

SESSION I

Steven Kruger (The City University of New York [CUNY], US): Unbounded Comparison: The Workings of Perception and Cognition in Medieval Dream Poetry

I begin by considering the limitations of my earlier ideas about the dream's doubleness and middle-ness (in particular, their replication of a certain binaristic tendency in medieval dream theory), and explore as an alternative the focus the seminar adopts on the complementary and synergistic operations of perception and cognition in relation to the medieval dream. I argue that medieval dream poems stage an almost literally experimental scene in which to test hypotheses about human perception and cognition—their capacities, their mutual interactions, and their limits. The Middle English Pearl is my central text. Rather than attempt a full close reading of this complex and elusive poem, I use it to develop some ideas about how the poem experiments with the representation of a dream in order to explore the perceptive experience of its dreaming narrator and his movements toward, and sometimes away from, cognitive understanding. Especially important, I argue, is the poem's repeated use of comparative grammatical structures (e.g., "more and more") in describing the dream's spaces and movements. It pushes us toward a certain excess of scene (one paradisaical garden replaced by another and another and another); of sense (with synesthesia a major feature of the descriptive passages); and of knowledge (with paradoxical understandings trumping more straightforward rationality). I suggest that the "unbounded comparisons" of this one poem—even though it is an unusual, even unique text—allow us an understanding of some more general ways in which late-medieval dream poetry stages experiments with perceptive and cognitive potentialities.

Malek J. Zuraikat (Yarmouk University, Jordan): Chaucer's Dream-Like *Book of the Duchess*

The functionality of the dream in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (BD) is usually associated by critics with the poet's interest in talking face-to-face with his patron, John of Gaunt, which overlooks the poem's philosophical value. Against such perspective, this paper investigates the philosophical dimension of BD, arguing that the poem challenges the classic and medieval views on dreams and their interpretation, as implied by the works of Chaucer's predecessors and contemporaries, to contemplate the complex nature of dreams and introduce them in a more scientific way. The paper provides a close reading of BD, explaining how the poem functions as an experimental treatise on the dream experience in terms of conjecturing the dream, controlling the dream content, and narrating the dream experience. I argue that the poet consults with his predecessors and contemporaries' authoritative sources of dreaming without enslaving his narrative to any of them. Thus, he composes a dream-like poem, not a conventional poem about a dream, which imitates the structure of the dream experience highlighting the demarcating line between the dreaming self and the dream-self. Using modern theoretical terms of the dream, sleep, memory theories, the paper concludes that BD is an early step towards studying the dream experience in scientific terms much before a similar approach is promoted by Freud and other psychologists.

Anna Chacko (University of Cambridge, UK): Dialectic, *interrogatio* and radical uncertainty in the 'B' version of *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, 'The Vision of Mac Con Glinne'

Constructed interpretative uncertainty in multiple embedded narrations of a single dream-vision, in the eleventh- or twelfth-century medieval Irish satirical narrative, *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, 'The Vision of Mac Con Glinne', contributes to a subtle and layered interrogation of multiple learned conventions. Logical inconsistencies within and between narrations of the vision undermine a reader's ability to conceptually "fix" it, in time and space, and simultaneously provoke generic confusion. However, although certain lines of interpretative inquiry and cognitive processes of visualisation and memorialisation are thus blocked, new associative possibilities arise from coalescing discourses which usually remain distinct. For example, a collapsing distinction between the discourses of religious vision and fable illuminates correspondences: both capitalise on ontological difference to mundane reality; both could convey meaning figuratively, rather than literally. Radical uncertainty in the vision narrative emphasises critical impossibility, contributing to the way the text highlights irresolvable interpretative gaps, inherent in both genres; such generic blending, however, also allows an apparently irreligious and excessively sensual dream to express religious instruction, albeit only ever contingently, and via interpretative inversion.

Despite recognition of this text's learned credentials by scholars of medieval Irish literature, its internal contradictions still tend to be dismissed as defects. I suggest that contradictions in the narration of the vision form an important critical function, alongside provoking striking stylistic effects. Furthermore, this aspect of *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne* may indicate engaged participation with intellectual discussions of dream theory which resonate strongly with developments in learned culture across medieval Europe more broadly.

SESSION II

Alessia Bellusci (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy): *Dreams, nightmares, and insomnia in late Antique and medieval Jewish magical sources*

Starting from the Hebrew Bible, Jewish literature counts several accounts on sleep and dreams which shed some light onto Jewish perceptions of these fascinating phenomena. Furthermore, Jewish textual and material sources document the use and transmission of dream magic at least from late antiquity onwards. In my lecture, I will offer an overview of the most common Jewish magical techniques related to dreams in late antiquity and the medieval era, based on a variegated selection of manuscript sources in Hebrew and Aramaic (such as the Babylonian incantation bowls and the fragments from the Cairo Genizah). In the first part of the paper, I will focus on a form of dream divination known as *she'elat ḥalom* (dream request), which is documented in Jewish sources only from the tenth century onwards, but which is well rooted in earlier Jewish Apocalyptic and divinatory traditions. After comparing this specific Jewish practice with non-Jewish techniques of dream incubations, I will reflect especially on the visual or/and auditory character of the dream content expected as outcome of the divination, and, more in general, on dream mentation, as well as on the possibility of transmitting cultural images and forms of imagination through dream rituals. In the second part of the lecture, I will explore the potential distress brought about by sleeping and dreaming activities. In particular, I will discuss a Jewish practice for reversing a bad dream (*ḥaṭavat ḥalom*), as well as Jewish magical techniques aimed at causing and curing sleeping impairments, such as insomnia and nightmares.

Marlène Beghin (L'école des hautes études en sciences sociales [EHESS], France): Imaging the dangers of dreaming: perceptive and cognitive fails in two 14th century illuminated manuscripts of the *Miroir historial* by Jean de Vignay

Dreaming in the Middle Ages can be an occasion to receive a prophetic revelation as well as to be deceived by the devil. It appears as a special cognitive state that can allow, through mental images, higher knowledge as well as deeper bewildering. Since Antiquity, philosophers have wondered about the status of those oneiric images, and hierarchized them in typologies, from the most meaningful to the most misleading ones. For this presentation, I wish to examine the negative category formed by the misleading images, close in certain ways to the current nightmare, and more generally the fails of perception and cognition that can occur in dreams.

Although medieval writings such as monks' diaries occasionally mention them, artistic representations usually select prophetic dreams and don't show many unsettled or deceptive ones. I will focus on two 14th century French manuscripts that have the distinctiveness of showing several of them: two dedication copies of the *Miroir historial*, the French translation by Jean de Vignay for Queen Jeanne de Bourgogne of the *Speculum historiale* by Vincent de Beauvais, one of the most read encyclopedias in the Middle Ages [Leiden, BU Voss. Gall Fol. 3A ; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 5080]. I will present the negative experiences of dreaming these iconographies embody, from the inability to perceive actual dangers while the senses are asleep, to the inability to resolve the ambiguity of these images' origins, whether corporeal or spiritual. I will examine in the end, how the importance of visual figures such as ghosts and monsters stress the link between cognitive uncertainty and fear.

Mikhail Lopatin (Uppsala Universitet, Sweden): Medieval hypnagogia? The sounds and noises of Vincenzo da Rimini's *In forma quasi*

The lyric persona of Vincenzo da Rimini's caccia *In forma quasi* finds herself in a peculiar transitional state 'between wakefulness and slumber' (*tra 'l veghiar e 'l sonno*), which is soon followed by a 'hurricane' (*tempesta*) of sounds and noises that seem to come from two distinctly different sources: sailors at sea trying to embark their ships and market traders on land aggressively promoting their goods.

This paper explores the lyric protagonist's 'state' (*forma*) against two theoretical backdrops: 1) that of Macrobius' five types of dreams, as well as their later reception in Boccaccio's and Petrarch's writings; and 2) modern theories on 'hypnagogia' (the onset of dreaming) and hypnagogic hallucinations. My aim is twofold. First, to shed some light on a rich history of some of the expressions used in this caccia (e.g., *forma... tra 'l veghiar e 'l sonno* and *tempesta*). Second, to address the role of this caccia's musical setting and its structure, and the ways this musical setting reflects — as well as contributes to — the *forma* of the main protagonist and the *tempesta* of the caccia's fictional soundscape.

SESSION III

Valerio Cappozzo (University of Mississippi, USA): The Medieval Dream Dictionary and Its Renaissance: The *Somniale Danielis* from manuscripts to print

With this talk, I would like to ask the following central question: what does the manuscript tradition of the *Somniale Danielis* demonstrate? This dreambook was the most circulated in the Middle Ages, and had a wide geographical dissemination. This text was usually copied with others that dealt with divinatory sciences and other techniques and theories of interpretation as for example medicine, astrology, alchemy, and literature. If we follow the tradition of the *Somniale* as it is translated in various modern languages, we can precisely visualize medieval culture, one that develops into the early modern world with its printed editions, in which the *Somniale* preserves its structure, but also adapts to the changing society that uses it.

In its first printed editions, we can still observe how the *Somniale* continues to transmit a highly symbolic culture that trusts the single person's ability for interpretation. I will thus focus on that specific passage, from manuscript to print, within the *Somniale* long history, through several key examples made and printed in Italy between the end of thirteenth century to 1550, where we will observe the text's structure and its variants, as well as the combination of the *Somniale* with other divinatory sciences in the same edition. In its printed version, the *Somniale* circulated among intellectual circles, made of poets and writers, but also scientists, among whom Leonardo da Vinci, who used it to interpret his own dreams.

Aaron Kachuck (Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium): Dreams of Pegasus from Homer to Milton

This paper exposes the link between Pegasus, dreams, and large-scale literary structures in the Classical tradition. Following an archaeology of the interconnection of Pegasus and dreams from Pindar's adaptations of Homer onwards, it then focuses on Ovid's lifelong fascination—poetological, astrological, and zoological—with the figure of the Pegasus. Building on Philip Hardie's work on Pegasus as later model for Fama, it demonstrates how Ovid made Pegasus a key structure to his *Metamorphoses*, in ways that allow us to tentatively conjecture a set of possible roles played by Pegasus and dreams in the structure of Callimachus' *Aetia*, a foundational work for post-Augustan literary structures. The paper then follows the traces of Ovid's conjunction of Pegasus and dreams into late antiquity, the Middle Ages (including the Third Vatican Mythographer), and the Renaissance (including Giordano Bruno's *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante* and John Milton); a brief envoi looks to how Aby Warburg adapted this tradition in the development of a bookplate—including the celebrated phrase *per monstra ad sphaeram*—for the collection of the late Franz Boll.

Aistė Kiltinavičiūtė (The University of Cambridge, UK): Dreamitation: Shaping the Language of Sensation and Cognition in the Early Italian Dream Writing

In his book *Imitating Authors: Plato to Futurity* (2019), Colin Burrow proposes the idea of 'dreamitation' in the Latin epic tradition, arguing that Virgil's *Aeneid* played a significant part in associating dreams and simulacral resemblances with imitations of earlier authors, including Homer, Ennius, and Lucretius. This paper adopts the notion of 'dreamitation' to explain how

Dante's, Boccaccio's, and Petrarch's engagement with dream visions allows them not only to construct a genealogy of inspired Italian writers-dreamers, but also to put an individual stamp on dream topoi by re-interpreting the inherited vocabulary of dream cognition and sensation for their times and purposes.

As Sherry Roush suggests in *Speaking Spirits: Ventriloquizing the Dead in Renaissance Italy* (2015), 'Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio hardly manage to rest in peace after their deaths in 1321, 1374, and 1375 respectively,' thanks to the proliferation of various fifteenth- and sixteenth-century narratives featuring dream visions of their ghostly spirits. But it was also the Tre Corone themselves who engaged in dreamitation. In Petrarch's 'Dream of Scipio the Elder,' Petrarch experiences visions that identify him as a successor of Homer and Ennius, and in Boccaccio's *De casibus VIII.1*, Petrarch appears to Boccaccio in a dream, exhorting him to work and reviving his desire for immortal fame. This paper will examine why the dream mode is so conducive to exploring ideas about imitation, understood as either making ghosts of the past, or attempting a ghostly revival of the past literary tradition. It will also suggest that dreamitation can reveal something important about the nature of writing as understood in the period in general, namely, as entering the realm of shadows, dealing in simulacra and eidola. Finally, this paper will propose that it is the broadly comparable workings of cognition, imagination, and sensation in experiential dreams and in the production of their literary representations that make the dream mode particularly conducive to metaliterary reflection.

SESSION IV

Andreas Keller (independent scholar, psychoanalyst): Psychoanalytic dream games — a review of a few different dream theories and their impact on psychoanalytic practice

Since the days of Freud psychoanalytic theory has developed into a vast and heterogeneous field which often seems full of contradictions. This also applies to theories of dreams and dreaming. My presentation will be an attempt to trace a certain development in psychoanalytic dream theory, from the view adumbrated in Freud's "The Interpretation of Dreams", through the works of British analyst Wilfred Bion to a contemporary view held by the North American analyst Thomas Ogden. I will try to illustrate how these theorists highlight different aspects of dreaming as a process that can be seen as infantile wish fulfilment and as psychologically defensive, as well as deeply creative and conducive to emotional growth.

Daniel Reeve (UC Santa Barbara, USA): *Pearl*: dream, experience, immanence, sameness

Three observations motivate this paper:

- 1) Classical psychoanalytic and standard medieval models of significant-dream interpretation are similar in that they understand dreams to have a latent content (or, a symbolic meaning) which is to be deciphered through interpretation of the manifest content (i.e. what actually appears in the dream-space). Under these models, the dream-space itself becomes peculiarly evacuated of meaning; little attention can be paid to the manifest content qua manifest content; the experience of the dream itself is not as important as the unconscious meaning that lies behind it.

2) This allegorical structure is related to the what we might call the mundane-transcendent duality of medieval dream vision literature: the dreamer's waking life is largely bereft of meaning until she is granted an experience of interpretable richness provided by a transcendent other.

3) Psychoanalytic writers since Freud – in particular, those associated with the British Independent tradition such as Masud Khan and Christopher Bollas – have argued for a greater emphasis on the dream experience itself, and in doing so have done much to dissolve the classical psychoanalytic distinction between latent and manifest content.

These observations lead to a question: Can we observe similar dynamics in medieval dream narratives? Are there medieval dreamscapes that complicate the mundane-transcendent structure and allegorical semantic evacuation outlined above? Do these dreamscapes take an interest in the experience of the dream itself?

My answer to this question is (firmly) yes. I will argue for it in this paper by drawing on material from the fourteenth-century Middle English poem Pearl.

Meghan Quinlan (Uppsala Universitet, Sweden): The Second Sense: Hearing in Dreams
Premodern and Modern

This paper responds to the session's two previous papers by situating music and sound on the boundary between the manifest and latent content of dreams. The psychoanalyst Thomas Ogden describes two forms of listening in the analytic setting: one that 'assumes a unidirectional movement—from symbol to symbolized, manifest to latent, conscious to unconscious' and another that is 'responsive to the rich reverberations of sound and multilayered meanings that lie at the heart of both poetry and psychoanalysis' (Ogden, *Conversations at the Frontier of Dreaming* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, 2002, p. 106)). The first, where 'sense' has precedence over 'sound', is understood to be a more classically oriented approach to listening, but Freud, despite his apparent resistance to music, the avant-garde, and 'non-rational' or non-representational ways of communicating, was deeply attuned to puns and other sonic continuities as anchors of association in dreams.

Since the pun's materiality is the key to its interpretation, I argue, it breaks down the traditional distinction between symbol/ symbolized and latent/ manifest. Moreover, punning as a technique for dream interpretation goes back at least as far as the Byzantine and Latin *Somniale danielis* dreambook traditions, which Freud himself acknowledged. What are these premodern precedents for punning, music, and sound distortion in dreams? I will describe some such cases, considering them in the light of medieval conceptions of sound, etymology, and nonsense, and reflecting on the kinds of knowledge thought to be made possible through the (inner) sense of hearing.