



Night Journeys: The Power of Dreams in Transatlantic Quaker Culture

Carla Gerona

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Early modern Quakers looked to their dreams to gain spiritual insight and developed a potent system of dreamwork that acted simultaneously as a device for gaining and retaining authority and as a democratizing force. *Night Journeys* recounts how Quakers on both sides of the Atlantic turned their sleeping experiences into powerful stories that advanced a more inclusive--but still imperial--vision of colonial and Revolutionary America.

Quakers did not keep their dreams to themselves. On the American mainland, Caribbean plantations, and in the British Isles, Quakers were competing to shape their imperial culture when they circulated dreams beyond meetinghouse walls and influenced larger transatlantic movements for reform.

Covering a broad time span that begins with the English civil war and ends with the creation of the American republic, Carla Gerona argues that dreams provided Quakers with mental maps to influence the values of their emerging colonial society, usually, though not exclusively, in progressive ways. Night visions, as Quakers often termed their dreams, contributed to social and cultural changes such as the abolition of slavery and religious reform. Simultaneously, dreams helped Quakers define and delineate their mission in America and the world, fostering innovative concepts of individuality, community, nation, and empire.

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