as an experience that exists in a different cultural sphere to the church, but rather as a superior competitor for the attention of the masses.

Still more witticisms about congregations sleeping through sermons appear in John Taylor's collections of jests *Wit and Mirth* (1628) and *Bull, Beare, and Horse* (1638):

> A Diligent and learned Preacher on a Sunday in the afternoone was preaching, whilst most of the zealous Vestry men (for their meaner edification) were fast a sleepe in their pues: in the meane space a young childe cryed somewhat aloud at the lower end of the church, which the Preacher hearing, called to the Nurse, and said, Nurse, I pray thee still thy childe, or else it may chance to awaken some of the best men in our parish.[37]

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[34] Nashe, *Summers*, sig. C1ʳ.

[35] Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue: Volume III: 1590–1597* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 202.

[36] Ben Jonson, 'Epicene *or* The Silent Woman', in Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist and Other Plays*, ed. by Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[37] John Taylor, *Wit and Mirth* (London: 1628), sig. D1v.

A Preaching Fryer once reproved his Auditors for sleeping at his Sermons, but yet (said he) I pray you do not refraine comming to Church though you doe sleepe, for God Almighty may chance to take some of you napping.[38]

In contrast with Jonson's humour, which employs the same shock tactic of irreverence as Brome and Nashe, Taylor's approach is more subtle. Both his jokes concern preachers who unexpectedly encourage their auditors to sleep, one to ironically draw attention to the slumbering 'zealous Vestry men', and the other to soften the blow of his reproof while affirming God's ability to capture hearts and minds. Yet both jokes also imply that to sleep in church is to break an implicit agreement to pay attention to the preacher.

Early modern religious texts demonstrated a less compromising approach to sermon-sleeping than did Taylor's preachers. True, some advice to churchmen as to how to keep audiences engaged put the onus on the preacher to understand the needs of their audience, implying the existence of an unspoken contract by which the preacher would engage and the congregation remain attentive. For example, Bishop of Salisbury Gilbert Burnet cautioned that sermons should be kept short, as longer sermons with a 'languid and heavy' opening would 'tempt [the congregation] to sleep'.[39] However, historian John Craig notes that the Bible lent support to the idea that audiences were fundamentally to blame for falling asleep, through Christ's parable of the sower whose seeds fall on stony or weed-choked ground (Matthew 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–20; Luke 8:4–15). 'There was a marked tendency,' he writes, 'to place the failure to hear and understand with the hearers.'[40]

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[38] John Taylor, *Bull, Beare, and Horse* (London: 1638), sig. C3v.

[39] Gilbert Burnet, 'A Discourse of the Pastoral Care' (1692), in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, ed. by Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington, and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 533–4 (p. 534).

[40] John Craig, 'Sermon Reception', in McCullough et al., *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*, pp. 178–97 (p. 180).

Indeed, manuals for churchgoers such as *The Drousie Disease* (1638), parish records, and private diaries indicate that auditors were encouraged to shoulder the weight of responsibility for staying awake during sermons.[41] Commonly quoted was the story of Eutychus, who according to Acts 20:7–12 dropped off during a long night-time sermon of Paul's, fell from a third-floor window, and was initially taken for dead. Stephen Egerton's *The Boring of the Eare* (1623) asks 'If such a iudgement befell him that slept in the night, & that at an exceeding long Sermon; What are we to say of those that sleepe in the day at a Sermon of an houre long?'[42] While manuals admitted that sleepiness might occur even in the devout, due to physical stillness, the contagious effect of drowsiness in others, exhaustion from work, the warmth of the church, and long sermons, it was nevertheless up to the individual churchgoer to stay awake.

Those hearing the sermon were assumed to have sufficient agency to resist sleep through physical and mental activity. This might be done by standing up and moving, giving short and appropriate verbal responses to the preacher, and reminding oneself of one's conspicuousness. The devout puritan artisan Nehemiah Wallington (1598–1658) resorted to pricking himself with a pin, biting his tongue, pinching himself, or chewing on pepper, ginger, or cloves. In his book *Ludus Literarius: or, the Grammar Schoole* (1627), schoolmaster John Brinsley argued that the practice of note-taking would keep boys from mischief, including 'sleeping […] in the Church'.[43] If all else failed, a sleeping worshipper might fall foul of an individual such as Matthew Smaly of Stathern, Leicestershire, employed

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[41] *The Drousie Disease; or, An Alarme to Awake Church-sleepers* (London: 1638).

[42] Stephen Egerton, *The Boring of the Eare* (London: 1623), sig. D5ʳ. Other examples include John Northbrooke, *Spiritus est Vicarius Christi in Terra* (London: 1577), sig. D2ʳ; John Godolphin, *The Holy Limbeck* (London: 1650), sigs. G12ᵛ–G13ʳ; and *A Serious and Seasonable Invective Against Sleeping in the Church* (London: 1683), single sheet.

[43] Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 71–2; p. 97.

in 1642 'for whipping doges and waking people in the Church'.[44] Despite all of these anti-sleeping measures, the problem apparently persisted through the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century: William Hogarth's *The Sleeping Congregation* (1762) depicts a sermon in a church packed with unconscious people.

It is unsurprising that both playwrights and authors believed that their respective audiences had a duty to stay awake; it is perhaps predictable that they should consider themselves rivals for the public's attention. However, we might also identify important *differences* in sermon-sleeping and theatre-sleeping, qualities that pertain to the mental processes involved in both experiences. In the following section, I analyse these different qualities, and ascertain what the contrast might tell us about playgoing that meant Shakespeare and other authors—through devices such as Puck's speech—might frame theatre-sleeping as an act of creation rather than a moment of oblivion.

Religious authors did not define sleep in purely binary terms of consciousness versus unconsciousness. Some proposed more complex conceptions of the relationship between attentiveness, awareness, sleep, and wakefulness. The anonymous author of *The Drousie Disease* implied that truly attending to a sermon was not merely a matter of staying awake, but rather of full mental and physical attentiveness, turning oneself into a vessel into which the preacher poured his words: 'in hearing [a sermon] we must use […] *Attention*, which is when the whole body, especially the eare and the eye, are reverently composed about hearing the Word.'[45] Similarly, in 'The Eutychian Sluggard', a short chapter on sermon sleeping in John Godolphin's *The Holy Limbeck* (1650), the author argues that:

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[44] Craig, p. 187.

[45] *Drousie Disease*, sigs. G8ᵛ–G9ʳ.

There are more Sermon-sleepers then *Eutychus* dreamt of; have you never seen a man

sleep at Sermon with his eyes open, but his ears shut? bid such an one repeat you the

Sermon, and hee'll tell you his dream: have you never observed a man at a Sermon to

sleep very attentively, that heard, all, understood, little, and practised nothing: It

seems there may be deaf hearers as well as dumb Preachers. Thus there are more ways

of sleeping at a Sermon then one, and for him that cannot refrain, it would be less

Hypocrisie to go to Hell in a feather-bed at home; for *Eutychus* slept but once that we

hear of at a Sermon, *yet he fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead,* Acts

20.9.[46]

In other words, the individual who gave merely the outward show of attention in church was

no better—indeed, in some ways was worse—than the Hell-bound individual who had stayed

home and been literally asleep. Although the auditor was expected to make a considerable

effort towards staying attentive, there is something essentially passive about the ideal model

of the sermon-goer presented here. The good churchgoer makes available their 'whole body,

especially the eare and the eye'; they have utter absorption in the outward world of the

church, not the inward, self-generated stimuli of the 'dream'.

It is therefore understandable that lawyer and pamphleteer William Prynne should

propose that the attentive playgoer was experiencing a different form of attentiveness, indeed,

consciousness, to that of the churchgoer. In his treatise against stage plays *Histrio-Mastix*

(1633), Prynne writes that:

Stage-haunters are for the most part lulled asleepe in the *Dalilaes* lappe of these

sinfull pleasures, yea they are quite dead in sinnes and trespasses; *their eyes are so*

blinded that they will not see, their hearts so hardned that they cannot discerne, their

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[46] Godolphin, sigs. G12ᵛ–G13ʳ.

consciences so cauterized that they never seriously behold nor yet examine the

execrable filthinesse, greatnesse, multitude, growth, or daily increase of their beloved

sinnes and lusts; no marvaile therefore if they affirme this falsehood; that they receive

no hurt at all from Stage-playes.[47]

In using the Biblical precedent of Delilah, who cut the sleeping Samson's locks and thus

removed his physical strength, Prynne is implying that playgoing has a similarly debilitating

effect. He suggests that, in contrast to the unified physical and mental absorption of the

churchgoer, the apparently wakeful playgoer is nevertheless essentially a sleeper, their senses

blocked and unreceptive to the reality of their sinful lives.

Indeed, while playwrights disliked the *literal* sleeper as much as did their preaching

counterparts, the explicit demands they placed on the mental faculties of their audiences were

not quite the same as godly individuals such as Godophin and Prynne. A way into exploring

the question as to what exactly playwrights expected of their audiences in terms of

attention—the passive, receptive state demanded of the sermon auditor, or something more

complex—is to look at the language used in prologues and epilogues. In the following

section, a range of attitudes is outlined, from the scorn heaped on sleeping audiences in the

public playhouse, to a more ambiguous and diplomatic approach taken in court performance.

This exploration, in turn, highlights an intriguing detail of Puck's speech; he appears to treat

a public playhouse audience with an attitude more appropriate to a courtly gathering. This

treatment of the audience as 'gentles' is, I suggest, of significance. It provides a thread

through which we may trace a more active and creative role for the attentive playhouse

audience than the passive, receiving role prescribed for the churchgoer.

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[47] William Lamont, 'Prynne, William (1600–1669), pamphleteer and lawyer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 19 May 2011. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/22854> [Accessed 11 August 2020]; William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix* (London: 1633), sig. Ffffff3ᵛ.

Superficially at least, playwrights regarded a sleeping audience as an embodiment of theatrical failure. The English translation of French writer Jean de la Bruyère's *Characters* (1699) describes the character of 'Stupidity', who has 'a dulness of thought in speaking and acting', and whose numerous *faux pas* include poor arithmetic, missed appointments, and general carelessness. When Stupidity 'is at the Theatre to see a Play, he falls asleep and wakes not till the rest of the Spectators are gone'.[48] While de la Bruyère places the blame for sleeping solely on the ignorant playgoer, other writers showed more nuance. Aphra Behn, for example, contrasts her comedic style with 'your fine fustian useless Eloquence' which 'Serves but to chime a sleep a drowsie Audience' in her prologue to *Sir Patient Fancy* (1678).[49] While theatrical conditions in the later part of the seventeenth century were quite different from those of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it is likely that some attitudes towards audience engagement persisted; it is probably safe to assume that at both timepoints, playwrights and players were unappreciative when their performances were interrupted by snores.

The way in which Will Summers's character in *Summers Last Will and Testament* blames the author for Ver's soporific speech opens up further degrees of subtlety. The tendency of fools to improvise notwithstanding, the audience would have been aware that Ver and Summers were both on the entertainers' side of the actor-audience contract. Both Ver's rhetoric and Summers's subsequent moment of comic deflation (an interjection which might have also served to refresh audience attention) came from the same pen. Furthermore, there is a question as to how closely Summers was mirroring the reaction of the audience: were they as bored as he was by Ver, and similarly on the verge of sleep? Or would they have been in a

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[48] Jean de la Bruyère, *Characters*, transl. by 'several hands' (London: 1699), sig. Kk2ᵛ.

[49] Aphra Behn, *Sir Patient Fancy* (London: 1678), sig. A2ʳ. According to the *DNB*, this play was first staged in the year that it was published. Janet Todd, 'Behn, Aphra (1640?–1689)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1961> [Accessed 15 November 2020].

position to enjoy and attend to both the speech *and* Summers's joke about it, shifting their attention and opinion contingently? Summers's jest may be a moment at which Nashe paradoxically uses a joke about disappointing his auditors' expectations and sending them to sleep to demonstrate that he is capable of anticipating and manipulating the dynamics of their response to hold their attention.

Even when a switched-off audience was switched back on, this might not have meant that the playwright and players had snatched victory from the jaws of theatrical defeat. Late seventeenth-century dramatist John Crowne provided an account of how audience attention and absorption might have shifted during a performance in the dedication of one of his Shakespeare adaptations, *Henry the Sixth with the Murder of Humphrey, Duke of Glocester* (1681). Crowne states that 'I have always observed when an Actor talks Sense, the Audience begins to sleep, but when an unnatural passion sets him a grimacing and howling as if he were in a fit of the Stone, they immediately waken, listen, and stare, as if some rare Operator were about to Cut him'.[50] Crowne's critique suggests that the audience might drift in and out of engagement—and in and out of sleep—not only in response to the dramatic text, but also in response to (over the top) acting styles, perhaps drawing a parallel between the type of theatre where plays were performed, and those where operations were carried out.[51]

Importantly for this chapter's later discussion of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the social status of the audience member apparently affected the playwright's attitude towards their falling asleep. A striking commonality about many of the plays that feature or mention

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[50] John Crowne, *Henry the Sixth with the Murder of Humphrey, Duke of Glocester* (London: 1681), sig. A3ᵛ. Likely first performed in 1681 according to the *DNB*: Beth S. Neman, 'Crowne, John (*bap.* 1641, *d.* 1712)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6832> [Accessed 15 November 2020].

[51] The *OED* records the earliest use of 'theatre' with this surgical meaning in the mid-seventeenth century. 'theatre | 249ntil249e, n.' *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/200227> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

sleeping and dreaming audiences is that they were first performed in private and indoor spaces (Figure 5).[52] Of seventeen plays I have identified, only four appear to have first been performed outdoors (of which *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one, a finding that will be discussed in detail below). However, even indoor settings were by no means uniform in terms of audiences or the expressed attitudes of playwrights towards them. As outlined below, in the indoor public playhouse and scholastic settings, playwrights tended towards the mischievous; in the court, towards a more respectful tone. In this context, it will be shown, Puck's epilogue is a notable exception: it was, presumably, spoken outdoors, and demonstrates a comparatively respectful, if playful, attitude.

With regard to indoor playhouses, it is possible that the relatively comfortable, all-seated arrangement of these venues promoted drowsing (in the same way that, as John Craig notes, 'As various forms of seating became more widely available, there was a greater concern about those who slept during the sermon').[53] Thus Cockayne's *The Obstinate Lady* which, as noted above, refers to 'Gallants' who use the theatre 'To sleep, and to digest their too much drink', emphasises its indoor setting in its prologue, mentions the Blackfriars and Cockpit playhouses, and was probably first performed at Salisbury Court.[54] Furthermore, the epilogue of Shakespeare and Fletcher's *Henry VIII*, expressing ironic concern for sleeping audience members (see above), may have been written with an indoor audience in mind, although the evidence is ambiguous.[55]

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[52] Information taken from Wiggins and review of title pages.

[53] Craig, p. 187.

[54] Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 92.

[55] The letters of Sir Henry Wotton and Henry Bluett concerning the fire during *Henry VIII*'s performance at the Globe on 29 June 1613 suggest that it was a new play at that time, and hence that its first staging was outdoors in daylight. However, Wiggins and Richardson argue that evidence of textual borrowing by John Webster for the trial scene of *The White Devil* (published in 1612) might hint that *Henry VIII* was composed some time before 1613, and that the Globe performance was a revival; therefore, initial performance at the Blackfriars

Plays performed in scholastic settings adopted a similarly robust attitude towards sleeping

audience members. In the comedy *Zelotypus* (1605), staged at St John's College, Cambridge,

the reference to the drowsing audience is made metatheatrically during the action of the play.

The presence of 'dormientes auditores' (sleeping listeners) is noted by one of the characters,

who whispers his plan, perhaps so as not to wake them (2.5).[56] The epilogue of *Apollo*

Shroving by William Hawkins, first performed on Shrove Tuesday in February, 1627 by the

scholars of the Free School of Hadleigh, Suffolk, concludes with the observation:

> 'Tis late. Me thinkes I spye some drowsie head,
>
> Whose yawning, nodding toles a peale to bed.
>
> If any such be here, wee'le take them napping,
>
> And all to boxe their eares with loud hand-clapping.'[57]

As with Cockayne and Shakespeare's references to theatrical sleepers, those sleeping through

school or university performances are identified as an out-group against which players and

audience join forces.[58]

A more respectful tone can be detected when the sleeping audience is of a higher

social position. In addition to the examples from Lyly's work outlined above, Thomas

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cannot be ruled out. Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue: Volume VI: 1609–1616* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 232.

[56] *Zelotypus*, ed. by Dana F. Sutton (2013). Web. <http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/zelotyp/> [Accessed 12 October 2020] [Dual English and Latin edition from Latin manuscripts: Durham Cathedral, Dean and Chapter Library, MS Hunter 76, item 6 (transcribed after 1605); Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS 185 (3.1.17), art. 2 (transcribed after 1625); Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.9, fols. 55–78ᵛ (transcribed after 1613)]. Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue: Volume V: 1603–1608* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 260–3.

[57] William Hawkins, *Apollo Shroving* (London: 1627), sig. B2ᵛ; sig G8ᵛ.

[58] It is also worth noting two comedies in which audiences are invited to applaud at the conclusion to wake sleeping or dazed characters on stage: *Lingua* by Thomas Tomkis, performed at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1606, and *The Wedding* by James Shirley, performed by Queen Henrietta's Men at the Cockpit, 1626. Thomas Tomkis, *Lingua* (London: 1607); James Shirley, *The Wedding* (London: 1629). Wiggins, *Catalogue V*, pp. 350–6; Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue: Volume VIII: 1624–1631* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 194–8.

Heywood's *Love's Mistress or The Queen's Masque*, performed by Queen Henrietta's Men 19 November, 1634 at Denmark House for the King's birthday, ends with an epilogue that acknowledges the lateness of the hour, and the possible drowsiness of the royal audience: 'I have kept you waking long, good night, 'tis late, | And many Birth-dayes may you Celebrate.'[59] Indeed, court and institutional performances may have occurred relatively late in the evening; referring to correspondence, memoirs, and court diaries, Craig Koslofsky detects a shift to later recreational hours in seventeenth-century European courts, noting that among the nocturnal pleasures of the elite were theatrical performances and masques.[60] The most powerful audiences who could command performances were also those who watched plays late at night, indoors, and after food and drink—and therefore may have been at high risk of falling asleep. Thus a possible motivation emerges for suggestions such as John Lyly's that 'your Highness imagine yourself to be in a deep dream'. Pretending that the audience might have fallen asleep and dreamed the play was an alternative strategy to that which identified sleepers as bad playgoers. It recognised the likelihood of such behaviour, and brought it within the compass of appropriate audience responses. Simultaneously, and as an added bonus, it shifted responsibility for any offence caused by the play—a particularly acute concern during performance before the powerful—onto the playgoer.

However, there is a problem if we try to apply this model to Puck's closing speech. The original performance of *Dream* was, according to Martin Wiggins, not before a private audience, but was by the 'Lord Chamberlain's Men, presumably at the Theatre'.[61] The

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[59] Thomas Heywood, *Loves Maistress* or *The Queen's Masque* (London: 1636), sig. A4^r. The first performance of this play was at the Cockpit on 13 or 15 November, 1634. Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue: Volume IX: 1632–1636* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 266.

[60] Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[61] *The Shrew* entered the repertoire of the King's Men at the Globe and Blackfriars, and a performance before King Charles I at St James's Palace occurred in 1633. Wiggins also notes performances of the *Dream* by the

sleeping audience members referred to by Puck would have been standing or sitting in an open air, public theatre. Examining these anomalies in depth in the following section, I show that this speech reveals important aspects of theatrical attentiveness that contrast substantially with the passive open-eyed and open-eared approach expected of sermon audiences; in brief, the epilogue of the *Dream* suggests that audiences were expected to make full use of the faculty of fancy in a process of active engagement.

'Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show': dreaming in the outdoor playhouse

Why does Puck, in suggesting that the *Dream*'s spectators might have fallen asleep, speak to a socially mixed outdoor audience as if they were an indoor gathering of wealthy individuals? It is possible, of course, that his final speech was not included in certain performances, including those held outdoors. In practice, prologues and epilogues could be detachable elements of early modern drama.[62] Nevertheless, although Puck's final speech has tended to be treated by editors and scholars as an 'epilogue', the quarto and folio texts complicate this classification. While the first quarto (Q1) includes an *Exeunt* stage direction before Puck's speech, the first folio (F1) does not.[63] This could be a case of compositor error in F1: on the same page of F1 as Puck's speech, Oberon's speech is treated (and typeset) as a '*Song*', when it may be simply a speech that precedes a song, now missing.[64] However, the effect of this inconsistency between Q1 and F1 is to leave Puck's speech in a state of uncertainty. If, as Sukanta Chaudhuri states, it is 'spoken (like all or most epilogues) half as Robin and half as

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King's Men at Hampton Court in 1604 and 1630, and that it was 'Reported (in 1669) as having been in the repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.' Wiggins, *Catalogue III*, p. 158; p. 299; p. 302. The theory that the *Dream* was first performed at a wedding is discussed in footnote 84 of this chapter.

[62] For a discussion of the detachable nature of prologues and epilogues, see Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 81–119.

[63] William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: 1600), sig. H4ʳ; William Shakespeare, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', in *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* (London: 1623), sigs. N1ʳ–O3ᵛ (sig. O3ᵛ).

[64] Shakespeare, *Dream*, ed. by Holland, footnote 5.1.392–413.

the actor playing him', it is also ambiguous as to whether the 'shadows' Puck refers to remain on the stage, or are absent; and in turn, it is unclear as to whether the fictional world of the play has dissolved or not.[65]

This is characteristic of a play which, as Michael Mangan puts it, 'finishes with a series of false endings', teasing the audience with potential conclusions 'only to come back to life again'. The play may seem as if it is ending with the resolution of the lovers' confusion and return to the court at the end of Act 4, but Bottom wakes and promises more to come; even the Bergomask of the Mechanicals in the final act does not bring matters to a close.[66] The *Dream* seems capable of rolling out in unlimited supply, like a dream that 'hath no bottom' (4.1.212). Puck's speech resists the dissolution of the fantastical world of the play, even as he emphasises the transient and insubstantial nature of both dream and theatrical performance.[67] If this seemingly endless nature of the *Dream* leaves the audience (in Mangan's words) 'unsure which world they inhabit, that of fantasy or reality', the very structure of the play's final acts might prime them for Puck's suggestion that they have been sleeping and dreaming.[68]

Puck's reference to the theatre audience as 'gentles' in his final speech is also unusual. The only other occasion on which a Shakespearean character addresses the audience thus is in *Henry V*: Chorus begs 'pardon, gentles all' (Prologue, 8), and later states 'the scene

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[65] Chaudhuri, 'Introduction', p. 102.

[66] Michael Mangan, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', in *A Preface to Shakespeare's Comedies 1594–1603* (London & New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 152–78 (p. 174).

[67] On plays and dreams as transient phenomena, see also the epilogue for the unexpected second performance of William Cartwright's *The Royal Slave* (1636): 'Thus cited to a second night, wee've here | Ventur'd our Errours to your weighing Eare. | Wee'd thought they'd have beene dead, as soone as borne; | For Dreames doe seldome live 254ntil the morne.' William Cartwright, *The Royall Slave* (Oxford: 1640), sig. H4ʳ.

[68] Mangan, p. 175.

| Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton' (2.0.34–5).[69] It is possible that in referring to a socially mixed playhouse audience in this manner, Shakespeare is engaging in what Stephen Greenblatt refers to as 'fine flattery' directed at spectators who are 'hardly monarchs'.[70] More recently, Maurice Hunt has proposed a reading that regards more generously Henry's promise that the experience of battle will 'gentle [the] condition' of his troops (4.3.63). Hunt writes that 'the empathetic imagination, in which one modestly senses what it feels like to be another, could make possible a brotherhood of gentles that cuts across social classes and could include the lowest.'[71] Despite their opposing conclusions, Greenblatt and Hunt essentially agree that the act of calling the audience 'gentles' is, in effect, a method of transformation. In Greenblatt's case, the audience temporarily buys into Chorus's language of the play as 'courtly entertainment' and hence swallows the deceptions of power.[72] In Hunt's, 'gentles' points towards the possibility of a more meaningful and consensual (albeit temporary) shift in social status. This adds a new perspective to Gurr's suspicion that 'when an audience was addressed as "Gentlemen" or "Gentles" the poet was likely to ask for less disruptive behaviour than he was accustomed to expect.'[73] It is possible that the word 'gentles' was used by Shakespeare, and maybe others, in the manner of performative language, attempting to affect a change in the audience such that they, too, agreed to act a particular role—that of a more refined audience—in response to the play. Thus, the audience

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[69] William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, ed. by Gary Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[70] Stephen Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets', in *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 21–65 (p. 64).

[71] Maurice Hunt, 'Brothers and "Gentles" in "The Life of King Henry the Fifth"', *Comparative Drama*, 49 (2015), 71–93 (p. 89).

[72] Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets', pp. 63–4.

[73] Gurr, *Playgoing*, p. 53.

of *Henry V* might find itself cast as the 'monarchs to behold the swelling scene' (Prologue, 4) whose absence the Chorus laments as he introduces the play.

Puck's use of 'gentles' could be an act of flattery, another of his ingratiating touches; perhaps even one with a hint of irony. Alternatively, or additionally, it may be a more subtle transformative act. Peter Quince has previously addressed the audience of Theseus's court as 'gentles' in the prologue to *Pyramus and Thisbe*: 'Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show' (5.1.126). When Puck uses the term, he might be asking the playhouse audience to maintain, for a moment longer, the role that *they* have performed in the final scene of the play. As the Mechanicals performed *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the mixed audience of the Theatre or Globe were effectively cast as members of Theseus's court, owing both to their physical position surrounding the stage-within-a-stage, and to a text whose comedy arises from the mismatch between the Mechanicals' intention and its external manifestation as witnessed by the Athenian nobility. The audience has been transformed from a cross-section of London society into 'gentles', and the playhouse from an outdoor space of public performance to an indoor area of court performance; the kind of place where audiences fell asleep.

The play concludes with the playhouse, and the audience itself, still occupying an indeterminate space. In the same way that the fairies return to the stage despite the play's relocation to the court of arch-rationalist Theseus, Puck refuses to let the audience leave the world of the drama. The danger of the 'serpent's tongue' from the enchanted wood remains, translated into the threat of a hissing audience; the 'we' who 'will mend' might be the actors, or equally the fairies, who could still be on stage; and in the final line the actor is still 'Robin', not divested of his power and identity like Prospero in the epilogue of *The Tempest*. Inasmuch as the theatre audience are still playing the part of nobles, the *Dream* is no exception to the more forgiving attitude taken by playwrights and performers to sleeping courtly audiences.

This reading—that a socially mixed outdoor playhouse audience might 'gentle' their condition by consciously assuming the role of the sleepy, late-night court—can inform critical debates around the culture of early modern playgoing. First, this reading makes clear the contrast between the attentive sermon-goer and the attentive playgoer; the playgoer is not just receiving stimuli, but assisting in the production of a fantasy. Prynne's criticism of the playgoer noted above—that he or she was 'lulled asleepe eyes blinded'—might thus be considered strangely apt. It is possible that complete attentiveness to one's surroundings, and *only* one's surroundings, was an undesirable state for the audience member expected to actively supplement the stage's fantasies with the productions of their own mind. Second, the potential for an audience to perform social role-play helps us to go beyond binary thinking regarding the nature of playgoers as *either* selfless participators *or* conspicuous consumers; or, to put it another way, as active producers of the theatrical experience as opposed to passive recipients.

As an example of this debate, Anthony Dawson and Paul Yachnin's *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (2001) is centred on a fundamental disagreement as to the nature of theatre in early modern England.[74] Dawson sees the theatre as a secularised version of the participatory eucharist of Reformed Christianity, whose success rested on the worthiness of the sacrament's recipient: 'The actor, by participating his body, creates his part, constructs the person he represents; the audience participates the actor [*sic*], exchanging its hold on ordinary reality for an embodied, but also of course impersonated, passion.'[75] Yachnin, however, proposes that the theatre was an example of the '"populuxe" market', 'an area of trade that centred on the selling of popular,

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[74] Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[75] Anthony Dawson, 'Performance and Participation', *Culture of Playgoing*, pp. 11–37 (p. 27).

relatively inexpensive versions of deluxe goods.' Yachnin argues that playgoing 'afforded the

cultural consumers of Shakespeare's time an opportunity to play at being their social

"betters" and a limited mastery of the system of social rank itself', and that 'the purpose, or

one of the purposes [of playgoing] was the opportunity to participate in an experience of

virtual courtliness.'[76] An audience willingly assuming their role as 'gentles' in the final act of

A Midsummer Night's Dream would have embodied both the collective form of theatregoing

that Dawson describes in their participation, and the more individualistic identities outlined

by Yachnin in their enjoyment of the 'populuxe' form of gentility bestowed on them by

Quince's men and Puck.

Similarly, if the audience were to accept their role as 'gentles', a middle way might be

negotiated between models of theatrical performance that place agency with the playwright

and players, and those which attribute it primarily to the playgoers. As Nova Myhill and

Jennifer Low put it, it is a conflict between 'the antitheatrical terror of the absolute power of

the spectacle over the powerless collective audience' and 'the absolute power of the

idiosyncratic individuals in the audience to determine meaning'.[77] Myhill and Low argue that

neither of these extreme positions is tenable; and indeed, it is possible that *A Midsummer

Night's Dream* demonstrates a way in which they may coexist simultaneously. Puck,

speaking for the performers, is not demanding that the audience behave in a certain manner;

rather, he is consensually transforming the Globe's spectators into a 'gentle' audience who

would behave in that manner.

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[76] Paul Yachnin, 'The Populuxe Theatre', *Culture of Playgoing*, pp. 38–65 (p. 40; p. 41; p. 53).

[77] Nova Myhill and Jennifer A. Low, 'Audience and Audiences', in Low and Myhill, *Imagining the Audience*, pp. 1–17 (p. 7).

Puck's speech harnesses the association between wealth and sleeping, disengaged audiences to prompt its spectators, paradoxically, into full participation in the theatrical experience. Relevant here is Allison Hobgood's conception of performance as a matter of 'irradiating emotion' through which the player could 'transform himself so as then to contagiously transform his spectators', manipulating the humours of their porous, permeable bodies.[78] The precise nature of this transformation, of the mechanism through which a theatrical audience (as opposed to a congregation) engaged with a performance is explored in the following section. It is proposed that the activation of the mental faculty of fancy— commonly associated with sleeping and dreaming—was key. Playgoing, I suggest, could be considered a form of dreaming while awake.

Theatres of dreams: sleeping on stage

While Puck's closing lines—stating that the play can be considered 'No more yielding but a dream'—make the theatrical experience safe in some ways, they also incorporate unsettling undercurrents. Claude Fretz notes Puck's allusions to 'some of the less comic themes' of the play, for example, his mention of 'the serpent's tongue' which recalls Hermia's bad dream, as well her likening of Demetrius to a serpent when she believes that he has killed Lysander.[79] Like the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, Puck's epilogue is the happy ending to a comedy that reminds the audience how close they have come to witnessing a tragedy (a theme that will be explored further in the final section of this chapter). Just as the young lovers have escaped the harm done by the snake, the players now face—but with the forbearance of the audience will avoid—their own form of serpentine danger in the form of hissing spectators. As Fretz points

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[78] Allison P. Hobgood, *Passionate Playgoing in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 20; p. 17.

[79] Claude Fretz, *Dreams, Sleep, and Shakespeare's Genres* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), pp. 49–50.

out, Puck, being an 'uncanny and even devilish figure, in spite of attempts to present himself as a conciliator' is ideally placed to deliver a message that hinges on double meaning, both providing and withholding reassurance.[80]

Puck's suggestion that the audience might have mistaken their dreams for reality (or at least for the reality of a theatrical performance) may be taken as a pleasurable comic conceit, a positive affirmation of the power of imagination, a worrying suggestion concerning the unreliability of the senses, or a combination of all of these things. For Marjorie Garber, the speech encapsulates the way that the play 'reverses the categories of reality and illusion, sleeping and waking, art and nature, to touch upon the central theme of the dream which is truer than reality'. From Garber's perspective, influenced by Freudianism, this sort of dream 'is the gateway, not to folly, but to revelation and reordering', and to 'real self-knowledge'; 'illusion and imagination' are 'preferable to their radical opposite, "cool reason"'. [81] R. A. Foakes takes a similarly benign view of the triumph of inward mental experience over the external world, writing that Shakespeare 'maximises at once our sense of the artifice of the stage, our awareness of being in a theatre watching actors at work, and our ability, through our imaginations, to enter into and give assent to a magical country of the mind.'[82] But is a 'dream which is truer than reality' really an enviable experience? Within the play, the night the lovers spend in the wood leaves them literally unable to believe their own senses and memories. After their morning encounter with Theseus, Demetrius looks to his companions for reassurance that 'The Duke was here and bid us follow him' (4.1.193); when Hermia, Helena, and Lysander agree, he adds 'Why then, we are awake. Let's follow him, | And by

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[80] Fretz, p. 50.

[81] Marjorie Garber, *Dreams in Shakespeare: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis* (1974; rpt, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 59; p. 60; p. 84.

[82] R. A. Foakes, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. by R. A. Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1–48 (p. 40).

the way let us recount our dreams' (4.1.196–7). Only experiences that are mutual provide assurance of reality; but even these might be faulty if the dream continues, and if one's companions are, in fact, only 'shadows'.

As Helen Hackett notes, Puck is 'an untrustworthy and ingenious trickster'. His suggestion that 'You have but slumbered here', she proposes, 'combines with the immediately preceding action of the play to challenge any rigid sense of the precedence of waking over dreams, of reason over imagination, or of reality over drama.'[83] Puck's characterisation of himself as 'honest' and his challenge to the audience 'Else the Puck a liar call' emphasises this double game. Puck is indeed a liar; in asserting the contrary, he is promising the audience 'amends', but using a questionable guarantor, that is, his status as an 'honest Puck'. Even if the spectators do not buy the suggestion that they 'have but slumbered here', they are invited to gull themselves in another fashion by simply going along with the performance. Puck is, effectively, asking them to join the compact of 'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet' (5.1.7) described by Theseus; to relinquish voluntarily the distinction between something and nothing, giving 'to airy nothing | A local habitation and a name' (5.1.16–17). In such a state, Theseus remarks, one thing is readily confused with another: a thought may be taken for reality or, in another example, 'How easy is a bush supposed a bear!' (5.1.22).

Puck's speech, in short, hints that dreaming was relevant to the experience of seeing the *Dream*. It also raises the question as to whether the experience of dreaming was relevant to theatregoing in the early modern period in general. At this point, it is helpful to return to the Young Vic panel of 1988, or rather, to the reason it was convened in the first place. The discussion on Shakespeare and sleepiness was held to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of a

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[83] Helen Hackett, *Writers and their Work: William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1997), p. 60.

book that, among other things, proposed a more complex and creative model of drowsing

spectators than the panel itself allowed for: Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. In his

influential essay on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Kott imagines a sleepy early modern

audience which contrasts markedly with the bored and oblivious twentieth-century

theatregoers discussed at the Young Vic. Starting from the now disputed proposition that the

first performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was at a private wedding feast, Kott's

essay constructs a scene in which the setting and events of play and party combine.[84] His

description of the late-night, intoxicated wedding guests shades into an account of the play

they are watching:

> It is late at night and the entertainment is over. All the toasts have been drunk,
>
> dancing has stopped. Servants are still holding lamps in the courtyard. But the
>
> adjoining garden is dark. Tightly embracing couples are slowly filtering through the
>
> gate. Spanish wine is heavy; the lovers have remained. Someone has passed by; the
>
> boy is waking up. He does not see the girl asleep by his side. He has forgotten
>
> everything, even that he left the dance with her. Another girl is near […] He has
>
> stretched his arm, he runs after her. He hates now with an intensity equal to that with
>
> which an hour ago he desired.[85]

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[84] Holland notes that there is no documentary evidence to support any of the wedding theories including the 'most popular candidate', the 1596 marriage of Sir Thomas Berkeley to Elizabeth Carey, despite the existence of a detailed contemporary family chronicle which might have been expected to mention the play's performance. Gary Jay Williams also cites the lack of documentary evidence for such a performance, arguing in addition that public performance was the priority for Shakespeare and his company at this point, and that readings that place the performance of the *Dream* at a specific time, or try to fit its characters onto specific public figures, often rely on literal or tortuous interpretations—including the idea that the play was written by the Earl of Oxford. Chaudhuri counters that the absence of evidence does not definitively refute the wedding theory, but concludes that 'The possible context of an aristocratic wedding affects our understanding of *Dream* as an imaginative construct, not as stuff for a historical guessing-game.' Holland, p. 112; Gary Jay Williams, *Our Moonlight Revels:* A Midsummer Night's Dream *in the Theatre* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997), pp. 5–18; Chaudhuri, 'Appendix 2: Date and Occasion', in Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, pp. 282–94 (p. 286).

[85] Jan Kott, 'Titania and the Ass's Head', in *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, transl. by Boleslaw Taborski (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 171–90 (p. 174).

While the historical basis of Kott's speculation is doubtful, his essay raises the possibility that dream-like mental activity during a dramatic performance might be more than simply an embarrassing moment of inattention. He proposes a performance in which not only the physical setting ('a spacious house in the late Gothic style') but the mental state of the tired and intoxicated audience is in harmony with the dream-like and erotic subject matter of the play.[86]

When William Sherman revisited the transcript of the 1988 Young Vic panel in 2009, he asked a question that resonates with Kott's essay:

> What makes us so sure […] that Shakespeare and his contemporaries would have seen sleepiness as an inappropriate response to the patterns of sound and imagery they presented to viewers and readers? Do we know enough about the place of sleep in Elizabethan somatics and aesthetics to assume that early modern playgoers (like modern ones) would consider vigilant wakefulness the hallmark of successful appreciation of great art?[87]

Sherman notes that sleep was a popular subject for early modern sculptors in the form of sleeping cupids, and that music was praised for its ability to 'transport, instruct and heal its hearers by bringing on an actual or metaphorical slumber'. Sherman asserts that 'The relative tranquillity and continuity of modern slumber have allowed us to forget […] that the border between wakefulness and sleep was a less stable and more active zone in the pre-modern imagination'.[88] The fact that this latter argument is partially based on Roger Ekirch's model of segmented pre-industrial sleep might give the reader pause (in the context of the critique of

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[86] Kott, p. 174.

[87] Sherman, p. 178.

[88] Sherman, pp. 186–7.

Ekirch's theory in Chapter 1 of this thesis).[89] Nevertheless, Sherman's proposal that sleep in the early modern theatre, whether literal or metaphorical, might have been a more complex matter than simple disengagement is consistent with the evidence presented so far in the present chapter. The material Sherman chooses for his investigation of sleeping, dreaming, and playgoing is compelling but indirect: he focuses on *The Tempest* as a play in which sleep is an 'agent of transport', and a powerful force of change.[90] In order to analyse further the intersection between theatregoing and the mental processes involved in dreaming, in the following section I consider early modern drama featuring audience members who sleep and dream on stage while watching plays-within-plays.

Thomas Kyd's highly influential *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) features a sleeping audience member of a sort; Revenge is berated for napping by the ghost of Andrea, and protests that despite appearances, he is actually hard at work: 'in unquiet, quietness is feigned, | And slumb'ring is a common worldly wile' (3.15.22–3).[91] However, strictly speaking, Revenge and Andrea are somehow watching events in a real-world space unfold, rather than sitting as audience members in a playhouse. The drowsing on-stage spectators of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1592), the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), and Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* (1638) are closer to—although of course, not documentary evidence of—the early modern theatrical experience.[92]

A Shrew famously features more appearances (or at least, more mentions in the printed text) of the drunken tinker, ne'er-do-well, and bad husband Sly than does

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[89] Sherman, p. 178.

[90] Sherman, p. 182.

[91] Thomas Kyd, 'The Spanish Tragedy', in *Four Revenge Tragedies*, ed. by Katharine Eisaman Maus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[92] Richard Brome, *The Antipodes* (London: 1640), title page.

Shakespeare's *The Shrew*. In addition, *A Shrew's* exploration of Sly's mental state is more elaborate. In *The Shrew,* the story of Sly being abducted while asleep, taken to a local manor house, fooled into thinking he is a lord, and entertained with a play, peters out in the first act. At 1.1.247 a servant observes 'My lord, you nod, you do not mind the play.'[93] Sly rouses himself sufficiently to give the drama qualified praise: ''Tis a very excellent piece of work […] would 'twere done!' (1.1.251–2). The last indication of Sly's presence in the printed text is the stage direction immediately following this dialogue: '*They sit and mark*' (1.1.252.1). The absence of further dialogue does not necessarily mean that Sly no longer appears on stage; indeed, Karl P. Wentersdorf has suggested that the unusual pattern of exit and entrance by Katherine and Petruchio—who leave the stage at the end of 5.1 only to (most likely) return immediately at the beginning of 5.2—might indicate a missing Sly scene, possibly involving his removal back to the inn from the induction.[94] In practice, modern-day directors have used material from *A Shrew*, including Sly's waking at the end of the play, to round off the Sly plotline.[95]

As Barbara Hodgdon has pointed out, the effect of re-introducing Sly to the later parts of *The Shrew* in performance, often via appropriated sections of *A Shrew*, is to potentially alter the audience's response to the play as a whole. Hodgdon argues that 'Attaching the Sly ending diminishes the idea of metamorphosis governing Kate's taming. If *The Shrew* was merely, as Puck says, a "weak and idle theme, | No more yielding but a dream" […] it has no bearing on the waking world'. Keeping Sly in the play, and returning to him at the end, she

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[93] William Shakespeare, *The Taming of The Shrew*, ed. by H J. Oliver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). All line references are to this edition.

[94] Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The Original Ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*: A Reconsideration', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 18 (1978), 201–15

[95] Barbara Hodgdon, 'Introduction', in William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Arden Shakespeare Third Series, ed. by Barbara Hodgdon (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1–131 (pp. 105–18).

posits, 'encloses and distances the taming story.'[96] However, I propose that the extent to which the framing narrative distances and diminishes the events of the main play depends on how much of *A Shrew* makes it into a blended performed text that draws on the two plays, and how it is used. It is possible for an event to have the properties of a dream and yet exert considerable power even after a return to full consciousness.

The Sly of *A Shrew* does more than fall asleep and wake up. He also interferes with the performance of the play-within-a-play by mistaking it for reality, adding another layer of confusion to his new-found identity as a lord. As Phylotus and Valeria are threatened with jail, Sly calls out 'I say we'll have no sending to prison!' (13.45). He is reassured by others not that he is watching a play, but that the characters have escaped arrest, thus maintaining his belief in the veracity of the staged events; following this, he '*drinks and then falls asleep*' (13.54.1). [97] The persistence of this sleep ('SLY *sleeps*', 13.126.2) allows the Lord and his men to return Sly to the 'alehouse side' (13.132). When Sly comes to, he refers to his experience as 'the bravest dream' (15.12–13) and states 'I dreamt upon it all this night till now, | And thou hast waked me out of the best dream | That ever I had in my life.' (15.17–19). Which of Sly's experiences constitute this dream? The play-within-a-play, his night as a lord, or both? It is not entirely clear. However, Sly's very lack of ability to distinguish his life from a dream, the events on stage from reality, or his status as a spectator as opposed to a participant in the action, has allowed the play to have a permanent effect. By drinking, drowsing, and falling asleep during the play, Sly has learned a lesson—albeit a reprehensible one—on 'how to tame a shrew' (15.16), which he intends to apply in his own domestic life.

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[96] Hodgdon, p. 70; p. 105.

[97] *The Taming of a Shrew*, ed. by Stephen Roy Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

The experience of combining—and confusing—dreaming with playgoing has proved, if not the road to wisdom, at least the route to a transformative experience.

Bill Alexander's 1992 Royal Shakespeare Theatre production of *The Shrew* featured a scene in which 'when Sly objected to Vincentio's being sent to prison', Petruchio reassured him 'It's all right. It's only a play'.[98] This addition to the text preserved one aspect of Sly's experience in *A Shrew*—his mistaking the play for reality—and used a metatheatrical joke to both reassure Sly of the fictitious nature of what he was seeing, and produce not only laughter but a moment of pleasurable paradox. Is the play-within-a-play any more unreal than the play itself? This confusion over categories, initiated by Sly's drowsy semi-engagement with the play, suggests a unity of theme between the framing device and the main action. As with Petruchio's performance of perverse over-attentiveness towards Katherine, and his detachment of sign from meaning (for example, treating sunlight as if it is moonlight), Sly's experience in *A Shrew* suggests that the temporary erosion of normal categorical boundaries and relationships—of sleep and wakefulness, fiction and reality, behaviour and intention— might have substantial and permanent effects. This theme—of a dream in the theatre that is a means of engagement with the play, and is a positive transformative experience—is a significant part of my analysis of the use of dreaming in the theatrical space; it is developed below in my analyses of Richard Brome's *The Antipodes*, and returned to in the context of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Richard Brome's *The Antipodes* emphasises the potentially constructive and curative properties of a confusional state.[99] Hughball, a doctor, uses immersion in a play held at the eccentric aristocrat Letoy's house to cure young Peregrine of his obsession with travel, and,

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[98] Hodgdon, p. 117.

[99] Richard Brome, *The Antipodes*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and Richard Proudfoot (London: Nick Hern Books, 2000). All line references are to this edition.

by proxy, Peregrine's wife Martha of her state of agitation brought on by three years of unconsummated marriage. The play-within-a-play enacts the customs of the inhabitants of the Antipodes, a fictional land that is geographically and socially so far away from England as to be a form of anti-England.[100] As a metaphorically and literally upside-down country, the Antipodes is a variation on the theme of what Hackett terms the 'back-to-front' space; in the *Dream*, this is the wood where things 'befall prepost'rously' (3.2.121).[101] Unlike Shakespeare, who locates this space of temporary madness in an enchanted forest (where lovers are 'wood [i.e. mad] within this wood'; 2.1.192), and whose characters follow their return to the sane and wakeful world by watching a play, Brome uses the play-within-a-play as the space of social and cultural inversion that will return Peregrine to sanity. Significantly, Hughball begins Peregrine's journey to the 'Antipodes' by giving him a sleeping draught: ''Tis a deep draught indeed, and now 'tis down, | And carries him down to the Antipodes! | I mean but in a dream' (1.3.226). The beginning of Peregrine's cure, therefore, lies in a dream-within-a-dream (his prior delusions have been described as 'a dream indeed' by Martha; 1.2.235), and in a play-within-a-play. Peregrine wakes disorientated; told that he has slept for eight months during a voyage to the Antipodes, he becomes increasingly involved in the play taking place around him to the point of directing and disrupting its action.

The high point of this disruption occurs off-stage, as in the tiring house an agitated Peregrine

> Rusheth amongst the foresaid properties,
>
> Kills monster after monster, takes the puppets
>
> Prisoners, knocks down the Cyclops, tumbles all

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[100] This treatment is consistent with supposed early modern cures for delusion which were based around temporary collusion with the patient; for example, by placing 'crawling vermin' in the patient's excreta to rid them of the delusion that their belly was full of frogs and toads. Helen Hackett, *The Elizabethan Mind: Searching for the Self in an Age of Uncertainty* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2022), p. 229.

[101] Hackett, *Writers*, p. 71.

Our jiggumbobs and trinkets to the wall[.] (3.1.305–8)

The description of Peregrine's madness is strikingly similar to Thomas Shelton's translation of the episode in Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* when the protagonist gets drawn too far into the action of a puppet theatre: 'he vnsheathed his sword, and at one friske he got to the Motion, and with an vnseene and posting fury, he began to raine strokes vpon the Puppetish Moorisme, ouerthrowing some, and beheading others, maiming this, and cutting in pieces that'.[102] However, unlike Quixote, and more like the Sly of *A Shrew*, Peregrine's befuddled interaction in the play-within-a-play is a staging point en route to a new understanding and a reinvigorated sense of agency. Hughball encourages Peregrine in his belief that, after his attack on the backstage puppets and other props, he has become 'King of the Antipodes' (3.1.316). Peregrine's government of his new realm, 'With purpose to reduce the manners of | The country to his own' (3.1.321–2) marks the beginning of his ability to regulate his own thoughts, beliefs, and feelings; in short, to regain his agency. Peregrine is initially impressed by the Antipodean system. He witnesses a legal dispute involving a gentleman who has taken goods from a mercer in return for impregnating his wife, but has not yet done the deed. When the 'governor' of the Antipodes resolves the situation by taking both goods and wife for himself, he is knighted by Peregrine. However, having seen more of Antipodean life—including its shocking inversion of social and sexual hierarchies—Peregrine finds himself moved towards a decisively conservative position.

Peregrine's renewed enthusiasm for English social norms is cemented when Martha, his wife, joins the play-within-a-play. She is cast as dream-like, defamiliarized version of herself: Hughball tells Peregrine that his wife is dead, and that 'her fleeting spirit | Is flown into and animates this princess' (4.1.448–9). Although Peregrine is afflicted by one last

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[102] Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote Part* 2, transl. by Thomas Shelton (London: 1620), sig. M7ᵛ.

moment of 'Mandeville madness' (4.1.466), worrying that Martha might be a 'Gadlibrien', and hence likely to sting during intercourse, he is persuaded to go ahead and sleep with her, the final part of the cure. As Letoy explains, 'his much troubled and confused brain | Will, by the real knowledge of a woman […] be by degrees | Settled and rectified' (4.1.509–12). This will also cure Martha's state of agitation; thus, as with the Jailer's Daughter in Shakespeare and Fletcher's *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613), sexual intercourse in a manner sanctioned by society—embodied in a physician—provides a route back from 'dreaming of another world' (4.3.5) into sanity.[103] One might also perceive a parallel with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which the lovers emerge from the unregulated, dreamlike free-for-all of the Athenian wood into the sane and stable institution of monogamous marriage, where 'Jack shall have Jill' (3.2.461) and Theseus commands 'Sweet friends, to bed' (5.1.359).

This tendency for socially-sanctioned sexual relationships to be used as a cure for mental derangement, or at least to mark the transition from such derangement to a settled state, might be another instance of the critically well-worn theme of subversion and containment.[104] In *The Antipodes,* Peregrine enjoys briefly a society with carnivalesque, upended norms, but this ultimately cements him into the position of a dutiful husband. However, it is also possible that, although a socially conventional position is the end point of Peregrine's adventures, the ultimate destination is not so much the point as is the journey. A space where dream logic applies, where usual associations are loosened or indeed inverted, is shown to be a necessary stage in the process of learning. This is similar to the process that Sly undergoes in the *Shrew* plays, moving through a dream-like space where his own social position is inverted; where a young boy poses as his faithful lady; and where in a play-within-

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[103] William Shakespeare, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. by Eugene M. Waith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[104] See Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets'.

a-play a man tames a shrewish wife through over-attentiveness to the point that she is willing to take the sun for the moon, or an old man for a beautiful youth.

The staged drowsing and dreaming audience member in *The Antipodes* and *A Shrew* does not undergo a catch-and-release process of temporary licence before authoritarian crackdown. He uses the preposterous dream-like space as a way to experiment and to learn by stretching the usual rigid associations formed in waking life to breaking point. With this in mind, one might consider the experience of the lovers in the dream-like space of the wood near Athens not as a Freudian-style safety valve releasing repressed sexuality, nor as a single night of carnival before a lifetime of monogamy, but as a necessary stage in which their too-rigid relationships with one another are broken, inverted, reformed, and remoulded. This is a key theme to which this chapter shall return.

Indeed, in the case of *The Antipodes*, Peregrine and Martha's return to sanity via the marital bed is framed as the ending of a dream. Both return to their senses, 'all their melancholy and his travels pass'd | And but suppos'd their dreams' (5.2.267–8). Peregrine uses the language of the sleeper waking, gradually reassuming both consciousness and self-consciousness:

> I am what you are pleas'd to make me, but
>
> Withal so ignorant of mine own condition —
>
> Whether I sleep, or wake, or talk, or dream;
>
> Whether I be, or be not; or if I am,
>
> Whether I do or do not anything.
>
> For I have had, if I now wake, such dreams,
>
> And been so far transported in a long
>
> And tedious voyage of sleep that I may fear
>
> My manners can acquire no welcome where

Men understand themselves. (5.2.306–15)

The resumption of normal life is like waking from a dream; but the transition between mental states is neither neat nor straightforward. Peregrine, according to the stage directions, 'seems something amazed' (5.2.304.6). He appears to take his cues regarding his identity and state of consciousness from others: repeating 'I', as if attempting unsuccessfully to establish stable subjectivity, he is 'what you are pleas'd to make me', and 'ignorant of mine own condition'. In its torrent of fragmentary sentences, failing to pin down the experience they attempt to describe ('Whether I sleep, or wake, or talk, or dream; | Whether I be, or be not; or if I am, | Whether I do or do not anything'), Peregrine's speech recalls Bottom's comic return to the human world in A Midsummer Night's Dream:

> I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was. Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream. It shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom (4.1.201–12).

The lovers are similarly shown to experience a sensation of lingering unreality and profound self-doubt when they are woken by Theseus and his hounds. Hermia observes that 'everything seems double' (4.1.189), while Helena describes Demetrius as 'Mine own and not mine own' (4.1.191). Demetrius summarises how they feel: 'It seems to me | That yet we sleep, we dream' (4.1.191–2). The lovers are, like Bottom, still mentally on the border between their dream and waking selves; they are emerging from their prior state of belief into an understanding of themselves that is anchored in their newfound roles as royally

sanctioned, soon-to-be-wed couples. On waking from sleep following a period of physical and mental derangement, Peregrine, as with Bottom and the lovers, emerges in a profoundly unsettled state. The audience see a character who is physically awake, moving and talking, but whose dialogue indicates that they are mentally on a metamorphotic boundary that defies precise verbal description. It is in such a state that the character completes their transition back to the waking world by slotting into their social niche: as mechanical, bride, groom, or gentleman.

The remark with which Peregrine's attention turns to his broader social situation— 'My manners can acquire no welcome where | Men understand themselves'—contains multiple meanings. The sentence may simply imply that Peregrine worries that the powerful 'dreams' that followed the sleeping draught administered by Hughball have altered him so profoundly as to alienate him from normal society. The word 'understand' might also play on the theme of inversion: unlike the inhabitants of the Antipodes, those of England literally 'understand' themselves, with their legs under, as opposed to above, their heads (we have, previously, seen the actor Quailpipe propose wearing a shoe on his head to symbolise 'the world turn'd upside down'; 2.1.65). Furthermore, as William West points out, in early modern England, 'understanding' could have referred to both intellectual comprehension and the physical act of viewing a play (in the sense of standing under the stage). The two positions might be synthesised to express the experience of embodied engagement in theatre: 'To understand is to inhabit the theater's world as one who participates and experiences, as one who stands below and within it rather than viewing and judging it from a distance.'[105] We may read in Peregrine's speech, therefore, not just a reference to the process of waking following a dream, but an allusion to the practice of playgoing, and hence a parallel being

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[105] William N. West, 'Understanding in the Elizabethan Theaters', *Renaissance Drama*, 35 (2006), 113–43 (p. 133).

drawn between the two experiences. Peregrine might be referring to the paradoxical position of the audience member who both observes the play from the outside and 'participates and experiences' within it mentally and somatically; this audience member would also, in a way, 'understand' themselves. Peregrine has, in his drugged and disordered state, undergone an extreme version of such an experience; on 'waking' and leaving the play he shows residual alienation from his own sense of selfhood and agency, as both spectator and actor in the play of the Antipodes. His experience differs from the audience member at the theatre in terms of degree, but not necessarily in terms of quality. It is therefore worth re-examining the process of sleeping and dreaming in the *Dream* with the sort of mental process Sly and Peregrine experience in mind, and which is common to spectator and dreamer; of being both present and participating in the action, and yet not being entirely *oneself* while this occurs.

Bottom's experience is not only 'past the wit of man' (4.1.201–2); it is a dream that 'hath no bottom' (4.1.212). Perhaps Bottom is not just saying, as Holland glosses the line, that his dream 'has no foundation in reality', is 'infathomably profound', and 'has no yarn out of which it can be woven'. He may also be expressing the same sense of self-alienation that Brome identifies in both the dreamer and the playgoer. Bottom's dream 'hath no bottom' in the sense that Bottom was present, and yet—having been partially transformed into an ass and then had his 'mortal grossness' (3.1.151) purged by Titania—was also *not* present. Bottom's dream both happened to him, and yet also did not, as it was experienced by a translated version of Bottom. Similar confusion over identity and presence occurs with other characters in the final act of the play: as Gary Jay Williams points out, Demetrius and Theseus associate Bottom with an ass, despite neither having seen him in his transformed

state. Williams writes that it is 'as if all somehow had been dreaming a common dream'; but perhaps there is more to it than that.[106]

There is some evidence that the self-alienated simultaneous presence and absence of the dreamer and theatregoer may have been enacted on stage in the *Dream*, and that this might have been the means through which Demetrius 'knows' to associate Bottom with an ass. If Demetrius is asleep on stage while Bottom is present with his ass's head, Demetrius' later identification of Bottom as an ass might indicate that he, too, has experienced the self-alienating simultaneous presence and absence of the dreamer and theatregoer. In F1, Act 3 concludes with the stage direction '*They sleepe all the act*', referred to by R. A. Foakes as 'the most puzzling additional stage direction in the Folio'.[107] Foakes suggests three possible meanings of this stage direction: that the lovers remain inert on stage during a break in the performance; that they do so during music played between acts; or that it is 'a prompter's reminder that the lovers are to remain on stage asleep when Titania enters, and throughout the next part of the action.'[108] This is consistent, Foakes points out, with the Folio direction later in 4.1 that '*Sleepers Lye still*'. Peter Holland, in footnotes for 4.1, observes that

> the stage is remarkably full with unnoted sleepers; productions always have the
>
> problem of how to accommodate four sleeping lovers alongside Bottom, Titania and
>
> her train, and, later, Bottom asleep while the stage is occupied by the lovers,
>
> Hippolyta, Theseus and his train.[109]

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[106] Williams, p. 19.

[107] Shakespeare, 'Dream' in *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, sig. O1ʳ; Foakes, 'Textual Analysis' in Shakespeare, *Dream*, ed. by Foakes, pp. 143–51 (p. 149).

[108] Foakes, p. 151. Shakespeare, 'Dream', in *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, sig. O1ʳ.

[109] Holland, footnote 4.1.0.1–3. Chaudhuri suggests that this potentially congested stage was managed in the early modern theatre via the use of a recessed space for Titania's bower. In the influential 1970 Royal Shakespeare Theatre Peter Brook production, wires were used to suspend the dreamers and the bower (in the

Furthermore, there is evidence that keeping the sleepers on the stage was a practice maintained even when the *Dreame* was performed on the smallest of early modern stages. The stage direction for '*Tawyer with a Trumpet*' (sig. O2ᵛ) in F1 has been identified as a reference to a musician listed as belonging to the King's Men in 1624, and hence suggestive that the text derives from a copy of the play marked up for performance in the 1620s.[110] If this is the case, this evidence, along with the reference to '*the act*' indicates that even when the play was staged in the relatively small space of the Blackfriars, the players still felt it necessary to clutter the stage with sleeping bodies. It must be assumed that there was some rationale for this. As Michael Mangan has pointed out, in the majority of plays by Shakespeare, or indeed other playwrights, 'characters not directly involved in the action are usually left off-stage', but 'in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* they are just as likely to lie down on stage in full view of the audience and fall asleep.' Characters are thus removed from the action, but kept in the sight—and the minds—of the audience, being 'both there and not there.'[111] It is, Mangan notes, an effect that is immediately grasped in performance, but harder to derive from a reading of the text.

Keeping the sleepers on stage presents a visual effect of both presence and absence; of inert, unconscious characters whose existence must nevertheless be registered by the viewer, and who return to the waking world displaying some knowledge, albeit faint and distorted, of the comprehensive perspective on events that is normally the privilege of the audience alone. The arrangement is also reminiscent of the way in which other early modern plays staged dreams. The sleeper sat or lay immobile on stage, with the action of their dream unfolding

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form of a large red feather) in the air, allowing the numerous sleepers to occupy the same visual space; thus the various worlds of the *Dream* could coexist without obstructing one another. Chaudhuri, 'Introduction', p. 8; p. 19.

[110] Holland, pp. 116–7.

[111] Mangan, p. 159.

around them, creating not only visual spectacle but also ambiguity as to what was 'really'

occurring in external as opposed to internal space. This convention was also employed in

numerous early modern paintings.[112] It is even possible that the presence of Titania

specifically within this tableau is significant; as Hackett points out, 'In various Elizabethan

writings the traditional mind–state analogy was given topical form. Elizabeth I was often

identified with reason as ruler of the mind and with the rational soul, the highest of

Aristotle's three levels of the soul.'[113] In which case, Titania's slumber might literally be

considered the staging of the sleep of reason. The cumulative effect raises questions about the

nature, position, and boundary of the self; in staged dreams, the body is apparently inanimate,

although it is surrounded by other, animate bodies that the playgoer understands are

(possibly) the inventions of the sleeper's mind. The result is a striking visual image of a split

and alienated form of selfhood.

This is not to say that being mindful of dream- and theatre-related phenomena such as

self-alienation will necessarily provide definitive solutions to the ambiguous or confusing

features of the *Dream*. It is, rather, to suggest that the oddities of the play—such as the

recognition of Bottom as an ass by characters who never encountered him in his animal

form—might be thought of as intrinsic and possibly revealing features of its dream-like

theatrical structure, rather than as inexplicable flaws.

To take another example, Theseus's recognition of Bottom's ass-like qualities may be

related to the actor's doubling with the part of Oberon. Stephen Booth has suggested that the

doubling of actors may have been not only a matter of theatrical necessity, but a way of

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[112] For example, Shakespeare's *Richard III* (1593), *Cymbeline* (1610), and *Henry VIII*; Thomas Heywood's *1 If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1604). See also *La Renaissance et le Rêve* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013).

[113] Hackett, *Elizabethan Mind*, p. 266.

exploring common and contrasting features of characters in performance.[114] Perhaps in the

Dream, the actor playing Theseus/Oberon 'seems double'; the usual boundary between

characters that is established by different costume, voice, gestures, and so on, is deliberately

weakened, such that the characters intersect with a double consciousness akin to both

sleeping and waking life, and to the simultaneous observer and participator. Did the same

actor portray both Theseus and Oberon in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century productions of

the *Dream*? Parallels between Theseus/Hippolyta and Oberon/Titania as the king and queen

of their respective realms can be drawn from the text, and some modern-day directors have

chosen to show a tension between Theseus and Hippolyta that foreshadows the Oberon–

Titania conflict in the performance of 1.1.[115]

However, while the doubling of the actors playing these characters is almost a routine

part of present-day productions, it could be a comparatively recent practice. The first

twentieth-century doubling of Theseus-Oberon and Hippolyta-Titania was likely in a 1956

production by the Shakespearewrights in New York; Peter Brook's 1970 Royal Shakespeare

Theatre production, which toured globally, may have cemented the practice as standard.[116]

Nevertheless, there is some evidence for doubling of the roles in the seventeenth century.

Gary Jay Williams notes that the list of characters for the considerably reduced adaptation of

the *Dream*, *The Humours of Bottom the Weaver* (first published 1661) specifies that 'the

actors playing Oberon and Titania may also play "the Duke" and "the Dutchess"'.[117] It is

tempting to conclude that the mid-twentieth century saw the rediscovery of an original

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[114] Stephen Booth, 'Speculations on Doubling in Shakespeare's Plays', in *Shakespeare: The Theatrical Dimension*, ed. by Philip C. McGuire and David A. Samuelson (New York: AMS, 1979), pp. 103–31.

[115] For example, in Dominic Dromgoole's 2013 production at Shakespeare's Globe, Michelle Terry as Hippolyta stood at a significant distance from the main gathering at the court during the scene, and exited the stage bestowing a silent blessing on Hermia and angrily ignoring Theseus.

[116] Williams, p. 217.

[117] Williams, p. 33.

casting practice. But the evidence remains ambiguous; *The Humours* was written, as

stationers Francis Kirkman and Henry Marsh put it in their address to the reader, to be 'easily

acted', which might imply that it was specifically adapted to be suitable for a very small

cast.[118] Furthermore, the text of *The Humours* provides a considerable gap between the exit of

Oberon and the entry of the Duke and Duchess to see *Pyramus and Thisbe*, encompassing

Bottom's waking speech and reunion with his friends.[119] As for the full version of the *Dream,*

there remains the rapid costume change needed to cover the exit of Oberon and Titania

followed by the immediate entry of Theseus and Hippolyta in 4.1, which might offer an

opportunity for an astonishing *coup de théâtre*, a moment to metatheatrically flag the

transition between fairy and human worlds by making the costume change obvious, or an

insuperable practical obstacle.[120]

Maybe there is just something ass-like about Bottom's 'overweening vanity and

bumbling incompetence' as Rebecca Ann Bach suggests; Bottom will be recognised as an ass

whether or not he has been seen wearing the animal's head.[121] Alternatively, it is possible that

if the same actor played both Oberon and Theseus, the audience might recognise some logic

in Theseus's remark on Bottom's ass-like qualities, albeit a logic that did not strictly apply

within the fictional parameters of the play. Rather, it would have been a logic that relied on

the simultaneous suspension of disbelief in the fiction of the drama—a man has been partially

transformed into an ass, and back again—along with the metatheatrical knowledge that the

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[118] *The Merry Conceited Humors of Bottom the Weaver* (London: 1661), sig. A4r.

[119] *Bottom the Weaver*, sig. C4ʳ–D1ᵛ.

[120] '*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and Robin Goodfellow. The sleepers lie still [...] Wind horns within. Enter Theseus with Egeus, Hippolyta, and all his train*' (4.1.101.1–4).

[121] Rebecca Ann Bach, 'The Animal Continuum in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Textual Practice*, 24 (2010), 123–47 (p. 139).

same single actor has been both Duke of Athens and fairy king. Oberon would thus function as an embodiment of Theseus's dream self, the two characters—like the waking and sleeping individual—the same and yet not the same. To paraphrase the John Locke epigraph with which this thesis begins, Theseus asleep and Theseus awake is not the same person—and yet also, he is.

Whatever the case, the drowsing audience members in *A Shrew* and *The Antipodes*, and the characters of Bottom and the lovers in the *Dream*, might be considered as embodiments of the disrupted sense of agency and identity experienced by both dreamer and playgoer as they endeavour to 'understand', to both observe and participate. The simultaneously amusing and disturbing nature of self-alienation in dreams was expressed, significantly, via a theatrical metaphor in *On my Selfe*, one of Samuel Sheppard's *Epigrams* (1651):

> No way facetious am I
>
> To toyish mirth or Jollitie,
>
> Yet in one dreame I can compose
>
> A *Comedy*, in Verse or Prose,
>
> Behold the Action, apprehend
>
> The Jest, and the quaint plot commend,
>
> And so much of the sence partake,
>
> As serv's to laugh my selfe awake.[122]

The dream here is both a product alien to Sheppard's nature, and a 'quaint' work of complexity of his own devising. The 'I' of Sheppard's epigram is a divided 'I'; one that is

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[122] Sheppard was an author and, possibly, a Presbyterian minister. Andrew King, 'Sheppard, Samuel (c. 1624–1655?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004. Web. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/25347> [Accessed 13 August 2020]; Samuel Sheppard, *Epigrams Theological, Philosophical, and Romantick* (London: 1651), sig. C2ᵛ.

both in 'No way facetious […] To toyish mirth', and capable of composing a comedy; one that both writes the jokes, and laughs at them as if they are the inventions of another. It is in the act of waking—and of writing the epigram—that the divided self is, if not reunited, at least contained (perhaps in a similar manner that dream pamphlet authors such as Thomas Dekker used the printed page to contain multiple versions of the self; see Chapter 3). Assuming that the dream is the production of the dreamer, and not a spiritual visitation or attack, Sheppard describes an experience that, despite its amusement value, is as disturbingly self-alienating as the torments of Thomas Nashe discussed in the Introduction to this thesis.[123]

Indeed, as noted above, in his *Terrors of the Night* Thomas Nashe offers a similar self-alienating image of the dream as a play: 'on those images of memorie whereon we buyld in the daye, comes some superfluous humour of ours, lyke a Iacke-anapes in the night, and erects a puppet stage, or some such ridiculous idle childish inuention.'[124] Why a 'puppet stage'? Nashe's use of the phrase carries several connotations: on the most basic level, it is a compact form of theatre, perhaps reminiscent of the small space of the cranium in which dreams take place. If Nashe had in mind hand-puppets as opposed to marionettes, the performance space would have been at the very top of the puppeteer's booth, an area analogous to the head.[125] Furthermore, puppet theatres, like dreams, create the illusion of multitudes of different characters, but all might, in fact, be operated by a single individual— the showman or the dreamer.

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[123] For material on spiritual dreams, see Janine Rivière, *Dreams in Early Modern England* (New York & Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2017), pp. 89–132; for an example of theatrical language used in this context, see Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames* (London, 1658), sig. H6ᵛ: 'For a mans bed and head to be Satans stage, upon which he brings strange disguised persons to play their parts, whereupon follows such effects as do defile both head and bed.'

[124] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night* (London: 1594), sig. C4ʳ.

[125] Both hand-puppets and the comparatively newer marionettes were used in sixteenth-century England. See Frances K. Barasch, 'Shakespeare and the Puppet Sphere', *English Literary Renaissance*, 34 (2004), 157–75.

In brief, the texts discussed in this section indicate that the idea of the sleeping audience had a different valence in the playhouse than it did in the church. True, complete oblivion was undesirable in both states. However, the portrayal of sleeping audiences on stage in early modern plays suggests that dreaming, with the activation of mental faculties that had the effect of self-alienation, was both akin to and congruent with the playgoing experience. The duty of the sermon-goer was to become a self-abnegating passive recipient; that of the playgoer was to become both participant and spectator in a potentially self-alienating manner. To put it another way, the churchgoer had to stay awake, while the playgoer was given room to dream.[126] The following section explores this idea further, and investigates the possibility that similar mental processes may have been involved in both playgoing and dreaming.

Fantastic theatre: dreaming the play

The diversity of early modern dream discourse and the span of decades across which the texts cited in this thesis were published preclude any single source from being representative of early modern thought on the mental processes that might link together theatregoing and dreaming. However, there is a commonly-used early modern anecdote that provides clues as to one possible connection; it involves an individual enjoying the performance of a play in an empty theatre with a vacant stage.

Swiss Reformed theologian Ludwig Lavater, French Catholic demonologist Pierre Le Loyer, English scholar Robert Burton, and Catholic philosopher Erasmus all cited the case of

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[126] 'Room to Dream' is also the title of David Lynch's autobiography; his dream-like style of filmmaking is discussed in the Conclusion of this thesis. David Lynch and Kristine McKenna, *Room to Dream* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2018).

a playgoer taking delight in a delusional visualisation of an entire play in an empty theatre.[127]

Le Loyer and Lavater recalled Aristotle's account of, in Lavater's words, 'a certaine man distraught of his wittes, who going into the Theatre of *Abydos* a Citie of *Asia*, when no man was therein, and there setting alone, by clapping of his handes, signified that he liked as well euery thing there, as if some commedie or tragedie had ben notablie sette forth on stage.'[128] The story appears in their treatises on the appearance of ghosts and other supernatural manifestations, and is used in both to demonstrate the extent to which the senses might deceive as part of a larger project to distinguish between true and false phenomena. In Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, the tale is taken as an example of melancholy proceeding from the blood. Burton adds the detail that the spectator of the phantom play also engages in acting: the man 'would sit after the same fashion as if he had beene vpon a stage, and sometimes act himselfe, sometimes clap his hands, and laugh as if hee had beene well pleased with the sight.'[129]

All authors added the similar tale from Horace of, in Le Loyer's words, 'one that was borne at *Argos*, who didde the like'; this was the version of the story used by Erasmus in his *Praise of Folly*. The man of Argos, Erasmus records, 'behaued hym selfe wysely enough', and was angry with his friends and family when they 'restored hym to his former wittes', saying '*Ye haue slaine, and not saued me* […] *in wrestyng my pleasure from me*'.[130] Erasmus was channelling the voice of Folly, and so this discussion of madness is threaded with irony and ambiguity. Madness, Folly explains, might take two forms: 'rage, whiche the Furies of

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[127] Ludwig Lavater, *Of Ghosts and Spirits*, transl. by Robert Harrison (London: 1572); Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folie*, transl. by Thomas Chaloner (London: 1549); Le Loyer.

[128] Lavater, sig. B1ᵛ.

[129] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford: 1621), sig. Q4ʳ.

[130] Erasmus, sig. H1ʳ.

hell, beyng punisshers of the wicked, doe bringe with them', and the more benign form 'farre

vnlike the former, whiche procedeth from me [i.e. Folly] wholy, and most is to be embraced'.

The latter form 'deliuereth the herte of that man, whom it possesseth, from all wonted

carefulnesse, & rendreth it dyuers waies, muche recreated with new delectacion.'[131]

Hallucinating a play, in these terms, is a pleasant form of madness. The English translation of

Lavater's account includes a phrase that again reiterates the alienating effect of self-

generated, but disguised, experiences such as dreams: the man of Argos berates his kinsfolk

by saying that 'he neuer liued more pleasantly than while he was beside him selfe.'[132]

The story also gets a mention in Edmund Gayton's *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixot*

(1654). In discussing the fourth chapter of the novel by Cervantes, in which Quixote fails to

rescue a servant from being beaten by his master but rides off believing he has righted a

wrong, Gayton states that he is 'like the sleeper in the empty Theater; who comming before

the Play, or Auditors, dream'd of the passages, and laugh'd, clapp'd, hiss'd, and stamp'd, as

if the Players had been enter'd'.[133] In other words, Quixote has, like the men of Abydos and

Argos, constructed a fantasy without knowing it, and is emotionally overwhelmed by his own

response. Gayton's reference to the person in the empty theatre as a 'sleeper' is intriguing:

the individual he is describing must either be literally asleep, and their response to 'the Play'

internalised within a dream or externalised as a form of somnambulism, or they are only

figuratively asleep. In either case, Gayton suggests that the individual who conjures up a

whole play in an empty theatre is experiencing a process identical, or at least akin, to

dreaming; something that Puck suggests might have happened to the audience of the *Dream*.

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[131] Erasmus, sig. G4ᵛ.

[132] Le Loyer, sig. B1ᵛ–B2ʳ.

[133] Edmund Gayton, *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixot* (London: 1654), sig. C3ᵛ.

The mental mechanism activated when plays are hallucinated—and possibly when they are experienced in the normal course of performance—is alluded to in some of these descriptions. Le Loyer quotes the story of the man of Abydos in the context of a discussion about the causes of madness; like Burton, he considers it an example of how 'an exceeding great aboundance of blood' might 'trouble and disturbe' the brain, 'as the vapours of wine intemperately taken doe trouble the vnderstanding.' The result is 'a thousand Images and ridiculous phantosmes'.[134] A 'Phantosme', as Le Loyer has previously explained, is 'an imagination of thinges which are not indeede, and doth proceede of the senses being corrupted'. It is connected to 'Fantasie', which is '*an Imagination and impression of the Soule, of such formes and shapes as are knowne: Or which shall bee receiued and vnderstoode of others, to bee such by reasons and arguments*'. Regarding Fantasie's work with known '*formes and shapes*', Le Loyer writes that

> whensoeuer we dreame of them, presently there commeth into our thought the Phantosme and Image of them. As if we dreame of our friend: Immediatly he presenteth himselfe to our mindes and imagination, in the same stature, face, habite, person, and a thousand other such particularities, which are notable in him. So if we dreame of our Countrey: It seemeth vnto vs that we see the very wayes before vs[.][135]

Lavater's citation of the empty theatre story is on much the same lines; it is part of a section concerning 'maruelous visions' that are natural, rather than supernatural in origin. The plays seen in the empty theatre would appear to fall into the category of '*Visum*' as defined in the opening section of Lavater's book, which 'signifieth an imagination or a certayne shewe, which men being in sleepe, yea and waking also, seeme in their iudgemente to beholde: as we

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[134] Le Loyer, Dd2ʳ.

[135] Le Loyer, sigs. B2ʳ–B3ʳ.

reade of Brutus, who sawe his owne angell.' These are synonymous with 'a fantasie, or vaine imagination.'[136] In other words, both Le Loyer and Lavater propose that the brain can be diverted—indeed fooled—by internal visual images which are indistinguishable from reality, via the action of fantasy.

Confusingly, the term 'fantasy' and its contraction 'fancy' might have been used in the early modern period to refer to several different things: the faculty through which objects are apprehended mentally; the mental image itself; an illusory mental construction; or the process of imagination.[137] To complicate the picture further, the faculty of 'fantasy' or 'phantasie' was sometimes used interchangeably with that of 'imagination'. However, despite the imprecision of the term, certain general properties of fantasy or fancy might be defined which are of relevance to both dreaming and playgoing, and possibly point towards the common mechanisms suggested by Puck's epilogue.

According to the theory constructed by medieval scholars from the work of Aristotle and synthesised in early modern texts such as the German Carthusian Gregor Reisch's influential *Margarita philosophica* (1503), the organic soul, that is, the principle that invested a body with life, was of three kinds. The vegetative soul was common to all living beings, and managed the functions of nutrition, growth, and reproduction. The intellective soul, unique to human beings, comprised the faculties of rationality: intellect, intellective (i.e. conceptual) memory, and will. Sitting between the organic and intellective souls, the sensitive soul was a property that human beings shared with so-called perfect animals (insects, birds, and mammals). The sensitive soul comprised the faculties of motility,

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[136] Lavater, sig. B1ʳ; sigs. A1ʳ–A1ᵛ.

[137] 'fancy, n. and adj.', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/68025> ; 'fantasy | phantasy, n.', *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/68119> [Both accessed 22 April 2023]. The words are used interchangeably in the remainder of this chapter.

emotion, and both internal and external perception. The internal senses consisted of common sense and imagination; fantasy and estimation; and memory. In terms of function, common sense took sensory perceptions, compared and categorised them, and then passed them on to imagination. Following this, sense impressions (phantasmata) were stored in memory or highlighted to the intellective faculties for consideration and action.[138]

The opinions of early modern scholars diverged on the exact structure and function of the imagination, and its relationship with fantasy. Some saw fantasy as a separate faculty, which specifically acted to remix sensory data into sometimes preposterous forms.[139] For example, Avicenna referred to this faculty as *imaginativa* or *cogitativa*; Thomas Aquinas called it *fantasia*, and noted that the faculties were able, as Avicenna wrote, to take separate imaginary forms (such as gold and a mountain) and recombine them into something that had never been seen (a golden mountain). However, Aquinas regarded this as simply a subfunction of imagination.[140] Regardless of the precise division of the sensitive soul, or whether or not a clear distinction between imagination and fantasy was commonly agreed upon, this part of the perceptual and sensory apparatus has several properties highly relevant to dreaming, theatregoing, and, specifically, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

First, fantasy, as noted above, could cut up and recombine visual impressions into novel and bizarre forms (such as, perhaps, a man with the head of an ass). In Thomas Jenner's set of engravings depicting '4 Faculties of the mind' (*ante* 1653), 'Fancie' is portrayed as an artist

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[138] Katharine Park, 'The Organic Soul', in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. by Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 464–84.

[139] Park, p. 471.

[140] E. Ruth Harvey, *The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1975), p. 55.

painting the world, the flesh, and the devil (represented by an orb, a woman holding a hand-mirror, and a demonic figure) onto an image of a heart (Figure 6). The caption reads:

> Ape-like I all things imitate,
>
> Dreame-like I them vary-straite
>
> New proiects fashions I inuent,
>
> All shapes to head & harte present.[141]

Fancie thus works by way of imitation; although it cannot invent *de novo*, it can nevertheless produce novelty through its 'Dreame-like' variation on 'all things'.

Second, because of their detachment from direct sensory evidence, the internal senses, as Katharine Park puts it, 'acted to bridge the gap between external sensation, limited to the knowledge of particulars, and the highest cognitive operation of intellection, which dealt with universals'.[142] In other words, fantasy was a vital component of learning, of helping the higher faculties to conceptualise groups with salient features in common (with the degree of mental flexibility that this property implies). As E. Ruth Harvey writes,

> *Phantasmata*, or sense impressions, are essential to human thought, it is not possible to think without them. The human intellect can come to a knowledge of universals by itself, through the *phantasmata* that it receives from sensation. It abstracts a universal from many particulars, but it does not then take leave of the sensible forms from which it has derived this knowledge, for in thinking of a universal, man always employs some phantasm, just as the geometer uses a diagram.[143]

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[141] Malcolm Jones, *The Print in Early Modern England: An Historical Oversight* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 24–5.

[142] Park, p. 471.

[143] Harvey, p. 58.

This could lead to misleading perceptions and ideas: as Burton put it, 'feare and phantasie' may suspect 'any obiect not well discerned in the darke [...] to be a Ghost, a divell, &c'; he might have added that it may also lead one to mistake a bush for a bear.[144] Helen Hackett points out that fantasy or imagination in the early modern period could therefore have negative, even sinister, associations. She cites the character Imagination in the 1514 interlude *Hick Scorner*, who 'frequents brothels, commits perjury and bribery, steals, slanders, brawls and persistently leads astray his companion Free Will', and a late Elizabethan sermon preached by William Perkins: 'The imagination and conceit [conceptual faculty] of every man is naturally evil.'[145] Burton, moreover, points out the deleterious and even fatal effects of fantasy on human health, with 'force of phantasie' persuading otherwise healthy people that they have sciatica or the plague.[146]

Third, fantasy or imagination is constantly active. During waking hours, it might supplement the limitations of the external senses. For example, the fourth-century Christian philosopher Nemesius wrote that the internal faculties supported the perception of objects that were too large or numerous for the senses to cope with.[147] At night, when the external senses were giving sparse or weak, confused reports, the fantasy or imagination would continue its operations, producing bizarre and confused images: that is to say, dreams.[148]

Although this was not the only theory of dreams in the early modern period, the concept of the dream as a fantasy-driven remix of sense impressions was popular with writers and

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[144] Burton, R7r.

[145] Hackett, *Elizabethan Mind*, p. 225. Hackett notes that Perkins based his text on the Biblical verse 'the imagination of man's heart is evil, even from his youth' (Genesis 8:21).

[146] Burton, sig. H7v.

[147] Ruth L. Anderson, *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 17; p. 25.

[148] Anderson, *Elizabethan Psychology*, p. 17; p. 49; Rivière, pp. 32–3; Harvey, pp. 49–50.

physicians. To illustrate this point, I return to the account of dreams and dreaming related by physician and cleric Richard Haydocke in his *Oneirologia* (1605), quoted in the Introduction to this thesis:

> When ye drowsye vapours haue seazed vppon the Commonsense, fouldeinge it vpp in ye peacable bands of sweet repose, then doth ye Phantasie keepeinge Centinell beare ye whole commaunde of reasons Campe, whiles ye Captaine Sense sleepeth, and ye fiue scouts are excluded. In w*hi*ch time it casts many weake and headless proiects, setts many friuolous formes of battailes, haueinge some resemblance w*i*th those it either sawe plotted formerly by the Captaine, or hearde related by him, from ye spies, to haue binne vsed in forraine parts. Whence wee vnderstande that ye Phantasie must bee free, or els there can bee noe dreame[.][149]

Phantasie, running free of its previous suppression by 'Commonsense', and without the inputs of the 'fiue scouts' of the senses, goes about constructing its 'weake and headless proiects' on the basis of fragments of information and memory. Similarly, Burton frames dreams as a point when fantasy, untrammelled, takes charge of perceptual experience:

> *Phantasie,* or Imagination, which some call *Aestimatiue,* or *Cogitatiue,* […] is an inner sense, which doth more fully examine the Species perceaued by common sense, of things present or absent, and keepes them longer, recalling them to minde againe, or making new of his owne. In time of sleepe this faculty is free, & many times conceaues strange, stupend, absurd shapes[.][150]

And, as noted in the Introduction to this thesis, Nashe writes in *The Terrors of the Night* that 'A Dreame is nothing els but the Eccho of our conceipts in the day', and 'A dreame is

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[149] Richard Haydocke, 'Oneirologia', in Alexander Marr, 'Richard Haydocke's *Oneirologia*: A Manuscript Treatise on Sleep and Dreams, including the "Arguments" of King James I', *Erudition and the Republic of Letters,* 2 (2016), 113–81 (p. 167).

[150] Burton, sig. C2r.

nothing els but a bubling scum or froath of the fancie, which the day hath left vndigested; or an after feast made of the fragments of idle imaginations.'[151] Given these properties of fantasy, it is logical to assume that it might also play a role in the operation of the theatre. One could, for example, see parallels between the workings of fancy, remixing pre-existing forms into new and surprising shapes and narratives, and the function of the playwright or 'play-patcher' who assembled entertainment from scraps of previous shows, older narratives, the words and music of others, and other odds and ends.[152] The resulting dramatic product, an engaging but ephemeral visual narrative, is an apt metaphor for dreams, as Thomas Shipman writes in *Henry the Third of France*:

> Sleep is the Stage, and Fancy makes the Play;
>
> The thoughts at night; act what they conn'd by day.
>
> A Dream's a Play, Sir, and a Play's a dream;
>
> Both aëry Descents of an idle Theme.[153]

Given this similarity, it is perhaps no surprise that an audience might mistake *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for a dream, and vice versa.

However, and importantly for this chapter, it is also possible that playgoing is an activity that, like dreaming, involves the operation of fantasy. Recall that fantasy is always active, might supplement the actual input of the senses, and indeed can be strengthened when these senses give weak or false report and other faculties are diminished. The tale of the man visualising—or the sleeper dreaming—a play in an empty theatre is connected by seventeenth-century politician and author Samuel Gott to the normal experience of theatregoing in his *Essay of the true happiness of man* (1650). Gott writes that

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[151] Nashe, *Terrors*, sig. C4ʳ; sig. C3ᵛ.

[152] Stern, *Documents*, pp. 1–8.

[153] Thomas Shipman, *Henry the Third of France* (London: 1678), sig. K3ʳ.

> The outward Senses deceiv the Fansie, and which is more strange, the Fansie can deceiv the very Senses, and operate on them as much as the Thing it self, not only as in a Dream, but when they are waking and most intent. He who sate in the empty Theater, and seemed to see most wonderfull Tragedies, was in a farther degree of vanity then common Spectators, who contemplated an *Hercules*, or *Achilles*, or a great Prince in the person of some mean fellow, whom they knew to be most unlike to them, but his Fansie was both Spectator and Actor, which is a double delusion. I do not think, as *Avicenna*, that Fansie can work miracles, or as *Paracelsus*, that it can create any thing: but though it cannot form a Being, it can frame a Fantasm, acting it within its own Theater, and also delude the Senses by it, which is as much as it receiveth from them even of those things which we really see or hear[.][154]

Gott sees both regular playgoing and the experience of hallucinating a play as examples of 'vanity', presumably in the early modern sense connoting a worthless thing or an act of foolishness.[155] As far as Gott is concerned, theatre is a stimulus for generating phantasms, whether in response to actors on stage pretending to be what they are clearly not (as Theseus would put it, taking what the performers mistake; 5.1.90), or indeed, through visualising an entire play in an empty playhouse; it is simply a matter of degree. Fancy might augment reality such that 'some mean fellow' becomes 'a great Prince'; it might also supply the initial visual stimulus itself as 'both Spectator and Actor'. It is the same faculty at work in both dreams and theatregoing: a strange, Puck-like creature, almost another entity entirely, that can lead the true and truth-loving self into 'vanity'.

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[154] Samuel Gott, *An Essay of the True Happines of Man* (London: 1650), sigs. B2^r–B2^v.

[155] 'vanity, n.', *OED Online,* Oxford University Press, March 2023. Web. <www.oed.com/view/Entry/221396> [Accessed 22 April 2023].

Other authors provide further evidence that plays were not only *like* a dream in their spectacle, their fluid movement from scene to scene and place to place, and their transience. The theatre itself was a site in which a mental process *similar to that* of dreaming operated, and good playwrights and their companies could utilise this knowledge. As the prologue of *The Contention Between Liberality and Prodigality* (1601) puts it, 'euery sort' of playgoer 'desireth specially, | What thing may best content his fantasie'.[156] Playgoing is not a purely receptive activity, in which images, sounds, and words are absorbed by the audience; it stimulates and pleases fancy to such an extent that the audience can 'take' what the actors 'mistake', even to the point that fancy might be so strongly empowered as to stage a play of its own. As the anti-theatrical writer (and former playwright) Stephen Gosson put it, 'if you go to Theaters to driue avvay fancies, it is as good Physike, as for the ache of your head too knocke out your brains; or when you are stung with a Wasp, to rub the sore with a Nettle.'[157] Fancy, in Gosson's view, was as intrinsic to the theatrical process as pain was to a headache.

Presenting a play might be thought of as holding the audience's attention in a manner that allows the stimulation and manipulation of fancy, or, indeed, the licencing of the audience to let its fancy take charge. As Chorus puts it in the prologue to *Henry V* (a play in which, I suggest above, the audiences are invited to play the part of 'gentles', the 'monarchs to behold the swelling scene'): 'Let us on your imaginary forces work' (Prologue, 18). Later, he invites the audience to 'Play with your fancies, and in them behold | Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing' (3.0.7–8). In *Pericles* (1607), Gower instructs the audience to 'be attent, | And time that is so briefly spent | With your fine fancies quaintly eche' (10.11–12).[158]

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[156] *The Contention Between Liberality and Prodigality* (London: 1602), sig. A3ʳ.

[157] Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (London: 1579), F3v.

[158] William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. by Roger Warren (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

The manipulation of pre-existing fancy thus allows the playhouse to contain space (*Henry V*'s ships) and time (the passage of years in *Pericles*) that would otherwise be denied it.[159]

Indeed, fancy (or fantasy) might be considered the hidden force driving the protagonists of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Egeus complains that Lysander has 'stolen the impression of [Hermia's] fantasy' (1.1.32); Theseus advises her to 'fit your fancies to your father's will' (1.1.118); Hermia, however, considers this sort of obstruction as being 'As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs, | Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers' (1.1.154–5). Fancy is either elided with love, or (as later events suggest) framed as the factor that precedes and initiates love; it is also, significantly, the generator of dreams. Fancy, too, is the motivator for Helena, who is 'fancy-sick' (3.2.96) and follows Demetrius into the wood 'in fancy' (4.1.162). The dream that the lovers have experienced—which Hippolyta suspects is not a dream—is described as 'fancy's images' (5.1.25). In combining the concepts of fancy and love, Shakespeare perhaps suggests that the flower called 'love-in-idleness' (2.1.168), which has its effect when applied to the eyes, the organs of vision, can also be considered as a drug whose target is fancy. It not only activates love, but stimulates the alteration of forms and associations typical of fancy's work.

As Helen Hackett points out, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, eyes are repeatedly referred to as the organs which receive desirable images, or provoke desire themselves; 'The eye, it is implied, is at once a lens which can be distorted, and an aperture through which the mind can be entered and altered.'[160] The characters apparently find it impossible to distinguish between the effect of the potion on their external senses and the internal changes

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[159] Hackett notes that textual evidence suggests Theseus' speech at the beginning of Act 5 of the *Dream* relating to poetic creation were added 'at some point between composition of the play in 1595 and printing of the quarto in 1600', covering the same period (1599) in which he wrote *Henry V*. Hackett, *Elizabethan Mind*, pp. 255–6.

[160] Hackett, *Writers*, p. 35.

of thought and feeling that this provokes; Lysander, under the influence of the love-potion, attributes his new-found love for Helena to his 'reason' being 'swayed' (2.2.121). We might speculate, to quote Puck's closing speech, that the performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has, similarly to love-in-idleness, used an 'idle theme' presented to the eye to activate and exploit the fancy of its audience. Like Lysander, the audience has been 'Half sleep, half waking.'

In summary, there is evidence that in contrast to the passive model of the awake, alert, and receiving sermon audience, the early modern playgoer took a more participatory role in the theatrical experience; paradoxically, entering a state associated with sleep and dreams was essential to this participation. While falling asleep was frowned upon, activation of the fancy—that part of the mind that took over as waking consciousness diminished and dreaming began—was an important part of this process. The strange, self-alienating effect which this produced could be terrifying, as alluded to by authors such as Nashe. However, plays featuring sleeping and dreaming audiences—and specifically, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—suggest that the operation of fantasy, with its self-alienation, reshuffling of visual imagery, and creative inversion of reality—might also have a positive, even a salutary effect on the individual. The final section of this chapter explores this possibility.

Stages of sleep: the purpose of dreams and the **Dream***'s purpose*

A Midsummer Night's Dream ends in comedy rather than tragedy because the thoughts, behaviours, and actions of the characters, and the societal structure in which they exist, move from rigid to flexible positions. As Susan Snyder puts it,

> Comedy and tragedy, being opposed ways of apprehending the real world, project
>
> their own opposing worlds. The tragic world is governed by inevitability, and its

highest value is personal integrity. In the comic world 'evitability' is assumed; instead of heroic or obstinate adherence to a single course, comedy endorses opportunistic shifts and realistic accommodations as means to an end of new social health.[161]

Does dreaming—in the broad sense of the dream-like experiences the characters of the play undergo, influenced by the actions of fancy—have anything to do with this shift? Or is dreaming simply, as a superficial reading of Puck's concluding speech would suggest, an idle way of marking out time, an inconsequential trifle?

Various theories regarding the nature and purpose of dreams have both been utilised by early modern dramatists (for example in Lyly's *Sappho and Phao* as described above), and provided useful tools for modern-day critical interpretation. Using early modern dream theory, Freudianism, or neuroscience will not provide the definitive and conclusive meanings of stage dreams. However, these explanatory frameworks are a source of potentially fruitful ways to think about the function of dreams in both real life and theatrical narratives—and even if they have a function at all. The debate as to whether dreaming is a meaningful activity, as opposed to an epiphenomenon of biological processes—from digestion to memory consolidation—has continued for centuries, and shows no sign of abating. In the past several decades, Freud's proposal that dreams were meaningful, albeit heavily coded, phenomena has been superseded by modern-day neuroscience which, focusing more on dream form than content, has identified the patterns of neurological activity that give dreams their characteristic properties (e.g. strong visuomotor and emotional elements) while discarding the idea that dream narratives might have intrinsic significance and utility.[162] Dreams have, in neuroscience if not in dramatic narratives, become 'weak and idle'.

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[161] Susan Snyder, '*Romeo and Juliet*: Comedy into Tragedy', *Essays in Criticism*, 20 (1970), 391–402 (p. 391).

[162] J. Allan Hobson, *13 Dreams Freud Never Had: The New Mind Science* (New York: Pi Press, 2005).

However, a recent scientific hypothesis that unifies the human practices of both dreaming and the creation of fiction provides both an intriguing echo of early modern models of mental function, and a possible angle from which to revisit both dreaming and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Neuroscientist and novelist Erik Hoel argues that:

> If aliens ever visited Earth, they might notice something strange. Nearly everyone, everywhere, spends a significant part of their day paying attention to things that aren't real. Humans often care fiercely about events that never happened, whether in TV shows, video games, novels, movies. Why care so much about fictions? […] The aliens' confusion might deepen when they learned that humans fall asleep and dream. For dreams are also fictions.[163]

Hoel concurs with other neuroscientists—and, incidentally, early modern physicians such as Haydocke—in conceptualising dreaming as the result of brain activity in the absence of 'bottom-up' sensory inputs. However, rather than seeing dreams as the epiphenomena of processes such as memory consolidation, Hoel proposes that the very purpose of dreams lies in their tendency to corrupt and warp the imagery and experience of everyday life.

Hoel uses the analogy of deep learning networks (a type of machine learning), and notes that the associations that machines create in response to stimuli can become too rigid and narrow. The machine, therefore, cannot usefully apply its learning beyond the original training dataset to new stimuli: it has become 'overfitted'. Applying this finding to animal (and human) learning, Hoel speculates that while 'animals, being so good at learning, are constantly in danger of fitting themselves too well to their daily lives and tasks. […] dreams could be a way to beat back the tide of daily overfitting.' Dreams, he argues, 'are "noise injections" that serve the purpose not of enforcing what is learned when awake, but rather

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[163] Erik Hoel, 'Dream Power', *New Scientist*, November 7, 2020, 34–8 (p. 34).

counteracting the overfitting associated with that learning.' According to what Hoel terms the 'overfitted brain hypothesis', dreams are 'self-generated corrupted inputs. And the act of dreaming has the effect of improving generalisation and performance in waking life.'[164] In departing regularly from the precise realities of everyday life, the brain and mind retain flexibility, improving performance on a variety of tasks, and hence increasing the chances of survival. 'It may seem paradoxical,' writes Hoel, 'but a dream of flying may actually help you keep your balance running.'[165] Or, to propose another example, dreaming of a bush with bear-like properties might help you to avoid real-world predators in their many deceptive guises.[166]

There are certain similarities between Hoel's hypothesis and early modern thought on fantasy and dreaming, which is not unexpected given that both draw on longstanding European philosophical and scientific ideas. For example, both systems propose a mental faculty that remixes sense impressions, is unfettered when sensory input is corrupted and diminished, and assists other mental faculties in identifying general patterns as opposed to simply responding to specific sensory inputs. The point of citing Hoel's work in this chapter, however, is not to lend value to early modern philosophy by drawing parallels with newly emergent—or perhaps re-emergent—concepts in neuroscientific thought. Hoel's proposal provides a way of thinking about dreams and dream-like fictions that finds practical value in the substitutions, inversions, and re-ordering that both experiences provide. If we apply this

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[164] Hoel, 'Dream Power', pp. 37–8.

[165] Erik Hoel, 'The Overfitted Brain: Dreams Evolved to Assist Generalization', *arXiv*, 24 September 2020. Web. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2007.09560> [Accessed 9 January 2022].

[166] Support for Hoel's hypothesis comes from experiments involving zebra finches, where neuronal recording shows that the activity associated with song is activated nightly, but differs from night to night rather than simply reproducing the patterns of daytime song generation. As neuroscientist Sidarta Ribeiro puts it, 'Sleep would appear to prevent the system from settling into a sub-optimal solution, adding noise to the memory each night. The phenomenon resembles the cycles of heating and cooling used to temper steel alloys, in a process that first hardens the metal and then makes it flexible.' Sidarta Ribeiro, *The Oracle of Night: The History and Science of Dreams*, transl. by Daniel Hahn (London: Bantam, 2021) pp. 235–6.

concept to the *Dream*, bearing in mind that both dreams and playhouses were spaces where the faculty of fantasy was active, Puck's epilogue throws new light on the play as a whole.

As outlined above in the discussion of the *Shrew* plays and *The Antipodes*, the play of fancy with its inversions and loosening of associations might not simply provide an escape or respite from reality. It could also nudge the individual out of certain rigidities of thought and behaviour in a beneficial manner. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a similar process occurs for the lovers. When the play begins, the younger Athenians are fixed in a damaging love triangle of Demetrius-Hermia-Lysander, with Helena permanently and unhappily locked outside; elder society is similarly immovable. Even Theseus 'by no means […] may extenuate' Athenian law (1.1.120). The fairy kingdom is also stuck in an intractable conflict. A *Pyramus and Thisbe*-style tragedy seems to be on the cards as Demetrius sets off determined to slay Lysander.

However, Puck's intervention in the lovers' affairs, stimulating their fancy so that things 'befall prepost'rously' in a dream-like fashion results in literal and metaphorical movement towards a happy resolution as the lovers make their way through the woods. Similarly, the alteration of Titania's fancy such that she dotes on the transformed, dream-like combination of ass and man that is Bottom shifts her previously immovable position regarding her changeling child. As Oberon tells Puck, she gives him the boy 'straight […] and her fairy sent | To bear him to my bower in fairyland' (4.1.59–60). From being the entire focus of a conflict that has deranged nature itself, the child is almost forgotten about by the conclusion of the drama. In both cases, the activation of the faculty of fantasy has broken through overfitted rigidity to make possible a harmonious conclusion in which both the lovers' affections and the potentially lethal law of Athens are tempered with necessary flexibility, and made anew. Egeus may be left insisting 'the law, the law upon his head' (4.1.154), but Theseus is now willing, if not to invalidate the legal system altogether, to

substitute the law of death for a law of life: 'Egeus, I will overbear your will, | For in the temple by and by with us | These couples shall eternally be knit' (4.1.178–80). In proposing that the night in the forest provides the mechanism that shifts the play from inevitable to evitable, from tragedy to comedy, I am to an extent in agreement with Jennifer Lewin, who sees sleep in the play as 'a means of inflecting a dramatic narrative toward a particular trajectory'. However, Lewin conceptualises sleep as a process distinct from dreaming, attributing the shifts in desire and motivation to sleep itself—with the vulnerability of sleep rendering subjects liable to manipulation by Oberon—rather than to dreams: 'manipulation and vulnerability are crucial to the role of sleep in the play. This feature causes sleep to differ sharply from dreaming, which is a process where some form of individual thought—or, perhaps, even choice making—might be possible.'[167] As noted above, my interpretation is that the important mechanism for transformation in a play in which the boundaries between sleeping, dreaming, and waking experience are porous is the activation of fantasy. The characters enter a state in which the faculty of fantasy is released via the action of love-in-idleness, and are thus in a state *akin* to dreaming, whether or not they are unconscious.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is therefore a notable exception to the general rule of early modern drama noted by Ruth Anderson, in which 'The supremacy of the imagination, of the affections, or a conjunction of the two […] is almost always fatal to an individual; hence this supremacy becomes a dominant force leading to tragedy.'[168] Dreams provide a way in which the fantasy can be made supreme, but the fact that the preposterous experiences it generates are temporary means that the dreamer reaps benefits, rather than being trapped on

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[167] Jennifer Lewin, 'Sleep, Vulnerability, and Self-knowledge in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', in *Forming Sleep: Representing Consciousness in the English Renaissance*, ed. by Nancy Simpson-Younger and Margaret Simon (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), pp. 109–25 (p. 121; p. 112–13).

[168] Anderson, *Elizabethan Psychology*, p. 172.

the path to tragedy. Even in the case of Demetrius—who never receives the antidote to the love-potion—the play suggests that the effect of his fantastical experience has been to nudge him back into his previously held, and appropriate, affection for Helena, rather than into a state of permanent intoxication and derangement. He has, as he puts it, been restored to the 'health' of his 'natural taste' (4.1.173). While previous critics such as Marjorie Garber have seen the *Dream* as a struggle between reason and fantasy, this reading suggests that the two might, in fact, co-exist in balance, complementing one another to the benefit of the dreamer. The minds of the lovers have been, in Hippolyta's words, 'transfigured so together' in a way that 'More witnesseth than fancy's images | And grows to something of great constancy' (5.1.24–6). The work of fancy has altered a previous pattern that was fixed on tragedy— melted it, as Demetrius says, 'as the snow' (4.1.165)—and shredded, reassembled, and reset the lovers' affections into a form that will ensure enduring fidelity and happiness.

Puck's statement to the audience that their theatrical experience might have been 'No more yielding but a dream' therefore takes on another meaning. On one level, as noted above, it devalues the content of the play in order to both minimise offence and plausibly place responsibility with the audience. However, there is ambiguity here. If the play has yielded nothing *more* than a dream to the audience, it is still possible that dreaming—and playgoing—yield *something*, and that this might be a thing of value. Perhaps, as with the sleeping audiences of the plays-within-plays of *A Shrew* and *The Antipodes*, the audience members watching the *Dream* have undergone some form of positive alteration thanks to the fantastical forms and experiences of their apparent dreams. Might they be, for example, more willing to relinquish a hardened, offended attitude, recognising their own part in constructing the theatrical experience, and hence 'pardon' and lend their hands to the players? Tiffany Stern notes that play texts might have changed following performance according to the audience's response. Puck's promise that 'we will mend' may therefore suggest 'the

possibility for first-performance revision'; a demonstration that the play is not a rigid text, but is itself mutable.[169] The playwright and his company, like fancy, can in their turn take apart, reform, and reshape the 'shadows' onstage.

Puck's epilogue—if it is an epilogue—provides a pathway that, if followed, can help the modern reader to access the playgoing experience of early modern England. Audiences did indeed fall asleep in the playhouse, as they did in that other space of large gatherings, the church. Both preachers and playwrights disapproved of complete oblivion on the part of their audiences. But a mental state akin to dreaming, with activation of the faculty of fancy, was permitted and encouraged in the playhouse; for example, in playing the part of nobles in the *Dream*'s Athenian court, or supplementing the epic landscapes of *Henry V*. The championing of fantasy in the *Dream* was a subversive act; as noted above, fantasy (or imagination) was not among the respectable mental faculties, being dangerous to both body and soul. As Hackett puts it:

> the Elizabethan imagination was criminal, sinful, sensual, wayward, deceptive, and idolatrous; allied with the Devil, and especially active in women, Catholics, and those sick in mind. It was far removed from the mystical creative power lauded by the Romantic poets and so highly esteemed in modern culture.[170]

Hackett also notes that 'The explicit exhortation to "imagine" was used increasingly and with growing vigour and confidence in late Elizabethan plays' which, she writes, indicates that 'theatre was a place where suspicion and fear of the imagination were beginning to be counteracted, and where a sense was emerging of the imagination as a powerful creative force to be celebrated'. In proposing that fantasy was not simply harmless, but actually

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[169] Stern, *Documents*, p. 119.

[170] Hackett, *Elizabethan Mind*, pp. 232–3.

salutary, the *Dream* may be seen as a text at the vanguard of this shift.[171] While tracing the journey of fantasy from 'criminal' faculty to 'mystical creative power' in English culture is beyond the scope of this work, it is possible to see foreshadowing of the Romantic attitude within Shakespeare's play.

Analysis of early modern plays featuring sleeping and dreaming audiences indicates that theatregoing, like dreaming, may have involved the experience of self-alienation and confusion over agency. Considering the role of fantasy alongside modern neuroscientific theory concerning the purpose of dreaming provides new insight into the *Dream*'s meaning. The dream-like experiences of the protagonists are neither the brief expression of repressed desires, nor are they a temporary moment of creative escape. They represent a point when empowered fancy remixes and reshuffles reality to break up rigid and overfitted patterns of thought, belief, and behaviour, before receding and leaving behind flexibility and transformation. When Demetrius, waking, remarks 'These things seem small and indistinguishable, | Like far-off mountains turnèd into clouds' (4.1.187), he could be describing the dissipating dream, or the unreality of the lovers' recent conversation with Theseus. He might also be expressing the way in which the familiar surroundings of Athens now appear following the transformative operation of fantasy. Puck's epilogue suggests that the audience, lingering in the *Dream* thanks to their own fantasy's work in the playhouse, may be left with a similarly pleasing sense of freshness and defamiliarisation. It is, in fact, as if they have 'but slumbered here'.

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[171] Hackett, *Elizabethan Mind*, p. 251.

Figure 5: Early modern plays featuring or mentioning sleeping and dreaming audiences

Author	Title	Date	Location
John Lyly	*Sappho and Phao*	1584	*'Played beefore the* Queenes Maiestie'
Thomas Kyd	*The Spanish Tragedy*	1587	?
John Lyly	*The Woman in the Moon*	1588	'presented before her Highness'
John Lyly	*Endymion*	1588	'Played before the Queen's Majesty at Greenwich, on Candlemas Day at Night'
Thomas Nashe	*Summers Last Will and Testament*	1592	Archbishop's Palace, Croydon
William Shakespeare	*The Taming of the Shrew*	1592	?Newington Butts
?	*The Taming of a Shrew*	1594	?Newington Butts
William Shakespeare	*A Midsummer Night's Dream*	1595	Theatre/Globe
?	*Zelotypus*	1605	St John's College, Cambridge
William Shakespeare	*Henry VIII*	1612	Blackfriars/Globe
William Hawkins	*Apollo Shroving*	1627	Free School of Hadleigh, Suffolk
Aston Cockayne	*The Obstinate Lady*	1632	Salisbury Court
Thomas Heywood	*Love's Mistress or The Queen's Masque*	1634	Denmark House
Richard Brome	*The Antipodes*	1638	Salisbury Court
Thomas Goffe/Richard Brome	*The Careless Shepherdess*	1638	Salisbury Court
Aphra Behn	*Sir Patient Fancy*	1678	Duke's Theatre
John Crowne	*Henry VI with the murder of Humphrey*	1681	Duke's Theatre

Key: light grey = probably first performed in outdoor settings; dark grey = probably first performed in indoor settings

Figure 6: An artist painting a woman with a hand mirror and the devil; representing the faculty of the imagination. Engraving, Thomas Jenner, ante 1653 (Public Domain/Wellcome Collection)

Conclusion: 'Am I not my selfe at that time?'

It has become a critical commonplace that, as Stephen Prickett puts it, Sigmund Freud's description of the power of the unconscious 'displaced the idea that we are "masters in our own house"'.[1] However, this thesis has cited examples of individuals at the turn of the seventeenth century who responded to their dreams and the notion of dreaming in general with a sense of personal distance from their own inventions, altered agency, and even self-alienation. As the epigraphs to the opening chapter suggest, dreams have long called into question who exactly is the master of the individual's house. To reiterate a point made in the Introduction, the purpose of this thesis is not to give a comprehensive account of early modern responses to sleeping and dreaming; rather, through the use of close reading and contextualisation of early modern texts, a range of possible responses to the self-alienation brought about by sleeping and dreaming has been explored. Early modern English culture treated this self-alienation quite differently than has the post-Freudian world. True, as Helen Hackett points out, there are certain similarities between the early modern model of the mind and the Freudian model: 'It is possible to draw some parallels between the early modern imagination—an unruly rebel against the government of reason—and the Freudian concept of the unconscious, which creates dreams and images that disrupt the attempts of the superego to repress and control it.'[2] However, as this thesis has demonstrated, while the notion of an unruly self that emerges at night is a common thread linking early modern thought and Freudianism, and indeed is present in modern-day theories of dreaming (see below), the presence of this covert, anarchic self is only one part of the equation. What matters in relation

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[1] Stephen Prickett, *Secret Selves: A History of Our Inner Space* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), p. 78.

[2] Helen Hackett, *The Elizabethan Mind: Searching for the Self in an Age of Uncertainty* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2022), p. 345.

to this thesis is not so much the existence of the night-time self as the waking response to it. In early modern England, the night-time self could be contained and even put to productive use without needing psychoanalytic-style integration with the biography and preoccupations of the daytime self.

Sleeping and dreaming were moments of deep and sometimes disturbing ambiguity. In the Introduction to this thesis, I explored how texts such as *The Terrors of the Night* expressed confusion concerning the integrity of the self. As individuals moved between waking and dreaming, the ownership of thoughts and the origin of perceptions could not always be clearly determined. In Chapter 1, moreover, apparently neat categorisations of early modern sleeping spaces, practices, and dream typology were revised in favour of a high degree of ambiguity and diversity. This thesis has therefore restricted itself to a close analysis of a select number of texts, rather than aiming to review broader social and cultural patterns. The notebooks of astrological physician Simon Forman demonstrate that, in contrast with the journey into the individual's biography and hidden drives and desires that characterises the Freudian approach to understanding dreams and establishing selfhood, Forman's dream interpretation was characterised by processes located outside the body. Dreams, in Forman's scheme, were not explained by inward factors, but rather meaning was made through their contextualisation in the external, grand scale of the cosmos though astrological frameworks. Moreover, the intellectual process underlying Forman's astrological method, with the use of pen and paper to produce horary figures, may be considered a means through which cognition extended into, and was supported by, the external material world.

The potential for the printed page to express and contain the various versions of the self that emerged during dreaming—and writing—is illustrated by the early modern pamphlet. Specifically, I explored the use of dream narratives to generate a sense of ambiguity regarding authorial identity and intention in the pamphlets of Thomas Churchyard,

Robert Greene, and Thomas Dekker. While this ambiguity was in some respects a simple safety measure—creating plausible deniability and appealing to a diversity of readers and interpretations—it also held creative possibilities. In *Dekker his Dreame*, the dream device allows a narrative that takes place in multiple locations (prison and Hell), at multiple times (during and after sleep), and with multiple authors (the sleeping, experiencing author, and the waking, analysing author). The layout of the printed page, mixing poetry, prose, and marginal commentary, gives the reader a glut of information without privileging any single voice.

The creative possibilities of a self that fragments at night, with a change in the hierarchy of mental faculties, are illustrated by Puck's epilogue to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Taking Puck's suggestion that the play might have been the unrecognised self-generated creation of the sleeping audience as the starting point of my analysis, I propose that activation of the faculty of fantasy was a phenomenon common to both dreaming and playgoing. The apparently autonomous actions of fancy, and the lack of any practice that might connect it with the waking self (as Freud would later offer in the form of psychoanalysis) may have induced anxiety. However, we may also read in the *Dream* a more positive framing of fancy's work. The work of fancy in cutting up, remixing, and reforming aspects of reality has a salutary impact in the *Dream*, its alternative worlds softening the rigidity of the Demetrius-Helena-Lysander love triangle, and the harsh Athenian law. Fancy's work changes inevitable tragedy into evitable comedy.

This thesis, in short, concludes that cultural responses to sleeping and dreaming in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England suggest that waking and dreaming selves were not reconciled, and perhaps *could* not be reconciled, by going deeper into one's personal biography and suppressed thoughts and feelings. Rather, these selves were contained within external frameworks, such as the astrological systems documented by Forman, or the printed page utilised by Dekker. This conclusion, in turn, implies that the early modern

conception of selfhood in relation to sleeping and dreaming is of relevance to the current scientific and cultural moment, when there is increasing interest in the potentially illusory nature of the self.

Neuroscientific dream research over the past half-century has eschewed the Freudian focus on dream *content*, choosing instead to use dream *form* as the basis for scientific investigation. Thus, dream characteristics (such as sensorimotor perceptual phenomena) as well as changes in cognitive function (including diminished logical reasoning and post-dream amnesia) provide clues as to which parts of the brain are upregulated or downregulated during sleep. As sleep scientist Allan Hobson puts it, 'The net effect is that, in dreaming (compared with waking), some mental functions are enhanced while others are diminished. It's as simple as that! And every bit as complicated.'[3] Dreams thus alter our usual patterns of thought and behaviour to the extent that we might ask, as did Augustine, 'Am I not my selfe at that time, O Lord my God?'

Indeed, modern-day philosopher Jan Westerhoff explicitly states that dreaming raises profound questions about the nature of the self:

It is a well-known fact that the self we experience in dreams has very different properties from our waking self. It does not have access to many of the waking self's memories, usually has a different set of predominant emotions (often more negative ones), it may have a different body, or even a body of a different gender. Given these significant differences, could there possibly be a dream in which the main character was not you, even though her experiences are part of your dream? This would be a dream in which the protagonist was not you but simply a dream character, as unreal or

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[3] J. Allan Hobson, *Dreaming: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 10.

as real as all the other characters in the dream, but with the difference that the dream

was narrated from her point of view, that her entire inside life would be transparent to

you.[4]

The neuroscience of dreaming is just one of the bases on which assumptions about a singular,

continuous, autonomous self have been called into question. Recent years have seen a

plethora of publications that, from the stance of modern-day science and philosophy,

undermine the idea of a single, coherent self. For example, psychologist and philosopher

Bruce Hood considers the self an illusion, as the self is constituted in the context of social

interactions, varies between settings and circumstances, and is composed of disparate, self-

concealing psychological processes: it is 'constructed like a spider's web but without the

spider. Each strand represents an influence pulling on the overall structure. The self is the

resulting pattern of influences pulling together, trying to find a common ground.'[5] Science

journalist Anil Ananthaswamy, meanwhile, points to the fragile nature of the self in the face

of neurological and psychological disturbance (such as the phenomenon of depersonalisation)

to highlight its illusory nature.[6]

Taking a broader perspective, ecologist Tom Oliver expands on neuroscientific

arguments against a coherent unitary self by emphasising the physical connectedness between

humans and their environment, the social connectedness between people, and the fluctuating

nature of cognitive development. Oliver argues that the unitary self is, in fact, a dangerous

illusion which must be mitigated against to avoid the social and cultural attitudes and

practices which have led to environmental depletion:

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[4] Jan Westerhoff, *Reality: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 17.

[5] Bruce Hood, *The Self Illusion* (London: Constable, 2011), p. 80.

[6] Anil Ananthaswamy, *The Man Who Wasn't There: Tales from the Edge of the Self* (London: Duckworth Books, 2020).

We conceive of ourselves as distinct from the world outside our physical bodies, using layer upon layer of mental abstraction, building great false castles of thought that separate 'us' from the world. Yet the science now shows these belief structures are essentially false. Our brain has evolved so that it efficiently runs a program (let's call it 'IllusionofIndependentSelf V1.1'), which places us in a mental cockpit of illusory autonomous control of a discrete self. In terms of neural networks, this program runs on well-worn neural pathways, like deep ruts in a road that a cart travelling along would struggle to leave.[7]

As with Katharine Eisaman Maus's observation that inwardness will not vaporize 'like the Wicked Witch of the West under Dorothy's bucket of water' should the reality of its social underpinnings be revealed, Oliver acknowledges that pointing out the illusory nature of the self through the scientific method is not enough to make it disappear.[8] Nevertheless, individuals arguing on the basis of foundational neuroscience, neuropsychiatry, environmental science, and philosophy converge on the view that, as experimental psychologist Bruce Hood puts it, 'You are actually a collection of conflicting messages and signals and thought processes [...] And these are somehow brought together to experience as unified self.'[9] Moreover, theories such as that of the extended mind have complicated the notion that the self ends at the borders of the brain. The reasons why modern-day scientists and philosophers dispute the reality of the self—its porousness with regard to the outside world, and its inward nature as a host of competing faculties—would, perhaps, be more

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[7] Tom Oliver, *The Self Delusion: The Surprising Science of Our Connection to Each Other and the Natural World* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2021), p. 152.

[8] Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), p. 28.

[9] Catherine De Lange, 'How to Think About... THE SELF', *New Scientist*, 244 (2019), 38.

comprehensible to an early modern individual than would the politically- and socially-based disputations of selfhood by scholars such as Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Belsey.[10]

My purpose in describing the increasingly fragmented and porous self that emerges from modern scientific and philosophical thought is not to claim prescience on the part of early modern culture, nor to suggest that this is some sort of default to which modern-day ideas of the self will return after a relatively brief Freudian diversion. It is, rather, to suggest that there is nothing inevitable or even particularly robust about the idea of the bounded, unified, continuous and autonomous self. It remains to be seen what the cultural influence will be of the current concept of the illusory self. David Lynch offers one of the few examples of a modern-day artist who uses an irreconcilably fractured version of the self to drive dreamlike dramatic narratives. For example, his *Lost Highway* (1997) features a character who shifts both body and biography partway through the film; and at the conclusion of his *Twin Peaks* television series (1990–1, 2017), an FBI agent and the woman whose murder he is investigating are transported into a divergent narrative, where they appear to be different people. As Marina Warner puts it, Lynch's *Lost Highway* 'shifts its characters away from the humanistic and Freudian unitary ego, safely mapped on a unique genetic blueprint and enriched with a lifetime of exclusive personal experiences.' Warner writes that Lynch's vision of a fractured self is

> a model of personality that […] resembles the beliefs of spirit religions as practised in
> Haiti, or elsewhere, among the Buissi people of the Southern Congo [...] In such
> schema of identity, the dream self can wander and perform independent acts or

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[10] See Introduction. Modern-day ideas about selfhood also bear a marked similarity to David Hume's proposition that the self is 'nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement'. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature Vol. 1: Of the Understanding* (London: 1739), sig. Ff4^r.

become possessed by the spirit and identity of a local stranger over whom the self has no authority.[11]

Warner's cultural analysis, made in 1997, might today be matched by a neuroscientific reading of Lynch's film. It remains to be seen if more artists and critics will follow this move away from 'the humanistic and Freudian unitary ego' in creating new work, and in the interpretation of early modern texts. To take an example from this thesis, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has tended towards Freudian-informed interpretations in both criticism (e.g. Jan Kott and Marjorie Garber's work cited in Chapter 4) and theatrical practice, notably Peter Brook's 1970 Royal Shakespeare Company production. There are considerable challenges in reinterpreting an early modern play for modern-day performance in a way that goes against cultural understandings of the self that are so ingrained as to be intuitive; but, as Lynch has shown, the exploration of a non-Freudian, fractured self can produce compelling artistic effects.

This thesis, through close focus on selected texts, proposes that we can use sleeping and dreaming to reassess our assumptions about the nature of the self, both in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England and today. Its conclusions are necessarily tentative, and open in turn to revision and reinterpretation; indeed, ambiguity is one of its overarching themes. The self-alienating experience of dreaming can be disorientating and even disturbing; but it can also provoke profoundly novel and creative responses in both life and art.

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[11] Marina Warner, 'Voodoo Road', *Sight and Sound*, 7:8 (1997), 6–10 (p. 8).

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