Dreams in the Bible and in Modern English Discourse: A Shift in Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the linguistic aspect of the phenomenon of secularisation, using as example the English word "dream." Comparative analysis of the linguistic structure of the dream narratives in the Bible and in modern English texts allowed us to discern two major secularisation trends—*humanizing the divine* and *mystifying the human*. In the Bible, entering into contact with the divine while asleep is always evaluated ambivalently: one is fascinated by the great favour and fears for one's life. In modern religious discourse, the growing number of dream narratives manifest the positive evaluation of the contact with the divine as comforting. The second tendency consists in the transfer of transcendental experiences from the religious sphere into the sphere of narratives describing human mind and emotions. Here, the ambivalent experience springs up from the mysterious depths of the subconscious. At the lexical level, both tendencies result in new senses of the word "dream" as well as in important changes in the narrative structure of texts relating dream experiences. In the end, we provide a dictionary entry for the English noun "dream".

KEYWORDS

dream narratives, the Bible, religious discourse, secularisation, lexicography

Introduction

The mysterious phenomenon of dreaming has always fascinated human beings giving rise to numerous popular beliefs. Many ancient cultures regarded dreams as a means of contact with supernatural powers (Beskova, 2005; Bulkeley, 2008; Szpakowska, 2001). Dream narratives play an important role in holy texts belonging to different religious traditions. According to Bulkeley, this fact suggests that dreaming might be "a primal wellspring of religious experience" (Bulkeley, 2008, p. 6). Therefore, by studying contexts in which the noun "dream" occurs regularly in a variety of text genres, we may get an important insight into human nature with its aspirations for spiritual growth and access to transcendental experiences, as well as into cultural phenomena reflected in the process of dream interpretation.

This article presents a comparative study of dream narratives in the Bible and in modern English texts. We focus our attention on the meaning of the noun "dream" as it can be reconstructed from its context. Our approach to word meaning is grounded in the semiotic tradition laid down by L. Wittgenstein (1953/1986). It is based on the understanding of word meaning as its potential to be used in the language in a specific way. This general prinicple has been substantiated by modern corpus linguistics, which we will discuss below.

By comparing the linguistic structure of the narratives describing experiences referred to as dreams, we can trace important contextual shifts for the English word "dream" that have taken place in contemporary English speaking world. We shall argue that these shifts are indicative of the growing processes of secularisation in modern religious discourse. They also reveal gradual transfer of transcendental experiences into the secular sphere of narratives concerning human psyche.

At the end of this paper, we provide a dictionary entry for the word "dream" that represents the description of the typical contextual patterns for this word in different speech genres.

Secularisation: Decline vs. Transformation

The term *secularisation* was introduced by the German sociologist Max Weber (1905/2001) to describe the process of religious decline in the era of industrialisation and science. According to Weber's predictions, religion was doomed to disappear in the modern world giving way to rational scientific thinking. The idea of secularisation as decline in religious beliefs has been further developed by many prominent sociologists (Baar, 2021; Bruce, 2002; Ertit, 2018; Haynes, 1997; Riesebrodt, 2014; Wilson, 1966). Jeff Haynes (1997), for example, defines secularisation as "a trend whereby societies gradually move away from being focused around the sacred and a concern with the divine, leading to a diminution of religious power and authority" (p. 713). For Steve Bruce (2002), this term means "a decline in the extent to which people engage in religious practices […] and conduct other aspects of their lives in a manner informed by beliefs" (p. 3).

Our post-modern era, however, has seen the resurgence of different religious movements (Riesebrodt, 2014), as well as a new tendency to embrace atheistic spirituality as a deep wonderment at the awesome universe which "will always remain at least partly opaque to understanding" (Shapiro, 2018, p. 199; see also Coleman et al., 2013). Industrialisation and modernisation, therefore, have not brought with them the predicted decline, but rather engendered new forms of experiencing transcendence. In our opinion, this fact suggests that the secularisation thesis as it was forwarded by Weber and his followers should be reconsidered in favour of a more flexible approach.

This understanding of secularisation as decline was contested long ago by David Martin who insisted that secularisation was not "necessarily antireligious", but rather presented "Christian attempts to come to terms with the advent of the supremacy of science and reason" (as cited in Künkler, 2019, p. 906). This approach is radically different as it presupposes that secularisation has been taking place within the system of religious beliefs and practices themselves as a means of adaptation to new social conditions. As such, it leads to the gradual transformation of traditional religious beliefs, rather than their decline and disappearance. For example, Martin (2014) considers Pentecostalism—an influential current in modern Christianity, whose members speak in tongues and believe in miracles—an example of these "alternative modes of secularisation and alternative modes of modernisation" (p. 2).

Today, Martin's views are supported by many scholars (Arthur, 2006; Casanova, 2007; Islam, 2020; Maciak, 2019; Taylor, 2007; Uggla, 2017). For Didarul Islam (2020), for example, secularisation is "a process of *religious change* [emphasis added] instead of hard separation between religion and politics" (p. 140) and "should be understood as establishment of 'active freedom' of religion" (p. 135). Bengt Uggla (2017), on the other hand, speaks about "*internal* Christian *secularisation*" [emphasis added] that began in the reform movements of the late Middle Ages and "had consciously 'made spiritual' the worldly, as well as having brought religious life out of the monasteries into the secular world" (p. 59). Writing about secularisation, Jose Casanova (2007) also refers to "diverse patterns of differentiation and fusion of the religious and the secular" (p. 104).

In the post-modern era, when different forms of spirituality still flourish in social and private lives, it seems to be more appropriate to consider *secularisation a multi-directional process of the transformation of religious beliefs and practices under the influence of modern humanistic values*. This process opens up new possibilities to experience transcendence by erasing the limits between the sacred and the secular and creating new patterns of their interaction in different types of discourse.

The process of secularisation has a significant impact at the level of linguistic structures. On the one hand, it creates new patterns of evaluation in the religious discourse, producing contextual shifts and, therefore, shifts in word meanings. On the other hand, older patterns of the verbal representation of transcendental experiences are transformed and transferred into non-religious genres. All this results in changes in the sense structure of certain words, as well as in the redistribution of the senses across different speech genres.

In this article, we are going to explore certain aspects of this process. As an example, we are using the case study of the English word "dream". By comparing dream narratives in the English Bible with modern dream accounts in the religious and secular discourse, we will be able to establish shifts that have taken place in the sense structure of this word over time. This, in turn, will help us to pin down the main directions of the secularisation process as it is reflected in the English language.

Theoretical Framework and Method

With the advent of corpus linguistics, the idea that the meaning of a word is constructed through context rather than exists in isolation has been gaining in popularity (Rundell, 2018; see also Harris & Hutton, 2007). Vaclav Brezina (2018), for example, suggests that "word meanings can best be investigated through the analysis of repeated linguistic patterns in corpora". It means that word senses can be distinguished by establishing typical collocational patterns of the word in context.

Unfortunately, this important theoretical premise has not contributed much to the improvement of the quality of dictionary entries in practice. They still lack in systematicity and often provide controversial examples (for a more detailed discussion see Smirnova, 2016a, 2021). This might be due to the lack of coherent methodology that allows to classify contextual patterns in a systematic way. A possible solution to this problem might be taking into account evaluation as the core constituent of verbal meaning (Tolochin, 2014).

The idea that the meaning of a sign results from the interaction of a living organism with its environment was initially introduced by Thure von Uexküll (1986). According to the author, meaning is determined by the needs of the organism that are projected onto the outer world, indicating possibility/impossibility of their satisfaction. Jordan Zlatev (2003) develops this idea further. For him, meaning as a relation between the organism and its environment is determined by the *value* of the environment for the organism. Therefore, language as a sign system that conveys meaning represents a means of need satisfaction for human beings and is intrinsically evaluative in nature (Tolochin, 2012, 2014). Each word has its evaluative potential that is represented by the basic features of human experience associated with this particular linguistic form. It is evaluation that determines the way words function in texts, creating stable collocational patterns that refer to similar categories of experience (Lukianova, 2004).

By analysing the evaluative characteristics of lexical markers, i.e., lexical items that frequently co-occur with the given word in a particular type of context, we can distinguish stable evaluative patterns of the word usage that provide a reliable basis for sense distinction.

Also, the novelty of our method consists in the broad understanding of the term *context*. We believe that the function of the word is fully revealed only in the narrative as a structurally and functionally coherent unit and cannot be studied at the level of a single sentence. Therefore, the elaboration of the word's sense structure implies the classification of narratives that contain the word in question based on the type of problem these texts deal with. The word "dream" presents a very convenient object

of study in this respect because dream narratives are usually short and can be easily analyzed in their integrity. This approach has been successfully applied to a number of lexical items (Smirnova, 2016a, 2016b, 2021; Smirnova & Tolochin, 2018; Tkalich & Tolochin, 2018; Vlasova & Tolochin, 2019).

One of the main advantages of our method, as we shall try to demonstrate further in this paper, is that not only does it allow to create a systematic representation of the word's sense structure, but it also reveals certain cultural phenomena as they are encoded in language. The linguistic sign as a vehicle of cultural information is sensitive to major shifts in value judgements. New evaluative patterns create new word senses, whereas the deconstruction of older evaluative patterns brings forth changes in the status of already existing ones.

In the present study, we have analyzed all the contexts for the word "dream" in the King James Version of the Bible[1] (112 tokens—89 nouns, 23 verbs), as well as 615 uses of the word "dream" in contemporary texts (540 nouns, 40 verbs, 35 adjectives)[2]. A 100 random sample containing 148 tokens was extracted from the Corpus of Contemporary American English[3] (Davies, 2008–); 141 additional texts containing 467 tokens were extracted in a more targeted way, using key words from different websites and forums, mainly Trusting-in-Jesus[4] (a Christian website that "does not promote the opinions or beliefs of any particular Christian denomination"), Dream Forum[5] and Google Books, a digital database of books and magazines.

Dreams in the Bible

Dream narratives in the Bible have been thoroughly studied by historians of religion, mainly in the context of source criticism as a means of dating the texts and establishing their authorship (Gnuse, 2000; Grossman, 2016; Richter, 1963). It is generally agreed that such narratives function as a literary technique in the Bible rather than factual accounts of real psychological experiences (Ehrlich, 1953; Husser, 1999; Flannery-Dailey, 2004). Be that as it may, biblical dream reports offer an important insight into the significance of dreaming in the Christian religious tradition. Therefore, by studying the word "dream" in the Bible we can discern major interpretative models which were embedded in the Christian culture long ago and were traditionally used as scripts for text production in the English religious discourse.

Attempts have been made to create a classification of dream narratives in ancient religious texts. A widely accepted typology was proposed by Leo Oppenheim (1956). He divided such narratives into two groups: message dreams and symbolic

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[1]   https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org

[2]   For reasons of space, we provide a dictionary entry only for the noun "dream". However, most of the senses have a corresponding homonymous verb and adjective.

[3]   https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/

[4]   https://www.trusting-in-jesus.com

[5]   https://dreamforum.net

dreams. According to the author, message dreams are vocal communications from God containing direct instructions, whereas symbolic dreams represent sophisticated visual imagery that requires competent interpretation.

This distinction was applied to the analysis of biblical dream accounts by Robert Gnuse (2000) and Frances Flannery-Dailey (2004). Flannery-Dailey points out that there is only one dream that does not fit neatly into Oppenheim's categories—Jacob's dream of the ladder (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Gen. 28:10–18), for it is both vocal and visual. She attributes it to both categories. Laura Quick (2018), on the contrary, argues that it is a typical message dream.

This is not the only problem with this classification, however. Symbolic dreams also convey messages. Pharaoh's dreams (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Gen. 41), for example, that are considered symbolic "are a *message* [emphasis added] from God, informing him of events about to unfold" (Grossman, 2016, p. 726). From the functional point of view, therefore, this classification seems tautological and does not work.

The analysis of key lexical markers that accompany the word "dream" in the King James Bible suggests that there exist three patterns of this word's usage in the Holy Scripture. These patterns differ by their evaluative characteristics and, therefore, represent three different senses of the word "dream".

Archetypal Dreams

The first contextual pattern (6 tokens—5 Nouns, 1 Verb—in 4 extracts) manifests itself in the following verses of the King James Bible (1769/2017): Abimelech's dream (Gen. 20:1–8), Jacob's dream about the ladder (Gen. 28:10–18), Laban's dream (Gen. 31:24, 29) and Solomon's dream (1 Kings 3:5–15). All these narratives have two important features in common. First of all, the dreamer enters into direct contact with God: **God came to** *Abimelech in a dream by night* (Gen. 20:3); *he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven* [...] **the LORD stood above it** (Gen. 28:12–13); **God came to** *Laban the Syrian in a dream by night* (Gen. 31:24); **the LORD appeared to** *Solomon in a* dream by night (1 Kings 3:5).

Second, entering into contact with God while asleep is perceived as an ambivalent experience. On the one hand, it raises fear for one's life which is expressed in the text either through the words referencing extreme fear: *the men were **sore afraid*** (Gen. 20:8); *he was **afraid**, and said, How **dreadful** is this place*! (Gen. 28:17) or through the description of a ritual as an act of propitiation: *Jacob* [...] *took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it* (Gen. 28:18); *Solomon* [...] *stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants* (1 Kings 3:15). On the other hand, God's appearance in a dream is a sign of great favour to the dreamer: *I know that thou didst this in **the integrity of thy heart**; for **I also withheld thee from sinning** against me* (Gen. 20:6); *in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be **blessed*** (Gen. 28:14); *God said, **Ask what I shall give thee*** (1 Kings 3:5).

Only Laban's dream does not contain any explicit lexical markers indicating ambivalence. However, it can be deduced from the way the events unfold that the dream must have been a powerful experience for Laban.

> (a) *It is **in the power of my hand to do you hurt**: but **the God of your father** spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.* (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Gen. 31:29)

The God that communicates to Laban is not *his* God, but belongs to another religious tradition—that of Jacob's father (a). Nevertheless, Laban refrains from vengeance and lets Jacob go with his daughters and the cattle definitely fearing for his life if he does not respect the warning.

The evaluative pattern present in these extracts corresponds to the category of word senses that we defined in our previous articles as the ***archetype***[6]: "A separate word sense common to words with an ambivalent integral category that manifests itself in texts describing irresolvable psychological conflicts related to the experience of interaction with inconceivable supernatural forces" (Smirnova & Tolochin, 2018, p. 160; see also Smirnova, 2021). This type of word sense represents the legacy of the primordial human mind with its low levels of analyticity and non-differentiation of certain contexts.

The world of dream was perceived by the ancients as another mode of reality. Dreaming in this respect was regarded as a borderline experience that allowed entering into contact with the supernatural forces (Bulkeley, 2008). As we can see, this ancient narrative pattern found its way to the Bible where the word "dream" in a number of cases is used to describe *a means of direct contact with God while asleep, which is simultaneously desirable and terrifying for the dreamer*. It must be no coincidence that the archetypal "dream" appears only in the oldest books of the Bible.

Prophetic Dreams

The second contextual pattern (96 tokens—77 Nouns, 19 Verbs—in 24 extracts) manifests itself in Jacob's dream (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Gen. 31:10–11), Joseph's dreams (Gen. 37:5–11; 42:8–9), the butler and baker's dream (Gen. 40:5–11), Pharaoh's dreams (Gen. 41), the dream of Gideon's victory (Judg. 7:13–15), Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (Dan. 2:1–9, 26–47; 4:4–9, 19), Daniel's dream (Dan. 7:1–28), Joseph's dreams (Matt. 1:19–20; 2:12–14; 2:19–22), the dream of Pilate's wife (Matt. 27:19–24), as well as general mentions of dreams (Num. 12:5–8; Deut. 13:1–1; 1 Sam. 1:28–6; Job 7:13–14; 33:14-20; Dan. 1:17; 5:12; Joel 3:28–31; Jer. 23:25–32; Zech. 10:2; Acts 2:16–17).

In these contexts the word "dream" stands for a mediated message from God received while asleep and containing specific instructions. The message might

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[6]   For a detailed discussion of this term and its relation to analytical psychology developed by C.G. Jung and his followers see Smirnova & Tolochin, 2018.

be visual (Gen. 40:5–11), vocal (Matt. 2:12), or both (Matt. 1:20). What is important is the absence of direct contact with God, which results in a less intense experience than the archetypal "dream".

> (b) *And the king said unto them, I have* **dreamed a dream**, *and* **my spirit was troubled** *to know the dream* (Dan. 2:3). *Then the king Nebuchadnezzar* **fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel**, *and commanded that they should* **offer an oblation and sweet odours unto** *him.* (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Dan. 2:46)

Such dream narratives are often introduced by the verbal sequence *I dreamed a dream* (b), in contrast to *God came/appeared to* […] *in a dream* in the archetypal contexts. The divine source of this experience is not explicitly mentioned in the beginning and is revealed in the process of interpretation by the elligible person. Fear for one's life gives way to confusion at the impossibility of making sense of the experience: compare *my spirit was* **troubled** (b) vs. **sore afraid** (Gen. 20:8) or **dreadful** (Gen. 28:17). The ritualized behaviour—*worshipped, offer an oblation and sweet odours* (b)—is directed at the interpreter of the dream who solves the king's problem. Therefore, it is not indicative of the ambivalent transcendental feeling of contact with the divine, but rather parallels the mundane sense of the word "awe" as high esteem and fear of the supreme authority (Smirnova, 2021).

All the supernatural dreams in the Bible fall into two major categories (archetypal vs. prophetic) based on the type of contact with God (direct vs. mediated), which creates a specific evaluative pattern (intense transcendental ambivalence vs. moderate mundane ambivalence).

Secular Dreams

The last type of context for the word "dream" (10 tokens—7 Nouns, 3 Verbs—in 7 extracts) is represented in the following verses: Ps. 73:16–20, Ps. 126:1–3, Job 20:4–8, Eccles. 5:2–3, Eccles.5:5–7, Isa. 29:7–8, Jer. 29:8–9 (King James Bible, 1769/2017). We call these dreams secular because the source of the experience defined by the word "dream" in these contexts is not supernatural. In the Bible, these are mostly general mentions of dreams in a simile.

> (c) *That the triumphing of the wicked is* **short**, *and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment* […] *He shall* **fly away as a dream**, *and shall not be found: yea, he shall be* **chased away as a vision of the night**. (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Job 20:5, 8)

Here, the word "dream" stands for a fleeting illusory moment, a deceptive image produced by one's imagination. In the Bible, this type of dream is considered negative as a symbol of self-deception and is opposed to both types of supernatural dreams that are regarded as a source of truthful knowledge.

Dreams in Modern English Culture and Language

According to Russian psychologists D. G. Trunov and M. A. Vodenikova (2012), the process of dream interpretation in modern culture is conducted within one of the three major contextual frameworks: metaphysical, scientific, and psychological. In the scientific model, the word "dream" is used as a term to define specific type of brain activity while asleep. It is not normally used by lay people in this sense with respect to their own personal experiences, therefore, we are not going to discuss this model here.

The metaphysical model of dream interpretation goes back to ancient religious practices. Within this framework, dreams are considered a means of communication with transcendental powers. The psychological model of dream interpretation, on the other hand, is rooted in various psychoanalytic practices that regard dreams as purely psychic entities revealing information about the unconscious mind of the dreamer.

In this article we are going to adopt the same distinction, however, using slightly different terms. *Metaphysics* is usually defined as "the study of what is outside objective experience" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). This term is too general, in our opinion, and may englobe certain types of experience that are transcendental and, therefore, incomprehensible and mysterious without, at the same time, being attributed to an otherworldly source (see, for example, the discussion of atheistic spirituality in Shapiro, 2018). The word "psychological", on the other hand, is too narrow and might misleadingly create an impression that this model of dream interpretation is relevant only to the psychological and psychoanalytical discourse, whereas it can be found in the religious texts as well.

Taking into account these considerations, we suggest distinguishing between the *supernatural* and the *symbolic* interpretative models. The word "supernatural" reflects more precisely the origin of the experience, which in this model results from the interaction with the otherworldly supernatural powers. As for the word "symbolic", it underlines the fact that whinin this model elements of the dream are considered to be symbols created by the psyche.

It should be kept in mind that these models do not correspond exactly to a particular type of discourse. Nowadays, the supernatural model of interpretation is still widely present in religious texts, whereas symbolic interpretative model is more common in secular speech genres. Both of them can be found in fiction.

This distinction in the overall attitude to dream interpretation leads to significantly different evaluative patterns established by the word "dream" in these two types of interpretive models. Therefore, we suggest considering this functional difference a basis for differentiation between two main senses of the word "dream".

The Word "Dream" in the Supernatural Interpretative Model. Sense 1 and its Derivatives

As already mentioned, dreams are often interpreted in modern religious texts as transcendental experiences of entering into contact with the supernatural. Four typical evaluative patterns can be distinguished within this major interpretative

framework. They are determined by two factors: the nature of contact (direct vs. mediated) and the general disposition of the force in question towards human beings (benevolent vs. malevolent).

Archetypal Dreams (Sense 1)

> (d) *I've had* **dreams** *where I* **encounter God**. *The* **dreams** *never are the same. All* **encounters serve different functions**. *In one* **dream God appears as a bright light, like entering the surface of the sun**. *He is* **unapproachable, only witnessed from a distance**. *In the* **dream** *I have a* **strong desire to draw closer**, *but there is also* **fear**, *and* **awe**. *In the end I simply* **collapse** *and* **declare that I am not worthy**. (What Happens, n.d.)

We have already discussed archetypal dreams in the Bible. In example (d), we find the same contextual pattern: direct encounter with the supernatural agent[7] triggers intense ambivalent emotional reaction. "A strong desire to draw closer" is counterbalanced by "unapproachability" and "fear". The divine power is perceived as both beneficial (at a certain distance) and destructive (if the safe distance is violated). This transcendental experience is so intense that it is almost unbearable for the dreamer ("I simply collapse").

As we can see, the ancient archetypal model has survived throughout the centuries. The evaluative potential of the word "dream" manifests itself to the full extent here. Therefore, we suggest considering this type of use the first main sense of the word in question (31 tokens—26 Nouns, 5 Verbs, 0 Adjectives—in 16 texts[8]).

Comforting Supernatural Dreams (Sense 1a)

> (e) *I had the following* **dream** *about God* […] **I was praying for guidance** [...] *The next morning I had this* **dream** *that* **God and I were sitting on a spot under a familiar tree** [...] *He was sitting closest to the tree, in a kneeling position wearing a white robe. I was sitting right next to Him* […] *I could feel* **the warmth of the sunlight softly kissing my skin**. **I've never felt so peaceful, calm, and Joyful and happy!** *God was busy telling me what I should write down, while* **making jokes and giggling** *in between* […] *I have never had any* **dream** *like this* **where God was present and talking to me**, *let alone* **the calm and happiness within me in my dream**. *I'm not sure what this means for me or* **what message I need to understand**, *but* **I know that God heard my prayers**, *and* **this was His way of getting close to me**. (Dreams About God, n.d.)

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[7]   The supernatural agent in the Christian tradition is mostly represented by God, Jesus or an angel. The words "God", "Jesus", and "angel" are ambivalent in the Bible. Therefore, they are still used in modern religious discourse as key elements of narratives that describe ambivalent archetypal experiences (for the detailed discussion of the word "angel" and its use in the Bible and in modern English discourse, see Smirnova & Tolochin, 2018).

[8]   Certain texts feature several different senses of the word "dream". Therefore, the total number of texts (241) is slightly inferiour to the sum of the texts mentioned for each particular sense (251).

(f) *I have been having **dreams** of the end times in the same sequence every night* [...] *In the **dreams**, I feel as if I must be hush hush, but **an angel did come to me back** when I was 19 **when I was not doing so well**. I was told, «be ready we are coming back for you and your family» and to «be ready when the times come»; **this angel took the form of my friend's voice so I would not be alarmed** [...].* (Prophetic Dreams and Visions, n.d.)

Here again, the dream is perceived as a means of entering into direct contact with the supernatural agent. In (e), the dreamer "prays for guidance" and God answers by coming to him/ her in the dream—"this was His way of getting close to me". In (f), the dreamer receives angelic visitations—"an angel did come to me back". The emotional reaction to the encounter with the supernatural force is radically different, however. God is represented as a fatherly figure (sitting next to the dreamer "under a familiar tree", "wearing a white robe", "making jokes and giggling") that emanates peace and joy; whereas the angel takes the form of a friend's voice. The experience is very intense—"I've never felt so peaceful, calm, and Joyful and happy!"—but, instead of disturbing the dreamer, it provides a sense of comfort and security.

This usage pattern has not been found in the Bible. In contrast, it is much more frequent in modern religious texts than the ambivalent archetypal Dream A. This tendency of representing the divine as humane, approachable, and easily comprehensible (God as loving and caring father, angel as a protective friend) might be one of the directions that secularisation processes take in modern English speaking world.

We consider this type of use a metonymical extension of Sense 1 for the reason that only positive aspects of the evaluative potential of the word "dream" reveal themselves in this type of context (44 tokens—40 Nouns, 4 Verbs, 0 Adjectives—in 22 texts).

Dreams as Demon Attacks (Sense 1b)

(g) **False dreams are sent to create fear and distrust. Dreams** *of losing a job or of your spouse kissing your boss could be **sent from the enemy. Dreams** are **an effective way for unclean spirits to get into your head** […] Here are some ways to **identify the interaction of demons in your environment**, and indicators of **false dreams created by demons. This is not about false dreams of the mind**. We are talking about **supernatural dreams sent by demons** [...]* (Avila, 2013, p. 1)

The direct contact with the supernatural (dream as an "effective way for unclean spirits to get into your head") is described here in purely negative terms. It creates "fear", "distrust" and is "sent from the enemy". Dreaming is perceived as a vulnerable state of mind that subjects one to demon attacks. Interestingly, the author attributes seemingly ordinary dreams (dreams of losing a job, for example) to this category and not only those that are typically regarded as nightmares. The distinction is

not based solely on the dream contents (these are not dreams about demons), but rather on their function—evil interference in human psyche. We consider this type of usage another metonymical extension (Sense 1b) where the word "dream" reveals only negative aspects of human experience (80 tokens—70 Nouns, 1 Verb, 9 Adjectives—in 28 texts).

Prophetic Dreams (Sense 1c)

> (h) *I had **a vision dream**. **Jesus showed me** a barren land. **Jesus showed me** a land that was sprouting with green plants. **The message communicated**, and **I had an understanding of the dream**: Disease, Famine, war, and death is on its way, but those who have a higher purpose in their life […] will be saved.* (Prophetic Dreams and Visions, n.d.)

In example (h), there is no direct contact with the divine. The dream is perceived as a mediated message from God (here, from Jesus—"Jesus showed me") that requires interpretation. As we remember, in the Bible the interpretation of such dreams is always made by the elligible person (a prophet). Here, the meaning of the dream is communicated directly to the dreamer ("I had an understanding of the dream"). This important difference in the narrative structure might also be rooted in the secularisation tendency. The divine is perceived to be more accessible to ordinary people.

Prophetic dreams as messages from God may retain a certain ambivalence. It is less intense, however, which allows us to conclude that this type of usage represents another evaluative pattern. We consider it Sense 1c (207 tokens—186 Nouns, 13 Verbs, 8 Adjectives—in 51 texts).

The Word "Dream" in the Symbolic Interpretative Model.
Sense 2 and its Derivatives
In the secular symbolic framework, dreams are regarded as products of human psyche. Therefore, they are either dismissed as insignificant or interpreted as revealing the hidden potential of the human subconscious.

Sense 2

> (i) *Oh! It was a **dream**. Darn it. I, uh, had a great time.* (COCA, 2000, MOV 102 Dalmatians)

> (j) *Thank God! Thank, God! It was just a **dream**! It's just a dream! What's going on? **A nightmare, but it was so real**... so, so vivid.* (COCA, 2014, MOV A Bit of Bad Luck)

> (k) *In the **dream** I am **standing on the rim of a volcano crater** and I can see… some kind of writing but I can't read it however I sense that the **firey light**

> *cast by the volcano when it erupts is **going to illuminate the letters/words**. In the **dream** the **volcano is about to erupt**... Now all day I have been **feeling quite weird**. Is this […] a message from my unconscious/higher self […]?* (Dream Forum, n.d.)

In examples (i)–(k), the word "dream" is used to refer to an uncontrollable imaginary experience one has while asleep. It produces a strong emotinal impact on the dreamer, which is either positive ("I had a great time" [i]) or negative ("Thank, God! It was just a **dream**!" [j]). In most cases, dream narratives of this type can be easily attributed to one of the two evaluative categories (positive or negative). We suggest calling this phenomenon *the split ambivalence*: the ambivalent evaluative potential of the word reveals its different aspects in different texts alternating between positive and negative evaluative patterns within the scope of one word sense (93 tokens—87 Nouns, 3 Verbs, 3 Adjectivess—in 53 texts).

We have found, however, a few examples of ambivalent secular dream narratives. In (k), the dreamer faces a mighty natural phenomenon—a volcano eruption. In the Bible, such natural phenomena are always associated with God's power; they terrify and fascinate. In this text, however, there are no religious attributes. The writing on the rim of the volcano might evoke the writing on the wall (King James Bible, 1769/2017, Dan. 5:25); but the dreamer makes no explicit connection to the Bible text. The dream itself is interpreted within the symbolic framework as a "message from my unconscious/higher self".

Cases of secular ambivalent dreams are rare (30 tokens—30 Nouns, 0 Verbs, 0 Adjectives—in 6 texts). Therefore, we do not consider this type of usage a separate sense of the word "dream". Nevertheless, these are interesting examples because they might mark another secularisation tendency: a shift of ambivalent transcendental experience from the religious to the secular discourse. Here, the transcendental experience is not rooted in the contact with the divine, but springs up from the depths of the human subconscious mind.

Intuitive Dreams (Sense 2a)

(l) *This **dream** can also be **prophetic**.—It may be that in your **dream** state **you are putting together clues of the infidelity that may have slipped by your conscious mind**. Your partner may indeed be cheating.* (COCA iWeb, n.d., Marriage Dream Meaning and Interpretations)

Another secularisation tendency manifests itself in what we call intuitive dreams. Such dreams reveal important information about the present or the future and are often called "prophetic" (l). In contrast to the supernatural framework, this revelatory experience is attributed to the mysterious functioning of the subconscious mind ("you are putting together clues […] that may have slipped by your conscious mind") and not to the supernatural interference. This type of dream narrative might have originated

under the influence of scientific theories of dream interpretation as an attempt to reconcile the spiritual and the material approaches (70 tokens—59 Nouns, 10 Verbs, 1 Adjective—in 27 texts).

Social Dreams (sense 2b)

(m) *Lorena came to the U.S. at the age of 18* **to fulfill a dream**. (COCA, 1993, SPOK ABC_20/20)

Example (m) provides a metonymical extension of the word "dream" in the social sphere. Here, it is not related to the experience one has while asleep, but rather designates a highly desired goal to be attained. The meaning shifts, therefore, from the pleasant uncontrollable state (sense 2 positive) to the consciously defined desirable goal (60 tokens—42 Nouns, 4 Verbs, 14 Ajectives—in 48 texts).

Discussion

The comparative analysis of dream narratives in the Bible and in English allows us to discern two major secularisation trends in how members of the English speaking world use this word in discourse—*humanizing the divine* and *mystifying the human*. They are produced by changes in the value of one of the following variables in the context—*source* (supernatural vs. subconscious) and *evaluation* (ambivalent vs. positive/negative).

As we have seen, dreams in the Bible, when not divinely inspired, are perceived to be worthless and illusory; such contexts are less frequent than the contexts in which dreams convey an archetypal or a prophetic experience. Modern contexts demonstrate significant changes in the structure of the senses and their relative frequency.

Humanizing the divine (supernatural positive). In such contexts, the source of the experience is supernatural—dreaming is regarded as a means of entering into contact with the divine. The nature of this contact, however, is evaluated positively as peaceful and comforting. This shift in evaluation might have been caused by the necessity for the religious discourse to adapt to the humanistic values of modern society. As a result, the divine is perceived to be more humane and approachable by ordinary people (God as a loving father, angel as a protective friend). At the lexical level, this tendency can be traced through the metonymical shift (ambivalent → positive) which results in a new sense of the word "dream" in the supernatural interpretative model (2a). It also manifests itself in the new narrative structure for prophetic dreams—the interpretation is given directly to the dreamer without recourse to the elligible interpreter.

Mystifying the human (subconscious ambivalent). This tendency is marked by the transfer of transcendental experiences from the religious discourse into texts that deal with human mind and emotions. In such contexts, transcendental experiences are no longer perceived as resulting from the contact with the divine, but rather as revealing

the unfathomable potential of the human subconscious mind. The dreamer is terrified and fascinated by the emotional power that their subconscious mind wields. However, secular ambivalent dreams are scarce in our sample. Therefore, we do not consider such cases as representing a separate sense of the word "dream". This pattern of word usage needs further investigation. The overall tendency to mystify the human mind also manifests itself in the shift from prophetic to intuitive dreams. The fact that certain dreams reveal important information about the present or the future is no longer regarded as the result of the divine communication. Such dreams are attributed to the mysterious capacity of the human mind to process information subconsciously. This shift might have occurred under the influence of the scientific reasoning which tries to explain different mysterious phenomena without recourse to the supernatural. We have also observed that in modern contexts dreams are not treated as worthless experiences that are self-deceptive because they are not divinely inspired, the usage which we have idnetified in the Bible.

This study opens up new possibilities for further research. First of all, modern religious discourse should be further studied in order to discern new linguistic patterns that underlie the secularisation process affecting how different languages construct contexts addressing the relation to the divine. The scope of the lexical items in the English language that are undergoing shifts in their meanings is to be established.

Second, the phenomenon of the secularisation of the archetypal experience, consisiting in its transfer from the supernatural realm to the natural sphere of narratives about the human mind and emotions, is to be studied further. It should be clarified what speech genres are typical for such narratives and what linguistic mechanisms underlie this transfer.

Conclusion

The study of typical collocational patterns for the word "dream" has revealed a number of important contextual shifts that have been taking place in modern English speaking world under the influence of humanistic values and scientific thinking. These shifts are indicative of two major secularisation trends—the humanisation of the religious discourse and the transfer of the typically religious transcendental experience into the secular sphere of narratives concerning human psyche.

It is important to underline that religious discourse is still alive and flourishing in modern English culture. Therefore, speaking of secularisation, it is more productive to consider this process as a transformation, rather than extinction, which manifests itself in the mutual penetration of the religious and the secular. "Humanising the divine" and "mystifying the human" are two distinct vectors of influence that religious and non-religious types of discourse exert on one another.

These findings demonstrate that the study of linguistic phenomena may shed new light on different social processes as they are encoded in language. Secularisation manifests itself not only at the macro level of the narrative structure, but goes deeper into the semantic level of word senses. Therefore, a further study of this process, using linguistic tools of analysis seems promising.

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Appendix
Sense Structure of the Noun ''Dream'' in Modern English

Dream 1 (archetypal): entering into direct contact with the divine while asleep which fills one simultaneously with the sense of overwhelming joy and terror;

1a (positive): a comforting encounter with the divine while aslee producing a sense of peace and total tranquillity;
1b (negative): a vulnerable state of mind occurring while asleep that subjects one to the evil supernatural presence;
1c (prophetic): a divine message with specific instructions received while being asleep;

Dream 2 (secular): an imaginary experience one has while asleep and over which one has no control; it captivates the senses and produces a strong emotional impact;

2a (intuitive): an imaginary experience one has while asleep revealing something important about real life;
2b (social): a highly desired goal requiring a lot of effort to achieve it.