

*Review Essay:*  
*Dreams and Dreaming in the*  
*Early Modern World*

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, a remarkable number of scholars of the early modern era have turned their attention to dreams.<sup>1</sup> Using a diverse array of sources and methodologies, these scholars are renewing interest in dreams both as significant historical experiences in themselves, and as the focus of widespread and deeply contested practices of dream interpretation. We have recently completed an anthology of new work on reported dreams and visions in the early modern Atlantic World, a project that opened our eyes anew to the richness and diversity of recent scholarship regarding the historical impact of dream phenomena. In the present essay we explore the main themes of the most recent scholarship, suggesting some of the new avenues that researchers have opened. Reported dreams remain puzzling and often difficult sources, but the works and authors discussed here show how this special type of historical source can shed light on some of the most important cultural shifts of the early modern period.

The present essay begins with a brief reflection on previous attempts to define dreams as an object of historical study. We then turn to scholarship about the early modern era, examining three main analytical approaches that have framed recent work about dreaming. The first, informed by the cultural history of science, foregrounds dreams' ambivalent status as sources of knowledge in this period. The second, shaped by social and cultural history, highlights the contests over dream narratives in religious and political discourse during the long era of confessional conflict. Finally, we review studies that explore the ways that dreaming mediated early modern Europeans' contact with the Other, interactions that usually unfolded in distant lands. It bears stressing at the outset that these approaches are not mutually exclusive, as the authors discussed here quite naturally draw from

<sup>1</sup>This review essay incorporates and expands on material found in the introduction to our *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World*, recently published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

more than one of these interpretive wells based on the nature of their sources and the questions they seek to answer. Finally, while we are aware of much rich and interesting work on literary dreams and the dream in literature, our emphasis here focuses on reported dreams and their historical impact.

## 2. WHAT IS A DREAM? DEFINING AN OBJECT OF STUDY

No understanding of the place of dreams in modern scholarship can overlook the towering influence of Sigmund Freud. In works published at the turn of the twentieth century, the founder of psychoanalysis articulated his famous thesis that dreams are the product of a hidden part of the mind he labeled the unconscious, and serve as a means of fulfillment for the dreamer's urgent but unacceptable — and thus repressed — wishes. Through a careful process of interpretation, Freud thought, the analyst might work backwards from the manifest dream to unveil the hidden wish, often an erotic wish, that it expressed. For decades, this psychoanalytic conception of the dream and the way to find its true meaning defined scholarly approaches to dreaming in past societies.

For some historians, literary scholars, and anthropologists, Freudianism signaled that modern science had at last discovered the hidden reason for dreaming. They responded by positing that the systematic collection of dreams might help to more precisely delineate what was universal about the human psyche — for example, drives and desires — and differentiate it from the culturally specific symbols in which these universals are expressed. Psychoanalytic anthropology as practiced at midcentury by Anthony F. C. Wallace and Dorothy Eggan suggested that dreams could offer a new route into the understanding of culture. In a series of three concisely written and carefully argued articles, Eggan charted a new course for the anthropologist interested in dreams, arguing for the importance of dream study to the ethnographer, for the critical cultural information to be gleaned from analysis of manifest content, and for the need for more “systematically collected and annotated dream materials.”<sup>2</sup> Some of this work offered a nuanced appraisal of the cultural construction of emotional experience; other versions were undergirded by models of cultural conformity or culture patterns now generally rejected by modern ethnography.

Yet it would be erroneous to claim that psychoanalytic approaches to dreaming ever became rigid or commanded unquestioning authority. Even within Freud's lifetime his original idea that dreams are properly understood as the fulfillment of repressed wishes yielded to a more fluid understanding

<sup>2</sup>Eggan, 1949, 177.

of the relationship of dreams to the individual's inner life. *Dreams and History*, the collection of essays edited by Daniel Pick and Lyndal Roper, examines the evolution of psychoanalytic approaches to dream interpretation since Freud. At the same time, it offers examples of how psychoanalysis continues to generate useful historical insight. This wide-ranging volume is a methodological starting point for current researchers. For early modernists, Roper was ideally positioned to help frame a new approach: in earlier work on Germany, she combined gender theory and a highly refined psychoanalytic framework inspired by the work of Melanie Klein to offer compelling readings of judicial sources. Now a classic, her *Oedipus and the Devil* probed the psychosexual dimensions of Reformation-era changes in households and marriage and offered persuasive arguments about the psychic trauma that led some women to spin elaborate, psychosexually revealing tales about their relationships with Satan.

While psychoanalysis undoubtedly inspired much interest in dreams reported by historical actors, for a time it circumscribed interest in the rich tradition of premodern oneirology from which Freud had sought to distance his own, purportedly more scientific, methods. The last decades of the twentieth century witnessed a dramatic change on this front, and a revival of interest in the premodern science of dreams and dream interpretation. Both postmodernism and the rise of cognitive neuroscience challenged psychoanalytic conceptions of mind and self, contributing to renewed scientific debate about why humans dream, and whether the content of our nighttime visions constitutes something more than mere neural housekeeping. In a broad cultural sense we have returned to debates reminiscent of those Freud carried out with those who asserted, following a German proverb, that *Traüme sind Schaüme* ("dreams are foam").

Though there is currently no consensus about the evolutionary purpose of dreaming, contemporary dream researchers make several observations that are useful for scholars of the early modern period. Rather than hermetically separating unconscious dreaming from consciously directed brain activity, these scholars understand dreams as part of a continuum of awareness that runs from night dreams through daydreaming all the way to focused problem solving. They observe that dreaming is as universal to humans as language, metaphor, and narration — mental functions that find expression in dreams just as in focused, waking thought. These insights are not at odds with those of psychoanalysts. Where modern dream science diverges is in its reluctance to posit any necessary relationship between dreams and the dreamer's inner, subjective experience. Instead, modern dream science documents the tendency of dreams to be hyperconnective episodes in which associations between ideas are made with greater freedom

than is typical of waking thought. Sleep researchers such as Ernest Hartmann suggest that dreams offer a critical avenue through which the mind integrates new information, enabling the dreamer to respond to various challenges, including developmental changes and intense emotions.

The current reappraisals of dreaming and dream reporting vindicate the impulse to pay close attention when our historical subjects made the effort to report their dreams, even if dream narratives are often puzzling, appear illogical, and offer challenges in interpretation. The new science of dreaming affirms the potential for dreams to elucidate historical and cultural change. Dreams illuminate significant developments at the level of the individual, such as might take place during rites of passage or in experiences of rupture like religious conversion. They also register the shared social experience of epochal transformations. What is more, our current scientific uncertainty about the precise evolutionary or cognitive function of dreaming lends itself to renewed sympathy for the premodern sciences of dream interpretation. The modern effort to explain the mysterious function of the subjective experience we call a dream is the latest expression of a long quest to grasp how the body and mind interact. We now recognize the oneirological traditions Freud dismissed as “ingenious mythology” as evidence for previous eras’ efforts to answer much the same question.<sup>3</sup>

Postmodernism and the rise of cultural history have had another notable influence on dream scholarship: they have shifted the center of gravity of dream studies from a focus on the meaning of dream content to the social acts of narrating and interpreting. Clinicians and dream scholars argue that dreams are irreducibly individual experiences to which we have access only insofar as the dreamer remembers and chooses to tell them. Accordingly, Richard Kagan’s discussion of the Spanish visionary Lucrecia de León and Mechal Sobel’s analysis of eighteenth-century conversion narratives take careful measure of the social contexts in which their subjects lived. These contexts shaped the content of dreams, but they also created rules and expectations for telling dreams and responding to them. Recovering these protocols of narrating and interpreting is vital to understanding how dreams inspired political resistance, religious dissent, and social change, becoming stories with the power to move individuals and groups to unusual action.

### 3. DREAMS AND KNOWLEDGE

There is a long literary tradition — stemming from the ancient world and running through the Enlightenment — of exploring the sources and origins

<sup>3</sup>Freud, 5.

of dreams. Much scholarship has been devoted to understanding these indigenous theories of knowledge and to charting their change over time. Works that helped to establish this tradition include Patricia Cox Miller's *Dreams in Late Antiquity* and Steven F. Kruger's *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*. Recent work on the early modern era offers particularly subtle readings of both elite and ordinary discourse about dream origins, meanings, and interpretive traditions.

Claire Gantet's *Der Traum in der Frühen Neuzeit* is a signal achievement in recent dream scholarship, a book that deepens our appreciation of the complex context in which early modern men and women sought knowledge in their nighttime visions. Gantet traces discourses about dreams from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, focusing in particular on the Holy Roman Empire, where ideas about dreams bequeathed by antiquity and the Middle Ages became implicated in the process of defining Protestant confessional orthodoxy.

In 1500, when Gantet begins her story, multiple theories of dreams were available to European intellectuals. Dreams were the province of several branches of knowledge, including theology, medicine, and the *ars divinatoria*. Despite academic debate on the subject, no one demanded conclusive answers to questions about which dreams offered the soul access to supernatural realms (though general agreement held some did), and which were simply illusions generated by physiological processes. Gantet traces how dream discourses were transformed over the course of the sixteenth century. Very early on Reformers like Philipp Melancthon latched on to dreams as a means to elaborate Protestant theories about the nature of the soul, its relationship with the body, and the possibility of continuing divine revelation. Early "enthusiasts," termed *Schwärmer*, took Luther's challenge to Catholic authority and tradition to its logical conclusion, prioritizing the possibility of immediate encounter with the divine, such as might occur in dreams. Soon these enthusiasts were questioning the continuing relevance of the Bible and challenging the authority of magisterial Protestant reformers. Gantet's account of the interpenetration of academic and popular dream traditions, and her refusal to apply anachronistic separations between scientific and religious discourses, generates an impressive picture of the ways that knowledge was tested by and harnessed for confessionalization.

Gantet suggests that confessional debates about dreams had profound long-term epistemological consequences. Responding to the challenge of enthusiasts, magisterial reformers often chose to explain divergences between dreams and the shared social world as the result of diabolical influence. In so doing, they promoted a notion that compelling inner certainty, such as might result from a vivid dream, was pathological. This

evolution heralded a change in the definition of knowledge itself. No longer secured by a divinely created system of signs to which one might gain insight via dreams and similar visionary experiences, knowledge came to be reliant on socially agreed-upon facts. Gantet's impressive monograph traces this story in rich detail, and will be a starting place for subsequent dream researchers for years to come.

Stuart Clark's *Vanities of the Eye*, while not focused specifically on dreams, also traces the role of sleeping visions in the early modern epistemological shift. Clark's book begins with the Aristotelian account of vision, which argued that what a waking person conceived "in the mind's eye" was the quasi-mechanical result of the impression delivered via the visual organ by the world of things. A similar notion that vision offers uncomplicated access to reality is, as he notes, implicated in several master narratives of early modern history, which point to developments like linear perspective in art or empirical observation in natural sciences as signs of progress. Clark undermines these narratives by examining the collapse of the Aristotelian account of vision, and the ensuing fascination with visual errors and manipulation of the visual faculty that surged in Europe between 1450 and 1700. *Vanities of the Eye* recovers the anxiety generated alongside the decision to ground truth on what humans see.

Clark traces two complementary threads of argument about the truth or falsehood of dreaming during the period. One leads through the rediscovery of skeptical philosophy to Descartes and Malebranche, preoccupied with the problem that we humans may not be as able to distinguish our true, waking perceptions of the real world from our sleeping, false visions as we think we are. In a chapter titled "Fantasies," Clark explores how the hallucinations of melancholics suggested the potential fallibility of human faculties of perception, and not just reason: essentially, melancholics experienced while awake what healthy people experienced in sleep. Yet in the chapter he devotes to dreams, Clark recognizes that this problem of visual paradox was not the main preoccupation of most Renaissance dream commentators. Avid readers of the classical dream guides of Artemidorus or Macrobius, Renaissance men and women generally wanted to know if their dreams were premonitory or prophetic, that is, if they bore some relationship to what was real in the present or future.

*Vanities of the Eye* follows in the wake of Clark's paradigm-shifting *Thinking with Demons*, a landmark study that revolutionized witchcraft scholarship by repositioning demonology from the fringe to the center of Renaissance intellectual life. *Vanities* continues this trajectory. In Reformation Europe, he notes, dreams' capacity to convey truth came to

be understood as a function of their source in either divine or demonic influence. Demonology offered much evidence to ponder. Witches confessed they were transported bodily to the sabbath, but observers contradicted their testimony. The contradictory evidence left authors struggling to explain whether these unfortunates had merely dreamed that they had gone there, to what extent witches' inability to tell their dreams from reality was evidence of demonic penetration of their minds, and whether this faulty perception still left them morally culpable. Few were willing, as was Johann Weyer, to argue that the whole of witchcraft was built from demonic influence over corrupted imaginations, without existence in material reality. The position articulated by Jean Bodin, which reassuringly supported the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical and secular authorities to punish witchcraft as an earthly crime, proved for decades more congenial. Nevertheless, Clark argues that the long debate about how to make sense of such confessions led without fail in a skeptical direction, and he proposes that the controversy over the witches' sabbath contributed to "a general shift, from one kind of dream distinction, the theological true/false, to another, the positivistic *rêve/réalité*."<sup>4</sup>

Taken together, Gantet and Clark highlight the role of dreams in mediating a crisis of knowledge and trace the journey of the imagination from its medieval position — as an intermediary faculty where images could be recalled from memory to serve in thought — to a synonym for *unreal*. Dreams, as uncontrolled imaginative productions, became signs of the mind's vulnerability to error and demonic influence, and its separation from what is real. Janine Rivière and Mary Baine Campbell explore the ramifications of these changes in two separate essays in the 2013 volume on dreaming that we coedited. Rivière's essay traces the evolution of an increasingly materialist understanding of nightmares over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Campbell's "The Inner Eye: Early Modern Dreaming and Disembodied Sight" argues that dreams, once thought of as visual events to be seen, were now construed as events within the faculties of memory and imagination, in short, as an aspect of thinking rather than seeing. At the very same moment (and not accidentally for Campbell), just as philosophers in Europe lost interest in dreams as means to understand reality, early modern thinkers "found a new object outside the realm of the fully 'human' . . . in the cultures of the New World." Interest in dreams and visions was relocated to the rising science of ethnography, and belief in dreams and visions became a hallmark of nonelite or non-Western cultures.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Clark, 2007, 320.

<sup>5</sup>Campbell, 40.

#### 4. RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL AFFILIATION

As the works mentioned above suggest, the pivotal events of the early modern period brought dreams and dreamers to center stage, making the period a critical one in the history of dreams. A second vein of recent work explores how dreamers sought through dream experience to understand their roles in the great political and religious struggles of the period. In the context of Reformation contests over religious authority, dreams came to embody — quite literally — the problem of determining what was true. Despite this, early modern men and women continued to deploy established forms of dream interpretation and even endowed them with new significance.

For a generation at least, scholars of popular religion have explored the ways that dreams and related visionary experiences remained embedded in the everyday spiritual practices of faithful, orthodox Christian men and women, both Catholics and Protestants, in the Reformation era. A generation ago, scholars such as Alan Macfarlane and William Christian unearthed a world where, for example, the seventeenth-century Protestant clergyman Ralph Josselin pondered the significance of his dreams, and sometimes those of his wife, in his journal, or Catholic villagers described at length their personal visions of saints or the Virgin Mary as a notary took down their accounts. In an influential work on the American context, David D. Hall located dreams, visions, and other portents firmly within a framework of popular providentialism — a framework that he argues was, in fact, widely shared among clergy and laity alike in seventeenth-century New England, as well as by most in Europe, Catholic and Protestant. Hall notes that, far from a mere continuation of the past, the early modern period actually extended the reach of traditional European dream theories, and granted dreamers an audience that might extend halfway across the globe. Print culture enabled the distribution and recirculation of dream theories and reports, connecting Hall's nonconformist English colonial subjects into broader European networks where the wondrous and providential were much appreciated.

More recent scholarship incorporates a growing concern for agency, individuality, and cultural contestation in its approach to dreams as cultural artifacts. Studies of religious enthusiasts by Mechal Sobel (2002), Carla Gerona (2004), and Phyllis Mack (1992 and 2013) could hardly proceed without examining the ways in which reports of dreams and visions were used to advance marginal or even unpopular ideas. Gerona's *Night Journeys* follows Quakerism as it moved from the seventeenth-century radical fringe to an accepted confession of the eighteenth century. Part of this transition,



she shows, was the development of new codes governing dream sharing. Quakers came to place less emphasis on the prophetic power of dreams, to make their telling a less public endeavor, and to report dreams in a somewhat more standardized fashion. Gerona's work features careful attention to the ways that dreams circulated, and to the ways they became implicated in building community and religious identity. Scholars like Gerona, Sobel, and Mack, and also Ann Taves, Susan Juster, and Douglas L. Winiarski are showing how, in the midst of the transatlantic Enlightenment, evangelical movements of the late eighteenth century gave both new life and renewed controversy to the experiences of dreaming and visioning. Dream reports served to document the interiorized moment of religious conversion, but also rooted dreamers in the greatest and most charged religious, political, and social debates of their times.

This dual quality of dreaming — as individual experience and social claim — leads these scholars to question teleological and overly simplistic claims about the birth of individualism. As Mack has recently argued, ideas about a porous early modern self becoming, by the eighteenth century, a bounded and fully interiorized self should be tempered by an appreciation for how these interior regions became, in the context of dreams or visions, somewhat boundless depths — to be explored, but never fully known. In her review of the meaning of dreams for English Calvinist, Quaker, and Methodist converts, Mack suggests that “Eighteenth-century dream theory and interpretation thus promoted not just new knowledge about the self but new levels of mystery and anxiety.”<sup>6</sup>

Recent work grants less attention than we might expect to the political significance of dreams, an interesting lacuna given the dynastic conflicts and crises of monarchical authority that were endemic in the early period of state formation. One exception surrounds the Elizabethan age, treated by several authors in a recent volume edited by Hodgkin, O'Callaghan, and Wiseman, as well as in Carole Levin's *Dreaming the English Renaissance*. Levin's monograph catalogues the dreams invoked in a wide variety of English texts during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, including diaries, letters, pamphlets, histories, sermons, devotional texts, demonologies, and plays. Her survey of contemporary guides to dream interpretation demonstrates, unsurprisingly, that these guides offered contradictory and uncertain readings — according to Andrew Seyton, to dream of a queen signified honor, joy, and prosperity while for Thomas Hill it meant “deceit to follow.”<sup>7</sup> It is nevertheless significant, as Levin notes, that both writers

<sup>6</sup>Mack, 2013, 225.

<sup>7</sup>Levin, 127.

offered their opinions in a century when dynastic and religious crisis came to be associated with queens occupying the English throne. Levin's book thus captures the persistent ambiguity surrounding dreams, which makes them simultaneously eloquent expressions of dreamers' anxieties and the object of struggles to define their political meaning.

Levin's impressive research shows that dreams by or about monarchs circulated in large numbers in early modern English texts of many sorts. Far from paeans to the stability of monarchical authority, these dreams were often "awash with blood," itself an ambiguous symbol that could refer to sanguine temperament, future violence, sacrality, or dynastic legitimacy. Levin offers useful insights into the semantic codes that guided early modern audiences when they encountered dreams: a dream dismissed as just a dream by the one it warns, for example, is no good story unless it comes true — which it virtually always does. *Dreaming the English Renaissance* makes a contribution to current dream scholarship by collecting a wealth of stories about the content and circulation of dream narratives in a formative era of English confessional politics. But above all, Levin's account of the circulation of dreams at Elizabeth's court invites scholars to pay closer attention to the political influence of dreams in early modern Europe, in particular to the ways oneiric narratives were deployed to legitimize or delegitimize rulers in this era of dynastic turmoil and divine-right monarchy.

## 5. DREAMS AND THE OTHER

A final trend in recent dream scholarship highlights the moment when Europeans encountered Asians, Africans, and Americans in missionary and colonial settings. The Reformation and the epistemological struggles that accompanied it, major focuses of the works reviewed above, coincided with efforts to secure Christian conversion and imperial power in far-flung lands. As a result, Europeans confronted the dream traditions of other cultures at a moment when their own ideas about dreams were increasingly implicated in confessional struggles and anxieties about protecting divine truth, however it was defined.

Here the work of anthropologists has offered much inspiration to scholars working in the field. Anthony F. C. Wallace's classic essay on the Iroquoian use of dreams, originally published in 1958, continues to be much cited by those at work on sources related to the Jesuit missionaries at work in the *Hodenausaunee* homeland. And the essays that resulted from a pivotal seminar convened by Barbara Tedlock at the School for American Research in 1982 continue to offer rich fields for those seeking to decolonize their use of indigenous dream reports. These influences have shaped a new wave of

scholarship about Catholic missionaries working in the Western Hemisphere. A recent essay by Dominique Deslandres, as well as essays by Andrew Redden, Carla Gerona, and Leslie Tuttle in the 2013 anthology that we coedited underscore the importance of exchanges about dreaming to the encounters between missionary orders and the Americas' indigenous peoples. The *Jesuit Relations*, spiritual biography, and a host of other missionary-generated texts offer rich sources through which to explore these intercultural conversations.

Early modern European beliefs about dreaming also traveled with missionaries to the Pacific Basin, encountering the diverse dream traditions of Asia. In two related articles, R. Po-Chia Hsia has mined reported dreams to better understand the religious culture of Christian converts in early modern China. Hsia's method in these pieces represents current scholarly trends by paying as much attention to the circulation of dream narratives as to their content, and by elucidating the crossing of influences across cultural boundaries. The Jesuits who constituted a sizable portion of the China missionaries, he shows, exhibited a measure of skepticism and reticence regarding holy dreams in pious biographies (Hsia found just one recorded as occurring to a Jesuit in 1595, mentioned in Matteo Ricci's memoir). But dreams proved to be abundant when he looked more broadly at sources from the seventeenth century, including the Jesuits' annual letters and extant writings of Chinese Christians. Hsia explains the discrepancy as a result of the scarcity of Christian clerics available to serve the many Chinese converts, who numbered about 100,000 by 1680. In a "matrix of weak ecclesiastical authority and strong religious demand" Chinese Christians and Christian clerics recorded dreams and other visions that "affirmed the validity of [Christian] faith" in its ongoing competition with Buddhism and Confucianism.<sup>8</sup> In some ways, Christianity was thereby yielding to the influence of these established traditions and their tendency to take dreams seriously as sources of religious insight. Nevertheless, Hsia reads the prevalence of dreams in the seventeenth-century sources less as a sign of the weakness of clerical authority than of the vibrancy of lay piety in Chinese Christian communities. European influence is nevertheless visible: he finds that Christian dreams (mostly recorded by Europeans) seem framed with concern to define a sharp boundary between dreaming and real life, while Buddhist dream texts from the same era exhibit "porous boundaries, allowing uninhibited passage through time and space, and between experiences in different modes of existence."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Hsia, 2010, 119–20.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 115.

Some of the most intriguing new work points to the development of newly creolized understandings of dreams and dreaming, describing worlds that can fairly be said to have both European and indigenous origins. In his essay in *Dreams, Dreamers and Visions*, Matthew Dennis places the revitalizing visionary movement of the Seneca prophet Handsome Lake within a larger context of early nineteenth-century religious awakenings among Amerindians and Euro-Americans alike. “Handsome Lake’s visions were simultaneously innovative and ‘traditional,’” writes Dennis: “Through his dreams the prophet translated relative powerlessness into new strength and revitalization, offering his people (like the citizens of the new republic generally) a means to deal with their postcolonial predicament.”<sup>10</sup> Dennis’s positioning of Handsome Lake’s new way locates it both within the deep wellsprings of Seneca culture and within a larger context of American revivalism. But what makes Dennis’s work new is his interest in adding the Seneca story to the historiography of the Second Great Awakening, thus crumbling the old colonial boundaries — built up by Jesuits, ethnographers, and others — between the credulous and the rational, the savage and the civilized. As Dennis notes in his conclusion, “If nineteenth-century Americans saw essential difference between Indians and whites, in retrospect we can see shared problems and similarities in their responses, sometimes in the form of prophetic visions, revitalizing evangelical movements, and the construction of new religions.”<sup>11</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION

An abundance of scholarly contributions has opened fresh avenues for understanding the role of dreams and dream reporting in early modern societies. Reported dreams remain profoundly social texts, available to historians’ interrogation and interpretation. Both in content and method, dreams offer new sources with which scholars can explore the shape of early modern encounters among peoples, politics, and cultures. While a powerful narrative for the progressive interiorization of dreams — originating in Enlightenment rationalism — has dominated much of the literature to date, a new historiography of dreaming has opened up new pathways through which to interrogate this and other old assumptions. This new literature follows three strands: a lively reinvestigation of early modern theories about the dream; the role of reported dreams in organizing and inspiring religious or political action, particularly in the wake of the

<sup>10</sup>Dennis, 227.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 244.

Reformation; and the special position of dreams in the encounter between Europe and its Others, in particular the ways in which this conversation offered surprising avenues for resistance or, in some instances, for the emergence of new creolized cultural milieus.

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