

Shaping Dreams



We are somewhat more than our selves in our sleepes, and the slumber of the body seemes to bee but the waking of the soule. It is the ligation of sense, but the liberty of reason, and our awaking conceptions doe not match the fancies of our sleepes.

Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici

Except our own thoughts, there is nothing absolutely in our power.

Rene Descartes

The ability to shape dreams is unevenly distributed. The vast majority of people go to sleep unprotected and pray to wake up safely. Some learn how to manipulate dreams, defend themselves and explore the dreamworlds. To achieve this the skills of Lucidity and the

various shaping Topoi are needed: strange abilities halfway between meditative control and imaginative genius/madness.

Lucidity



We tearme sleepe a death, and yet it is waking that kills us, and destroys those spirits that are the house of life... It is that death by which we may be literally said to die daily, a death which Adam died before his mortality; a death whereby we live a middle and moderating point betweene life and death; in fine, so like death, I dare not trust it without my prayers, and an halfe adiew unto the world, and take my farewell in a Colloquy with God.

Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici

Lucidity allows a person to recognize that they are in a dream and to act (and allows dreams to recognize that they are in reality). People with high Lucidity are aware if they are dreaming or not, can control themselves in dreams, and can remember what happened clearly. People with low or no Lucidity tend to wander around in their dreams helplessly, bound by dream logic and dream destiny, and once they wake up they quickly forget their dreams.

When first falling asleep, the character rolls INT + Lucidity to recognize that they are dreaming. If the roll fails, the character will be dreaming for one dream (usually 1/3 of a night) and gets to re-roll in the next dream. Non-lucid dreamers will obey the dream logic and not know that they are asleep.

Where a dreamer emerges into the dreamworlds is largely set by chance and what their waking concerns are. By rolling Int + Lucidity as they go asleep they can achieve some control over this: each success allows one word of determination. For example, with three successes

the dreamer could state "In my home", "Court, masquerade, music" or "Sir William Bentley". It is normally not possible to descend into the deep dreaming this way - for that feat Shaping is required. The exception is if the dreamer has a dream object from a particular dream-place in reality. Then a successful Lucidity roll allows them to visit that place using their key. If several people wish to enter the dreaming together they must either succeed with their lucidity rolls or enter physically into the dreams as one or more fall asleep.

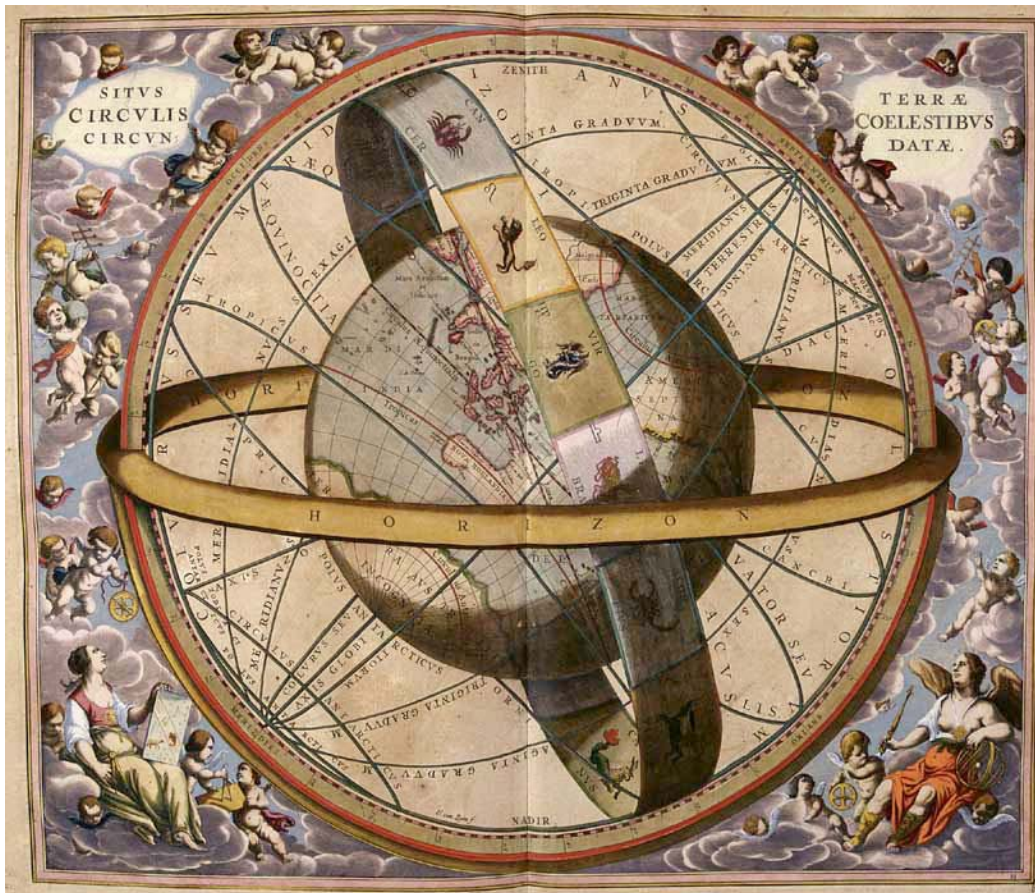
To wake up, the character needs to roll WIT + Lucidity to wake up. The depth of dreaming sets the difficulty: one success is enough in one's own dream, two in other people's dreams, three in Dream Europe and up to five for Deep Dreaming. If it succeeds the character immediately wakes up, disappearing from their dream. Waking up requires freedom of movement in the dream: if shackled or held by someone it is not possible to wake up (or it will be much harder).

To remember the dreams, roll INT + Lucidity.

A botched Lucidity roll means that the character sinks one level deeper into dreaming (including falling asleep if awake) or becomes non-lucid if they were lucid.

Cambions are automatically lucid in dreams, but use Lucidity to move into the dreamworld or out of it. Just like for waking up, going into dreams requires freedom of movement. A Cambion shackled to a wall in prison will not be able to sleep at all. It is also harder to enter or leave dreams if awake people are present: one extra success is needed for every awake person present, up to a maximum penalty of 3.

Shaping



Ere time and place were, time and place were not,
When primitive Nothing Something straight begot,
Then all proceeded from the great united--What?
Something, the general attribute of all,
Severed from thee, its sole original,
Into thy boundless self must undistinguished fall.
Yet Something did thy mighty power command,
And from thy fruitful emptiness's hand,
Snatched men, beasts, birds, fire, air, and land.
Matter, the wickedest offspring of thy race,
By Form assisted, flew from thy embrace,
And rebel Light obscured thy reverend dusky face.
-- John Wilmot, *Second Earl of Rochester, Upon Nothing*

I am no way facetious, nor disposed for the mirth and galliardize of company, yet in one dreame I can compose a whole Comedy, behold the action, apprehend the jests, and laugh my self awake at the conceits thereof; were my memory as faithfull as my reason is then fruitfull, I would never study but in my dreames, and this time also would I chuse for my devotions, but our grosser memories have then so little hold of our abstracted understandings, that they forget the story, and can only relate to our awaked soules, a confused & broken tale of that that hath passed.

<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/relmed/relmed.html>

Shaping is the ability to control dreams and dreaming. It has the following 9 topoi:

Place: Navigation, moving from one dream place to another, finding someone or something, changing distances and shapes.

Plot: Controlling randomness, dream "destiny", the situation in the dream.

Elements: Controlling the elements and forces of nature.

Matter: Controlling physical objects.

Animal: Controlling dream animals and dream bodies.

Plant: Controlling dream plants, making them grow or wither.

Mind: Affecting the minds of other dreamers/

Essence: Detecting and drawing passions from objects or beings, channeling them into new containers. Handling spilt blood.

Spirit: Control dreaming itself, opening portals to reality or shackling someone deeper in the dreaming. Affecting the nature of dreams itself.

To use Shaping, describe the desired effect. The description of the effect needs to use adjectives: there can not be more successes than the number adjectives used to describe the desired shaping.

Roll the relevant Topos (+ Breed).

Bonuses:

+1 per deepness of dream (if compatible with the local dream plot, some dreams have strict rules)

-3 for reality

When botching a Shaping roll, an effect of similar level occurs based on one of the Topoi the character is least powerful in. For example, if Marquise de Blondet attempts to conjure a rose for his paramour and botches, he might instead accidentally conjure a slimy lizard or a horrific storm. It is also common to get a phantom or Eidolon as a result when searching for a place or a person.

Topoi



Shapings have levels dependent on how complex they are. Sum the levels of the tables below and compare to the level of the Topos the character has. If the level is less than or equal to the character's, the action will succeed with just one success. If the level is higher, the difficulty goes up correspondingly.

Gaining knowledge	1
Minor phantasms	1
Control	2
Increase/Diminish	3
Create/Destroy	4
Transform/recreate	5

Range

Touch, affect self	0
Within sense range	+1
Beyond sense range	+2

Duration

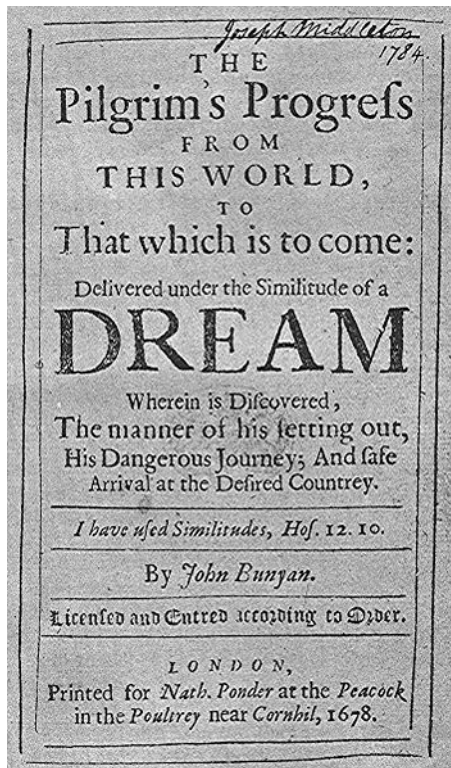
Concentration	0
For the scene	1
During the dream	2

To make something permanent passions have to be spent. Each passion point spent adds one to the duration; if the duration reaches 3 it will be permanent, i.e. independent of the dreamer's state. At least one point has to be spent to achieve this. However, if the dreamer dies the things empowered by their passions will begin to fade. Spending enough to bring duration up to 4 makes it permanent and entirely independent.

Target

Individual	0
Group	1
All within range	2

Place



The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.'
Genesis 31:10-12

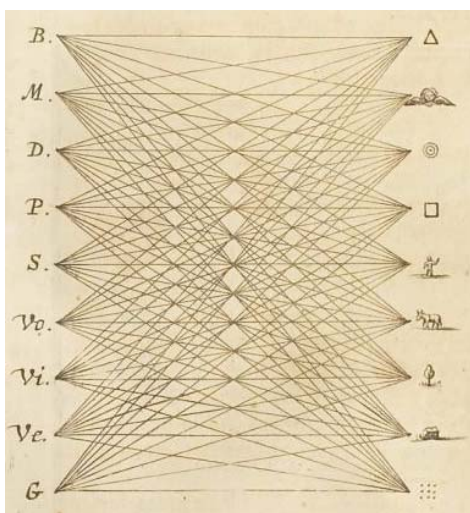
When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill . . . engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant and which know me not, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there.

Pascal, Pensées, 1655-62

The Place Topos allows the shaper to control the scene: where they are and where they are going.

- 1 The shaper can learn where they are within the oneirography of the dreamworld, as well as divine where a certain thing or person is. They can create odd and confusing distortions of perspective and distance.
- 2 The shaper can move things around as he desires. This includes himself, allowing various forms of flying or other conveyance. He can surely navigate through a dreamscape towards a destination despite its changes.
- 3 The shaper can control the size of things, making them larger or smaller. This includes distances, which can be increased (a fleeing enemy has to struggle to reach the door) or shortened (a long sailing trip is done within moments). He can also spy remote dreams if he has a connection, such as an object belonging to that dream or someone present.
- 4 The shaper can create new places or destroy old ones. He can remake the setting as he desires. He can instantly reappear wherever he wants to. He can create barriers that prevent other from moving or going somewhere, or remove them.
- 5 The shaper can contort space itself, turn left into right, creating paradoxical locations (one-way doors, stairs leading endlessly up but not down, bottomless wells or doors leading to remote locations). He can exist in several places at once.

Plot



Good Valentine, be kind to me,
In dreams let me my husband see.
Traditional Valentine's day spell

Plot deals with the dream "destiny" and rules that govern a scene. This is especially effective against non-lucid dreamers, since they tend to follow the rules.

- 1 The shaper can learn the dream logic or rules governing a particular dream. He can learn hints of its meaning, if it has any. He can make predictions about near future dream events as long as they are left to unfold.
- 2 The shaper can change some of the rules, but not their overall meaning. If the rule says that the monster will inevitably devour a person, the shaper can change it so the monster merely captures the person. He can give simple commands to non-lucid dreamers. He can speed up or slow down the unfolding of the plot.
- 3 The shaper can strengthen or weaken dream rules. In the monster dream the unavoidability of the monster can be weakened compared to the rule that the ground is too muddy to allow running, leaving both monster and fleeing dreamer struggling in the mud. The shaper can jump to the next part of the plot.
- 4 The shaper can add or remove dream rules or destiny. He can control the actions of non-lucid dreamers. The shaper can rewind the dream, undoing something that has happened.
- 5 The shaper can completely change the plot of a dream.

Elements



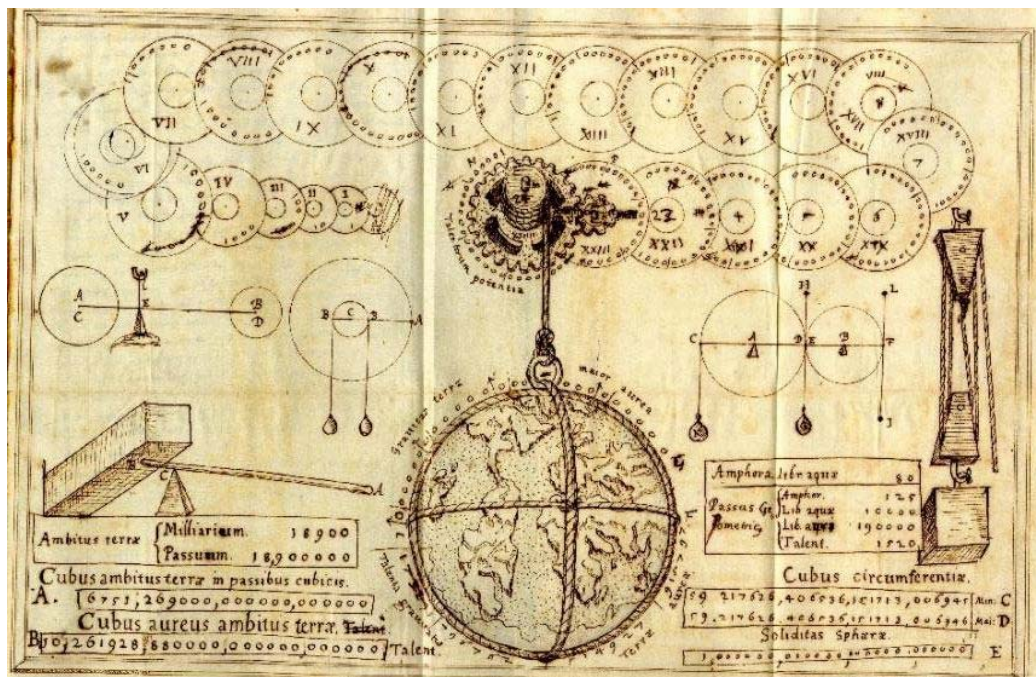
Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

Genesis 37:8-10

- 1 The shaper can create small amounts of the elements, such as flames in the palm

- or annoying gusts of air.
- 2 The shaper can control present elements, for example the movement of a fire or who a lightening strike hits.
- 3 The shaper can amplify or drain elements: fires can be turned into conflagrations, a puddle turned into a roaring sea. A sinister crescent moon can be turned into a romantic and bright full moon.
- 4 The shaper can create or destroy elements: if he wishes he can invoke a storm or landslide. He can turn night into day or vice versa.
- 5 The shaper can create fantastic elemental combinations, like fire elementals or rains of wine.

Matter



- 1 The shaper can know the nature and origin of a substance by examining it. He can create small, innocuous objects from thin air.
- 2 The shaper can change objects, for example changing the denomination of a coin or what color clothing is.
- 3 The shaper can multiply or remove compound objects, e.g. make more coins in a purse or make a shirt grow short.
- 4 The shaper can create or destroy objects at a whim.
- 5 The shaper can transform objects into anything, inventing bizarre hybrids like moving chairs or talking pens.

Animal



Were I (who to my cost already am
One of those strange, prodigious creatures, man)
A spirit free to choose, for my own share,
What case of flesh and blood I pleased to wear,
I'd be a dog, a monkey or a bear,
Or anything but that vain animal
Who is so proud of being rational.

John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester, A Satyre against Reason and Mankind

- 1 The shaper can know the nature and properties of an animal or body (e.g. for diagnosing an illness). He can conjure minor creatures or shadows of larger creatures.
- 2 The shaper can speak and give orders to dream animals (more powerful dreams can resist this), change some of their shape and heal dream wounds.
- 3 The shaper can make bodies grow or shrink, become healthier or sicker.
- 4 The shaper can destroy or create animals or other bodies.
- 5 The shaper can create entirely new animals with strange properties, like flying wolves. He can transmogrify others into new shapes, such as turning them into frogs

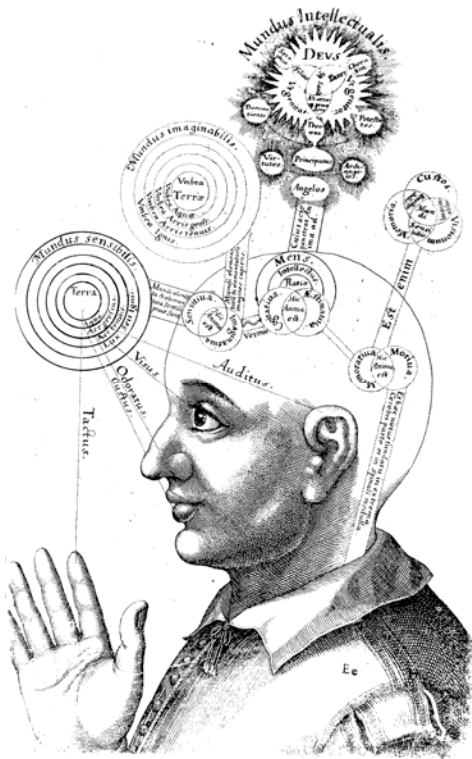
Healing someone in dreams is possible, but of course the healing will only affect the dream-body. Using Passion it is possible to make this healing "permanent" – a sick person will now always have a healthy dream body, but that still does not help the sleeping sick body. Only blood can achieve that kind of healing.

Plant



- 1 The shaper can know the nature and properties of a plant in a dream. He can conjure symbolic or ornamental plants.
- 2 The shaper can speak and command plants, changing their shape.
- 3 The shaper can make plants grow rapidly (possibly catching people) or shrink.
- 4 The shaper can make plants appear or disappear, improve their health or make them weak and sickly.
- 5 The shaper can invent new kinds of plants, like trees bearing intoxicating golden fruit or a singing mushroom that will repel thieves.

Mind

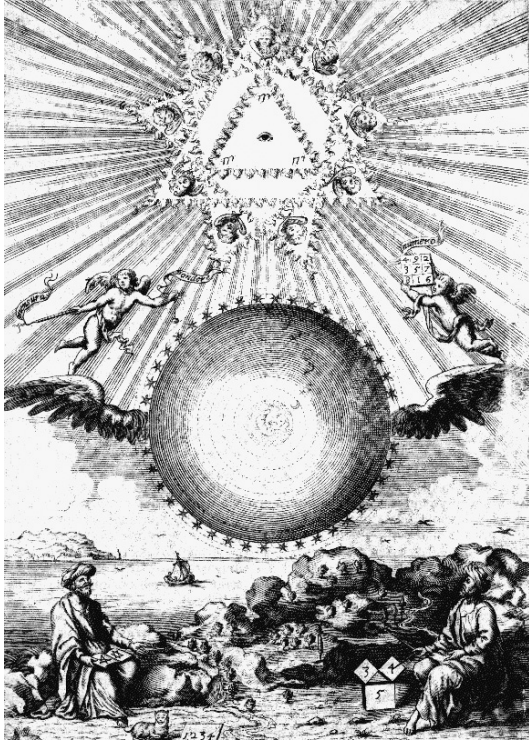


But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropp'd manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels.

John Milton, Paradise Lost. Book ii. Line 112.

- 1 The shaper can know whether something has faculties of reason. He can create minor, obvious illusions.
- 2 The shaper can influence other minds, e.g. by projecting emotions, a sense of awe or making dream-logic arguments that seem to make sense.
- 3 The shaper can cloud minds, make dreams and dreamers smarter or stupider, more or less alert, affecting personality. He can create convincing illusions. He can make a dream event or place hard to remember when visitors wake up.
- 4 The shaper can induce madness or create what appears as reason in normally mindless objects.
- 5 The shaper can manipulate minds, editing memories or personality, introducing new things like a persistent hallucination. He can embed a dreamer in an illusion.

Essence



- 1 The shaper can detect passion in an object or the surroundings, discerning its nature.
- 2 The shaper can manipulate the type of passion, for example turning lust into acquisitiveness or fear into loathing. He can trace the passion in a dream back to the dreamer who empowered it.
- 3 The shaper can weaken the passion in a dream, dissipating it and making the dream weaker. He can infuse more passion into it (from himself or other dreams) to make it stronger.
- 4 The shaper can shatter the passion in something, removing all of its stability. He can block dreamers from using their passions.
- 5 The shaper can transmute passions, creating strange new forms like a wine made of longing or a place where regret turns into joy.

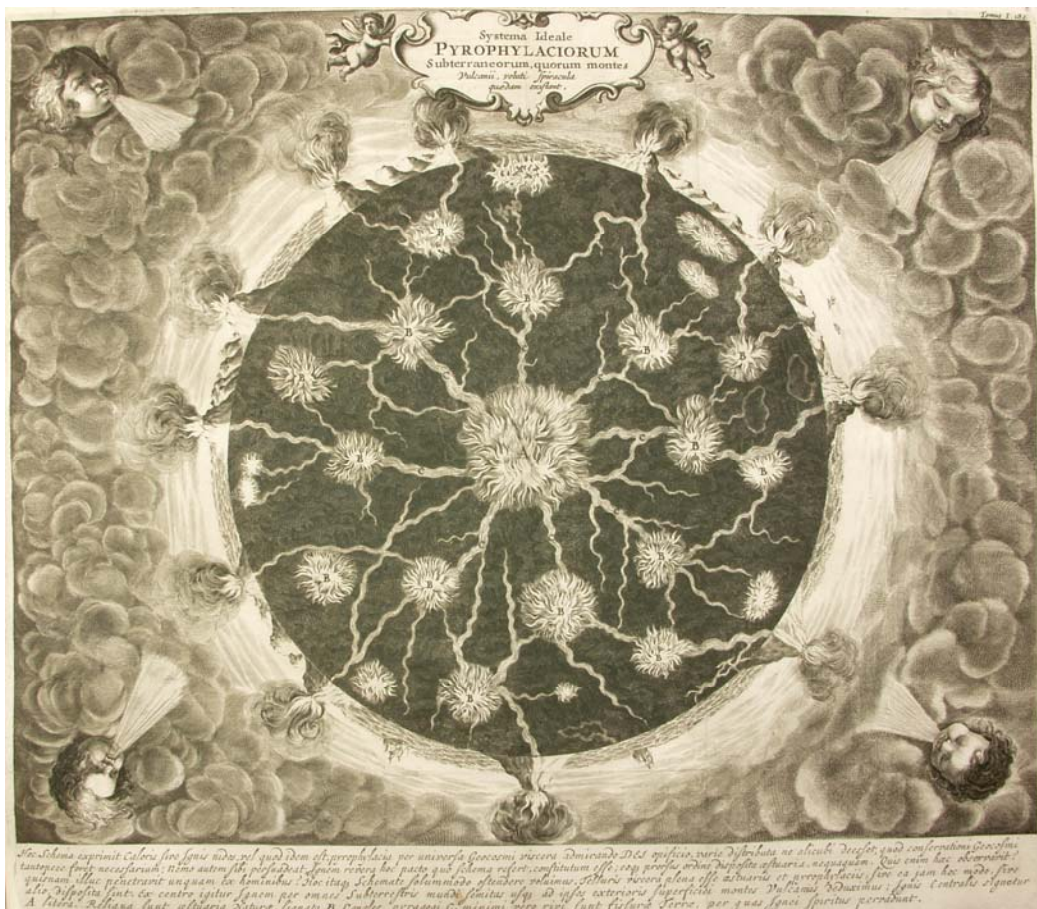
Passions fuel dreams but most human passions are too weak to create the most dramatic shapings. The insanity of love, blinding hate or the confusion of a madman can help bring a dream over to reality or turn an eidolon into a permanent being. Religious ecstasy is an exception: being enraptured by the holy is a pure emotion that cannot create false images as in dreams. But humans are fallen, and in their impure and fallible state many people experience false ecstasies that are not of divine origin. These can create the most dangerous eidolons and phantoms, things that appear to be holy and true yet are secretly driven by hidden human passions.

There is a darker way of empowering dreams: flesh and blood. They contain the animal spirits and concentrated passion of a human. By sacrificing blood a dreamer can empower dreams to a level few people can achieve with their passions alone.

To draw blood either requires a real cutting implement brought in from reality, or a successful Essence Topos roll. Each personal wound level is worth two points of spent Passion, and each wound level of another is worth one. They have to be spent immediately in a Shaping, otherwise the power will dissipate randomly. The donated blood must either be from a willing participant or increases the difficulty of the Essence roll by 2 (note that the victim can resist this with Reason – they cannot stop the cutting or draining, but they can wrest the power out of the hand of the warlock).

Eating the flesh of a dreamer works as well as draining blood, but can also give some of the desired solidity to a dreambeing. Some of the nastier dreams consume human victims to gain the power to materialize in the real world, often taking their shape and place.

Spirit



He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

Genesis 28:11-13

- 1 Discern what kind of dream the shaper finds himself in, how strong it is and its extent. Detect from where a dream or being comes.
- 2 Understand and command spirits and weak dreams. Move towards deeper or higher layers of dreaming. Wake up a non-lucid dreamer into lucid dreaming.
- 3 Move a dream or part of a dream deeper or higher in the dreaming. Attempt to "sedate" a lucid dreamer to non-lucid dreaming.

- 4 Open portals between dream and reality. Shackling somebody or something to a certain dream, or freeing them. Creating new dreams with desired properties.
- 5 Make dreams that are hard to wake up from. Create hybrids between dream and real objects. Create new kinds of dreams.

Dreamers of course wake up in their own bodies when they awake, while Cambions re-emerge at the same spot they entered the dream. However, by using Spirit it is possible to ascend into the waking world directly. This allows Cambions to take shortcuts through the dreams of others, possibly evading pursuers or traveling through easy ways. A human dreamer who uses the same method can appear in the awake world as their dream-self.

The location of emergence is not determined by dream geography as much as links to the awake world. If a dreamer is present emergence will happen near his sleeping body (human dreamers usually have trouble not emerging where they are lying, since they are by definition their closest link). Real objects can also work, but are harder to follow. Very skilled shapers have been known to emerge into the real counterpart of a dream location, but this takes much skill.

Opening portals to the real world enables dreams and reality to mingle. Real people and goods can go freely into the dreaming, not requiring Lucidity rolls to stay lucid. Dreams do not need Passion to enter reality, but will rapidly fade if not sustained. On the battlefield wardreamers open gates to let out their nightmares, who will feed on the terror and flesh of the enemy – a skilled tactician can defeat them by disengaging long enough to deny them their sustenance.

But the Quincunx of Heaven runs low, and 'tis time to close the five ports of knowledge. We are unwilling to spin out our awaking thoughts into the phantasms of sleep, which often continueth precogitations; making Cables of Cobwebs and Wildernesses of handsome Groves. Besides Hippocrates hath spoke so little and the Oneirocriticall Masters, have left such frigid Interpretations from plants that there is little encouragement to dream of Paradise it self. Nor will the sweetest delight of Gardens afford much comfort in sleep; wherein the dullness of that sense shakes hands with delectable odours; and though in the Bed of Cleopatra, can hardly with any delight raise up the Ghost of a Rose.

Sir Thomas Browne, The Garden of Cyrus or The Quincuniall, or Lozenge, or Network Plantations of the Ancients, naturally, artificially, mystically considered

Note that people who are physically present in dreams also feel the need to sleep – which means that they leave their physical body asleep in one dream, and emerge as a dreamself in a yet deeper dream. They also require food and water to sustain themselves physically if they spend much time in the dream.

Dream objects in reality cannot truly kill. But their indirect abilities are often enough: a dreamsword in reality will not kill by piercing the heart, but it forces the victim to dream and act as if he was dead with a pierced heart. Not only does this give ample opportunity to kill with mundane means, often people die of the shock or suffocate because they cannot breathe. Some dreamweapons are used to mainly immobilize people