SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF SLEEP AND DREAMS

A Thesis Presented for the Degree of Master of Arts

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Approved by
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Shakespeare's Treatment of Sleep and Dreams

Introduction

"There are a kind of men so loose of soul, That in their sleep will mutter their affairs."
Othello, III, 3

"If I may trust the flattering trick of sleep My dreams presage some joyful news at hand; I dreamt my lady came and found me dead."
Romeo and Juliet, V, 1

"To die, to sleep; To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub For in that sleep of death what dreams may come."
Hamlet, III, 1

"The sons of Edward sleep in Abraham's bosom, And Anne my wife hath bid the world good night."
Richard III, IV, 3

"Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! Macbeth does murder sleep'-- the innocent sleep, Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care."
Macbeth, II, 2

"We are such stuff As dreams are made on: and our little life Is rounded with a sleep"
The Tempest, IV, 1

"Peaceful night, the tomb where grief should sleep"
Pericles, I, 2

"Sleep that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye Steal me awhile" A Midsummer Night's Dream, III, 2

"Or I am mad, or else this is a dream. If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep."
Twelfth Night, IV, 1

"It seems to me that yet we sleep, we dream And by the way let us recount our dreams."
A Midsummer Night's Dream, IV, 1

Sleep has been so long recognized as a mystery that it seems to have been almost forgotten except by the poet and the psychologist. Great natural phenomena, when they occur repeatedly and uniformly, customarily excite less curiosity
than do less frequent, trivial occurrences. Thus we take for granted such things as the freezing of water, and the change of seasons. It takes some event such as collision of two automobiles, a derailed electric car or a decrease in the price of a well-known stock to arouse local excitement which eventually may appear in a syndicated news column.

It is true that everyone sleeps, and scarcely anyone gives it a thought, unless he has disturbing dreams or is kept from sleeping by some annoyance. With body alive, and senses closed "we become a different self, that we may know the self we are." Sleep often opens the door of the soul to things unpleasant. We cannot protect ourselves while asleep as we can while awake, for our mind runs in grooves not laid by us.

Savages and primitive men feared sleep. They thought that the soul, that dwarf who was thought to exist inside each of us, went out of the body, to roam in space or revel with demons. Even yet some savages are reported to be afraid to awaken a sleeper lest the soul be frightened and never return. The resemblance between sleep and death may be partly responsible for the superstitions of men and for the analogies of the poets.

Literature has long portrayed sleep with a shelter seeking aspect--a foretaste of eternal bliss--or cold final slumber.
In Shakespeare we find:

"If I do wake, some planet strike me down,
That I may slumber in eternal sleep."
Titus Andronicus, II, 4

"When I am forgotten as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble"
Henry VIII, III, 2

"Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."
Macbeth, III, 2

"And sleep in peace, slain in your country's wars"
Titus Andronicus, I, 1

"The mortal worm might make the sleep eternal."
Henry VI, part 2, III, 2

"O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her!"
Cymbeline, II, 2

"Death counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep."
Midsummer Night's Dream, III, 2

"Is he so hasty that he doth suppose
My sleep my death?"
King Henry IV, part 2, IV, 5

"Though we seemed dead, we did but sleep"
King Henry V, III, 6

Although man has not shown particular interest in sleep, dreams have held profound significance for him. In the life of primitive man dreams have played a conspicuous part in determining theories of life and death. Dreams were supposed to represent fragmentary memories of the experiences of the soul while wandering out of the body during sleep. The primitive and the superstitious mind interprets a dream as a sign that points into the future. We today look for the meaning of dreams in the past, in their origins and sources. Some of the disciples of Freud, no doubt, have already made a study of the dreams in Shake-
speare's plays, interpreting them as the disguised fulfillment of a suppressed wish, an unsatisfied longing, or an inclination never formulated in speech.
A Midsummer Night's Dream

This fantastic dream play is externally and internally of the fairy-tale character. Each of us who is at all imaginative, probably knows from his own experience that state of mind, in which familiar things like clouds or a flower appear mysterious and mystic; in such a mood one feels that at any moment something extraordinary or unheard-of must happen. There come to many of us hours in which the Mysterious and the Mystic struggle with the familiar—hours in which imagination confronts reason and we see ourselves and the world about us from two entirely opposite points of view. This state of mind forms the foundation of that fantastic picture which as in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", blends into one, two contradictory forms of existence and makes them into a strange world. Thus Shakespeare's play is distinguished from the fairy tale by the double view of life which forms its basis; the fairy tale moves in only one world; it does not appeal to the reason but merely to the imagination.

At first glance one scarcely knows what to make of the airy creatures in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for there are so many pranks and so much of merriment and fancy that the first impression leaves one with the belief that the play possesses no rational meaning or deeper significance. The tendency of one part to parody the other, and the identity of theme brings the different group of characters into close community, for all seem to be ruled by the same spirit. The
mechanics' play gayly ridicules the contents of the piece as well as all dramatic art; the piece which parodies everything and is a parody on itself, carries this tendency to a climax and gives the drama its point.

The title intimates the spirit in which Shakespeare conceived the play and the intention which influenced him in writing it. Human life is portrayed as a fantastic midsummer night's dream. As in a dream the airy pictures flashed through the mind; the strangest and most varied figures mix with one another to form a curious medley.

As dreams are incoherent and posses neither law nor order, all is confusion in them. Shakespeare denied his piece both order and regularity at the very outset; strength of will, reason and sense are put in the background while the fullest license is given to fancy and feeling, caprices and whims, and those emotions of which we are scarcely conscious, but which affect our lives. The power of imagination is active in all the characters; it creates the dreams and governs the images of dreamland, and is therefore the most powerful force in the various characters. In light of this, love—the main lever of the action—is founded only upon the imagination; Titania's fondness for the Indian boy is a whim; Egeus' preference for Demetrius is just a notion and it is imagination that he believes Demetrius is the only one he wants for a son-in-law; it is fancy in Hermia that she can marry no one but Lysander and in Helena that she can love no other man than Demetrius. Puck proves this by the
ease with which a few drops of the magic fluid can change
their loves. This magic fluid is symbolical of the in-
fluence of accident, and outward circumstances.

The lovers are completely in the hand of fairies
which enmesh the sense, juggle reason and action with no
high mental or moral bearing. The fairies send and bring
dreams to the mortals without delicate feeling or morality,
as in our dreams we meet with no check to our tender sen-
sations. There is no moral impulse, no reflection. When
Titania awakes from her vision she is affected only by the
actual and the visible. She speaks of her adventures as a
vision:

"My Oberon! What visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass"

How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!"

Oberon: "Titania, music call; and strike more dead.
Than common sleep of all these five the sense."

Titania: "Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!"

Helena, Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius awake to find
that events which have gone before left upon them the im-
pression of a dream. The sober Theseus finds in their ex-
periences only dreams and fantasies. Bottom, one of the
last to awaken, speaks thus:
"I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was-- there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,-- and methought I had,-- but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was..... It shall be called Bottom's Dream because it hath no bottom."

By calling the piece not only a dream but "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Shakespeare further explains more definitely what is expressed in the plot, that it is not a heavy, dull dream such as the cold of winter would produce, but a gay airy dream, such as one might have on a moonlight midsummer night.

"Cupid's delight in breach of faith and Jove's merriment at the perjury of the lovers cause the actions of those who are in the power of the God of Love to appear almost as unaccountable as the sins we commit in a dream. We find, moreover, that the actions and occupations of Cupid and the fairies throughout the piece are interwoven or alternate. And this appears to us to confirm most forcibly the intention of the poet to compare allegorically, the sensuous life of love with dream life; the exchange of functions between Cupid and the fairies is therefore the true poetic embodiment of this comparison. For the realm of dreams is assigned to Shakespeare's fairies; they are essentially nothing else than personified dream-gods, children of the fantasy, which as Mercutio says, is not only the idle producer of dreams, but also of the caprices of superficial love."

(Dr. G. G. Gervinus -- Shakespeare Commentaries, Page 194)
The Tempest

"This play is one of the most delightful of Shakespeare's creations. To the audiences of his own time it must have had a charm which we may comprehend but can imperfectly appreciate. The romance of worlds as yet unexplored was suggested by it, the imagination was captured by the portrayal of sights and sounds which men hesitated to believe and yet did not dare to deny wholly."

In stories of enchantment, such as "The Tempest" the dramatist faces the practical difficulty--how to bridge the gulf between the supernatural and the experience of his audience. The three general modes of treatment are derationalization, which removes as far as possible from commonplace experiences, general surroundings in which the supernatural appears; rationalization, in which the supernatural element itself is given as many contacts as possible with thought and experience; and finally, a method which gives support to the supernatural element, by uniting with it as much as possible of what is nearest akin to it in the world of reality. Shakespeare uses all three modes of treatment in this play.

Shakespeare has provided a fitting background for this play of enchantment by making the scene far distant, in an almost inaccessible haunt of the supernatural--a desert island, the secret place of a few sailors, or the source of their yarns--a region with ocean currents which convey man

"Lounsbury....."Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist"
to it "by accident most strange", and a region guarded by a belt of fierce storms which give a name to the play. Yet the island, once gained, is a spot of wonderful charm, with "subtle, tender, and delicate temperance." The "air breathes most sweetly"; the grass looks "lush and lusty"; the dwellings are those provided by nature; the prisons are prisons of nature—-the rift of cloven pines, the knotty entrails of an oak; the labor is gathering fire wood; the food is brook muscles, roots, husks of acorns. The scenery is linked with fairy life for one hears songs and conversations which inhabit the island with invisible personages. Its remoteness from ordinary life impresses the ship-wrecked courtiers who behold it. It inspires Gonzalo to think of a golden age when civilization should not be known; no law, no wealth, no war, no treason, no use of food, metal or fuel, but nature should provide for all. Every scene is full of suggestions of nature which are gathered to a climax in the Masque of act four; Ceres is the owner of

"Rich leas
Of wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and pease;
Thy tumful mountains, where live nibbling sheep,
And flat meads thatch'd with stover, them to keep
Thy banks with pioned and twilled brims,
Which spongy April at thy best betrims,
To make cold nymphs chaste clowns; and thy broom groves,
Whose shadow the dismissed bachelor loves,
Being lass-worn; thy pale-clipt vineyard;
And thy sea-marge, sterile and rocky-hard,
Where thou thyself dost air."

Iris, of rainbow hue, diffuses honey drops on flowers, and unites with Juno, queen of heaven to invoke marriage blessings on the married couple. Water, as a feature of scenery
is not omitted. An invocation follows to the

"Nymphs, called Naiads, of the winding brooks,
With yoursedg'd crown and ever-harmless looks;"

The nymphs mingle with the "sun-burnt sicklemen of August
weary" in a dance of harvest home. And thus the Masque
terminates a symphony of all the joys and beauties of the
landscape, "lulling us to pastoral repose with its flow
of sleepy verse."

This effect is carried from nature to the inhabitants
of the island. Miranda, with her simplicity that acts like
a charm, is a true child of nature if ever one has been
portrayed. She is almost a definition of ideal—"created
of every creature's best."

At the opposite pole from Miranda is Caliban who is
equally linked to the idea of nature. Caliban, the fruit
of abominable parents, half demon and half man, is born for
slavery, yet murmurs against it. Moulton in his "Shakes-
peare as a Dramatic Artist." states that in a single dia-
logue between Prospero and Caliban we have painted in
successive clauses, the whole history of the relations be-
tween savage races and civilization, wherever civilization
has been reinforced by the elevation power of religion.
First we have the wrongs of the savage, and his dispossess-
ion by the white man:

"This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou takest from me."

Next we see the white man petting the savage as he would an
animal—
"When thou camest first
Thou strokedst me and madest much of me, would give
me water with berries in it.".

Then the man educates the savage who in return gave gifts--

"(Thou wouldst) teach me how
10 name the bigger light, and how the less,
That burn by day and night: and then I loved thee
And showed thee all the qualities o' the isle,
The fresh springs, urine-pits, barren place and fertile"

Soon there appears a moral gulf between them:

"Thy vile race,
Though thou didst learn, had that in it which good
natures
Could not abide to be with"

Then the forced dominion of the white man:

"Therefore wast thou
Deservedly confined into this rock,
Who had'st deserved more than a prison."

So the gift of civilization is turned into a curse:

"You taught me language; and my profit don't
Is, I know how to curse."

When Shakespeare makes the drunken Caliban kneel before the
drunken Stephano, we feel the savage is the nobler of the
two since he retains the faculty of reverence. Thus the
dramatist finds an attractiveness even for the drunken sav-

age.

Shakespeare uses music, linked with dreamy sleep as
the transition stage between reality and enchantment.

"The isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again."  III, 2
The sleepy atmosphere and fixed quality of the climate dull the critical faculty which might doubt visionary appearances. Music is almost an immediate herald for the supernatural, and through it we pass into the world of enchantment.

Shakespeare has put two Elemental Beings into his play to suggest the analogy between human nature and the elements Air, Fire, Earth and Water. Ariel--is an Elemental Being of the higher order, identified with air and fire, having the nature of man. Ariel's very name is taken from air and he is addressed: "Thou, which art but air". When telling of the lightning and the ship, Ariel said that the ship was "All a-fire with me". He is invisible, but he can take shape as he acts; he can penetrate everywhere; his natural speech is music; he is moody and capricious. He suffers at the hands of Sycorax:

"For thou wast a spirit too delicate
To act her earthly and abhorred commands,
Refusing her grand heats, she did confine thee
By help of her more potent ministers,
And in her most unmitigable rage
Into a cloven pine."

Over against Ariel is placed Caliban, an Elemental Being of the lower order. Caliban is near enough human to be classed as a savage yet his origin from a Witch and the Devil forbids us to call him human. Prospero calls him "monster", "moon-calf" and addresses him as "Thou, Earth, thou". When Trinculo and the courtiers see Caliban for the first time they doubt whether he is fish or man and speak of him as "fish-monster", "Half a fish and half a monster".
Thus he is identified with both Earth and Water; he indulges in and glories in the lowest passions. The poet uses Sycorax to introduce witchcraft into his drama to work for evil as Prospero’s magic works for good. Thus good and evil, light and dark are balanced.

Love at first sight is here effectively used to show that some elements of common life have kinship with enchantment. Miranda awakes out of a charmed sleep and sees a young man for the first time:

Prospero. "The fringed curtains of thine eye advance And say what thou seest yond."

Miranda "What is’t? a spirit?"

Ferdinand is drawn there by music and sees Miranda

"Most sure, the goddess
On who these airs attend."

Their feeling upon seeing each other is mutual. "At first sight they have changed eyes," says Prospero, where upon Ferdinand confesses:

"The very instant that I saw you, did My heart fly to your service; there resides, To make me slave to it."

Miranda. "This Is the third man that e’er I saw, the first That e’er sighed I for...."

Ferdinand. "O if a virgin, And your affection not gone forth, I’ll make you The Queen of Naples."

The humorous side of real life has kinship with enchantment through intoxication. Caliban is given a little liquor and immediately he changes from a savage into a worshipper who speaks blank verse instead of prose:
"These be fine things, and if they be not sprites;
That's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor."

After another taste of the bottle:

Caliban. "Hast thou not dropp'd from heaven?"

Stephano. "Out o' the moon, I do assure thee; I
Was the man in the moon when time was."

Caliban. "I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee."

We feel little sympathy for Antonio and Sebastian, the villains. They alone have no music in the soul; they are unaffected by the enchantment of Ariel's music which pronounces sleep upon every one else who hears it. They are left untouched by quality of the climate and stand staring at the sleepers, with treason in their hearts. Antonio, the harder villain, suggests a plan to which Sebastian, at first unwilling, gradually gives way. They stand apart to complete their death plot. At the last moment when everything is ready, a sighing of the wind is heard, which upon approaching sounds almost human; it forms into words; it is the voice of Ariel:

"While you here do snoring lie,
Open-eyed conspiracy
His time doth take.
If of life you keep a care,
Shake off slumber and beware:
Awake, awake!

The sound dies away as it came; the conspirators return with drawn swords.

Antonio: "Now let us both be sudden."

Gonzalo: "Now good angles
Preserve the King!"

Gonzalo is awake, and has aroused the sleepers who accuse
the traitors.

If we look only on the surface of the "The Tempest" the central theme would seem Enchantment; when we consider the drift of the action, we see unity there, in which Enchantment is symbolic of something deeper. Prospero controls the course of circumstances who for that purpose is given the power of magic. He plays the part of Providence; he is a Providence for the island. How did he pay for his magic power? He gave up the world and its prizes and devoted his life to study; he with his daughter suffered on the open sea with little hope of surviving; he studied and worked twelve years to become master of his art, enduring privations and exerting perpetual watchfulness where a moment's inattention would have meant death. Prospero exercises mercy and judgment, two chief works of providence, on Ariel and on Caliban. At the climax we find universal restoration; the impenitent Antonio and Sebastian are not excluded, nor Stephano and Trinculo; Ariel is given his freedom, and Caliban his island; Alonso is restored to his kingdom; Ferdinand and Miranda already restored to one another, are restored to the grief-stricken father; Gonzalo adds:

"All of us to ourselves
When no man was his own."

But what of Prospero? He realizes his power that can control every department of nature; he realizes it, only to lay it down.
"This rough magic
I here abjure ... I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book."

Thus the Providence of the island, at a time when he feels the great extent of his power, is willing to renounce self and come down to a simple human station. The play ends with farewells. Ariel must return to the elements; Miranda must go with her husband and Prospero is close to the last parting of all:

"Thence retire me to my Milan, where
Every third thought shall be my grave."

The poet here represents life as agitated by a tempest—agitated by conflicting elements which have come together by accident perhaps—agitated by a power we call chance—but ruled by Providence. Life itself is like a passing wave in the ocean of time, put in motion by some higher power.

"Like the baseless fabric of this vision
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve;
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."
Romeo and Juliet

In this piece the poet raises love to the heights of the most fiery passion, contrasts it with a hate equally fiery and thus exhibits the opposite extremes of all human passion, love and hate, the passions to which all others may be traced.

There is a drowsy langour in the first acts; it is midsummer; it seems that daylight never wholly departs from the luminous nights. It is nature in the development of human passion. Thus we find Romeo, in our first glimpse of him, given over to a sentimental love for Rosaline. But this love is only fancy, a longing and craving for love, not true love itself. Then by a sudden freak whim of his friends, Romeo goes to the Capulet feast and sees Juliet! Shakespeare here reminds us through Mercutio of the mysterious connections between the outer and the inner life, between the past and future, which often reveal themselves in dreams. Romea has had a dream which frightened him so that he yields to his friends reluctantly; he says that "some consequence, yet hanging in the stars, shall bitterly begin its fearful date with this night's revels," and yet he is urged on to meet his fate.

The poet shows us in this play the deliverance of a man from dream into reality. Rosaline's Romeo is a melancholy idle dreamer who abandons himself to emotion for emotion's sake. He cries, he groans, he revels in the
agony of unrequited love.

"Why then O brawling love!  O loving hate!
O anything, of nothing first create!
O heavy lightness!  Serious vanity!
Mis-shapen chaos of well seeming forms!
Weather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!
Still waking sleep, that is not what it is!"

Then Romeo meets Juliet.  At first he cannot over-come
a certain self-consciousness; his first love for Juliet is
not entirely simple and direct.  He says in the garden scene:

"How silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night
Like softest music to attending ears."

Upon hearing Juliet's voice, he feels that he must drain the
sweetness of it.  Romeo exclaims as he reluctantly turns to
go:

"Love goes toward love, as school boys from their books,
But love from love, towards school with heavy look."

Juliet is thinking of the danger to which Romeo is exposed
on her father's property, rather than exulting in her new
found happiness.  She leaves the window and Romeo is left
alone-- He is thinking only of his new joy:

"O blessed, blessed night!  I am afeared,
 Being in night, all this is but a dream,
 Too flattering sweet to be substantial."

But Juliet reappears; she is living in no dream of joy--

"Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where, and what time thou wilt perform the rite,
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee, my lord, throughout the world."

Juliet is sure of her passion; while Romeo is only half-
delivered from self-consciousness.  Juliet takes the lead;
she is eager for marriage and self surrender. After the
death of Tybalt, and upon hearing of his banishment, Romeo
throws himself down and grovels on the ground in dismay and
helpless, hopeless despair. He is overcome by his emotions.
Not so Juliet. She goes to Friar Lawrence's cell, meets
Paris with a smiling face to conceal her desperation, and
begs the Friar to find a remedy for her seemingly hopeless
position.

In the night and the stillness, suffering morbid
imaginations of the hideous secrets of the tomb, Juliet
thinks of Romeo and his danger. Her fears give way and she
swallows the potion, which will confine her in temporary
death sleep, with the words, "Romeo! I come; this do I drink
to thee." Romeo breaks from a life of dream into full con-
summation of manhood when he receives the false news of
Juliet's death. He is an adult, with a will of his own and
a determination to act:

"It is even so? Then I defy you stars;
Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight."

This is the Romeo who sighed, and wept for Rosaline's love,
but he has become strong. His final determination is un-
alterable. Romeo and Juliet loved perfectly. Juliet
suddenly came into womanhood and through her, her lover em-
erged from dream life into the life of reality.

Balthasar and the Friar enter the tomb:

Balthasar-- "As I did sleep under this yew tree here
I dreamt my master and another fought,
And that my master slew him."
Friar L. "I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest
0 death, contagion, and unnatural sleep."

Juliet. "Go, get thee hence, for I will not away"...
Thy lips are warm. 0 happy dagger.
This is thy sheaf."

Then we recall Romeo's words at the opening of Act V:

"If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead--
Strange dream that gives a dead man leave to think--
And breathed such life with kisses in my lips,
That I revived and was an emperor.
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!"

The happiness of these "star-crossed lovers was

"momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collies night
That in a sleep, unfolds both heaven and earth
And ere a man hath power to say-- Behold!
The jaws of darkness do devour it up."
Julius Caesar

Storms, exhalations, dreams and other supernatural portents assist in emotional agitation in Julius Caesar, and suggest for it a mystic sympathy with mutations in human life. As in King Lear, storm is the dramatic background for the tempest of human emotions. Thunder and lightning are needed to harmonize with the whirlwind of human passions. The conception of nature exhibiting sympathy with sudden turns in human affairs is one of the fundamental instincts in poetry. The idea of dark foreboding, begun early in the play is kept before our attention; the earth trembles, the sky lowers, nature shrieks and groans.

"Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen
The ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam
To be exalted with the threatening clouds;
But never till tonight, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world too saucy with the gods
Incenses them to send destruction.
A common slave-- you know him well by sight--
Held up his left hand which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches joined, and yet his hand
Not sensible of fire, remained unscorched.
Besides-- I ha' not since put up my sword--
Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glazed upon me and went surly by
Without annoying me: and there were drawn
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women
Transformed with their fear, who swore they saw
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets,
And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noon day upon the market place
Hooting and shrieking."

Brutus reads missives by the light of meteors glancing through the air. Cassius uses such a night to work his
evil; he feigns to see an image of Caesar in the tempest.

"Now could I, Casca, name to thee a man
Most like this dreadful night,
That thunders, lightens, opens graves and roars
As doth the lion in the Capitol.
A man no mightier than thyself or me
In personal action, yet prodigious grown
And fearful as these strange eruptions are."

When he perceives that the superstition of Casca is touched,
he refers to the work to be done which "like the complexion
of the elements." is "most bloody, fiery, and most terrible."

There is a subtle touch in the change which has taken
place in Caesar:

"For he is superstitious grown of late
Quite from the main opinion he held once
Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies."

Caesar himself tells us:

"Nor heaven not earth have been at peace tonight;
Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out:
'Help, no! they murder Caesar!'

Calpurnia. 'Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies
Yet now they fright me.
A lioness hath whooped in the streets;
And graves have yawn'd, and yielded up their dead:
Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol;
Horses did neigh and dying men did groan
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
O Caesar! these things are beyond all use,
And I do fear them."

Caesar is persuaded not to go to the Capitol, until
Decius Brutus, whom we have overheard boast that he can
oversway Caesar with flattery, persuades him that Calpurnia
has interpreted her dreams amiss, and he does go in spite
of his better judgment. The passing effect of the scene is
to suggest weakness in Caesar, while in fact it furnishes
an element, which upon reflection goes to build up a character of strength.

I feel that Shakespeare has at no time surpassed the portrayal of the development of character of Brutus. The force in his character is obvious; some readers find difficulty in seeing its softer side. But this difficulty is really a tribute to Shakespeare's art for Brutus is a Stoic and his gentleness comes out in spite of himself. We see his manners are softened by his culture in music, art and philosophy. This culture is not merely conventional. In the midst of the confusion of preparation for battle, he has his page play on the lyre; then he reads from the turned-down page of a philosophical treatise. Brutus is considerate of his dependants; he insists that the men on watch in his tent lie down rather than stand. A tender scene in the fourth act brings out the gentleman and sweet demeanor in his character. Brutus is in his tent with his boy Lucius who sleepily fingers the strings of his instrument. Noticing that Lucius has given way to the irresistible sleep of boyhood, Brutus, who could not wake a sleeping boy, gently removes the instrument from a position where it would be broken and then continues to read the book which he had the previous night.

Brutus. "Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so; I put it in the pocket of my gown."

Lucius. "I was sure your lordship did not give it me."
Brutus. "Bear with me, good boy; I am much forgetful. Can't thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile, And touch thy instrument a strain or two?"

Lucius. "Ay, my lord, an't please you."

Brutus. "It does my boy: I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing."

Lucius. "It is my duty sir."

Brutus. "I should not urge thy duty past thy might; I know young bloods look for a time of rest."

Lucius. "I have slept, my lord, already."

Brutus. "It was well done; and thou shalt sleep again; I will not hold thee long; if I do live I will be good to thee. This is a sleepy tune. O murderous slumber, Lay'st thou thy leaden mace upon my boy That plays thee music? Gentle knave, good night, I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee. If thou dost nod, thou break'st thy instrument I'll take it from thee; and, good boy, good night."

"The tenderness of a man who is stern is the only tenderness which is wholly delicate and refined."

The ghost in this drama plays an important part although it appears but once to utter a few words; but we feel that it is hovering in the background symbolic of the offended spirit of history ready to avenge political crimes. The spirit seems to keep before us the moral wrong in the murder of Caesar as well as the political right which was on his side.

"If in Hamlet the poet's aim is to treat the relation of the intellectual to the active nature in a thoroughly human scene, in the history of Julius Caesar the tendency is rather political; to depict the collision of moral against
political duties. The struggle between the humanity of a noble and gentle nature and the political principles of an energetic character, between personal feelings and public duty, this is the soul of this play and the most interesting point of the situation in which Brutus is placed.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Dr. G.G. Gervinus  "Shakespeare's Commentaries" p. 704
Macbeth

In Macbeth as in a dream, we move in a world of the supernatural—ghosts, witches, exaggerated deeds, emotionless murders. The witches are the instigators of the tragedy, and of the subconscious desires of Macbeth. They set the play in motion in the same way that a dream may be incited by the events of the day. They appear—the embodiment of inward temptation—in a desert place amid thunder and lightning—a barren and wasted place, where evil is master. The weird sisters represent the dark and mysterious connections between what is evil and hideous, and moral wickedness in man. The prophecy made by the witches is double; they not only promise the throneship and the crown but also they reveal that Banquo will beget kings though to be none. After the first half of the oracle has been fulfilled by his elevation to the throne, Macbeth tries to prevent the fulfillment of the second half by his attempt upon Banquo and Fleance; the object of his crime against the Banquo family is to frustrate the second part of the witches' prophecy. So the original prophecy sets the play in motion, the rise and fall of the action.

Dr. Coriat has contributed a study in applied abnormal psychology to uncover the fundamental mental mechanisms in Macbeth and his Lady. It differs from the usual conceptions of Lady Macbeth since Dr. Coriat does not interpret her behavior or motive either as criminal or obsessed by ambition.
He has the opinion that if the tragedy be read in the light of modern psycho-pathology, the interpretation that Lady Macbeth is an example of hysteria will be found to be the only adequate one.

Professor Sigmund Freud of Vienna has forced psycho-analysis to our attention. His psychology has not only rationalized certain aspects of medical science but has penetrated into different fields of human knowledge, and analyzed and interpreted them. According to Freud, mental processes are not arbitrary, accidental, or due to chance, but are closely related to one another. This is as true of dreams as in the more complex manifestations of hysteria. Mental states are never at rest, but are active and dynamic. Every mental process or experience leaves it traces upon the nervous system. We are not completely aware of all these mental processes. When a painful experience occurs, the natural tendency is to banish it; but an experience banished is not dead. It remains active although latent, and at any time may appear in consciousness or under certain conditions, such as in sleep or dreams. Banishment of an experience is known as repression, the effect of which is to prevent an experience or complex from entering consciousness. This repression often causes hysteria. If the complex is unconscious or subconscious resulting from disease or certain types of early training, the individual may be unaware of the fact that his thoughts and actions are caused by these
complexes. If two or more opposing complexes are in the mind at the same time, they produce mental conflict. There follows an emotional tension which may produce different kinds of mental distress and may lead to hysteria. So we may interpret Lady Macbeth's apparent bravery as unconscious cowardice.

Dreams are the result of antecedent experiences or complexes and may appear either in a true or a distorted or a symbolical form. Thus dreams furnish a valuable and convenient means of exploring the repressed experiences of the mental life. In somnambulistic crises there exists a rehearsal of all the emotional experiences which originally caused the mental dissociation. The condition usually arises in sleep, and may end in sleep or awakening, with the subject talking to imaginary persons, and doing imaginary acts at one time real. When the somnambulism is ended, the subject becomes normal and is unaware of anything unusual.

In the sleep walking scene, Shakespeare reached the peak of his art in creating an abnormal state. This scene proves his remarkable understanding of mental mechanisms, particularly of abnormal states of consciousness. The sleep walking scene does not occur in Holinshed and we must accept it as an original effort of Shakespeare's active imagination. It is evident from the doctor's first words that this is not the first time that Lady Macbeth has walked in her sleep. That she is a victim of somnambulism is shown by the description of the eyes being open, by the reminiscences which en-
ter into the scene and by the hallucination of the sense of smell. Since blood was the dominating note of the tragedy, it further proves Shakespeare's remarkable insight that the hallucination should be the smell of blood.

Sleep walking scene

Doctor. "You see, her eyes are open."
Gentlewoman. "Aye, but their sense is shut."

In the delirium of this last appearance, we can readily follow the three distinct tones of thought working in a weird harmony into one another.

"Out, damned spot! out, I say! One: two:
Why then 'tis time to do it. Hell is murky.
Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afreard
What need we fear who know it, when
None can call our power to account?
Yet who would have thought the
Old man to have had so much blood in him?"

"The Thane of Fife had a wife; where is she now
What, will these hands ne'er be clean?"

Then the struggle to keep her husband from betraying himself:

"No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that;
You mar all this with starting."

"Here's the smell of blood still; all the
Perfumes of Araby will not sweeten this little hand."

"Wash your hands, put on your nightgown;
Look not so pale;
I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried;
He cannot come out on his grave
To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate;
Come, come, come, come, give me your hand;
What's done can not be undone;
To bed, to bed, to bed."

The "sorely change heart" signs and soon takes her life--the only solution of her mental disease. We do not know by
what means she ended her life for neither Holinshed nor Shakespeare give us anything but the bare fact.

The first hint of the murder complex is found in Macbeth's mind. He transmits it to Lady Macbeth in a letter which gives occasion for her first soliloquy. She is not criminal by nature for in her breast was that "milk of human kindness" of which she said her husband had too much, a significant trait seen in:

"Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done it."

She strengthens her courage at the outset with the drugged wine. Her soul is quick, sensitive; she has keen insight into the characters of those around her.

"Give me the daggers; the sleeping and the dead
Are but pictures; 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil."

She knew all should be lost should she relax for a moment.

Macbeth: "Methought I heard a voice cry. 'Sleep no more.'"

Lady Mac: "Who was it that thus cried?"

After Duncan makes him Thane of Cawdor, Macbeth in an "aside", lets the complex come to light:

"Glamis and Thane of Cawdor;
The greatest is behind."

The witches have made their prophecies and Macbeth has already begun to

"yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs."

The suggestion becomes an obsession which brings on the mental disorder of Lady Macbeth, finally dominating her
entire personality.

After the murder of Duncan the supernatural becomes more real than the actual life around Macbeth and his Lady. We feel the terrible nature of the deed perpetuated and hold fullest sympathy with the actors in the work of darkness which for them will murder sleep forever afterwards. Macbeth, previously hesitant, is now independent and firm, and needs no spurring forward. His conscience in the silent hours of the night always arouses his sensitive imaginations anew, and forces him to think of the danger, the horrors and the awful scenes which he must prevent by new crimes. Macbeth calls on night to scarify up the tender eye of pitiful day.

"Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and sicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep;.....
Thou sure and firm-set earth
Hear not my steps, which way they walk in fear,
The very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time
Which now suits with it."

Dr. Coriat believes that Shakespeare was fully aware of the danger of the repression of emotions and quotes these line as proof. After Macduff had been informed of the murder of his wife and children, Malcolm speaks to him thus:

"What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows
Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er fraught heart, and bids it break."

The critics, Brades and Ulrici, point out the childlessness of Lady Macbeth as a possible cause for her abnormal state.
Freud states, "Shakespeare early lost a son, Hamnet. As in Hamlet there was treated the relation of the son to his father, so in Macbeth there is treated the theme of childlessness." Perhaps Lady Macbeth's ambition for her husband is a substitute for her dead children. The repression of this complex and the repression of the murder secret led to mental dissociation.

After Macbeth has acquainted his wife with his plans for murdering Banquo, she is in a state of terror. Macbeth's words prove that she also has had terrible dreams.

"But let the frame of things disjount, both the worlds suffer
'Ere we will eat out meals in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly; better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless ecstasy."

Lady Macbeth, too, speaks of Macbeth's difficulty to sleep.

"You lack the season of all natures, sleep"

Macbeth. "Come, we'll to sleep. My strange and self abuse
Is the initiate fear that wants hard use;
We are yet but young indeed."

"In Macbeth the punishment falls at last upon the guilty husband and the guilty wife. But that is a matter of subsidiary consequence; and an end in view scarcely play any part in the development of the drama. It is the gradual transforming power of sin, when once it has taken full possession of the soul, which here arrest the attention. It is the different character of the devastation wrought by
it in different natures which furnishes a study as full of psychological interest as it is of dramatic. Macbeth, at the opening of the play, the valiant general, the loyal subject, promises even then, though unfixed in principle to end his career as honorable as it had been begun. It is his wife who at the outset is the dominant character. In her dauntlessness she gives courage and strength to her husband's infirm purposes, which, while longing for the fruits of crime, shrinks from its commission. But before the play approaches its conclusion, the positions of the two have been reversed. The soldier of the early part has become a cruel tyrant, as inaccessible to remorse as he is to pity. His moral nature has become an absolute wreck. With the hardening of the heart and the deadening of conscience have disappeared entirely the compunctions which once unnerved the resolution and the terrors which shook the soul. Not so with Lady Macbeth. Her nature, far finer and higher strung, though at the beginning more resolute, pays in remorseful days and sleepless nights the full penalty of violated law. While Macbeth grows stronger as a man by the very course which destroys his susceptibility to moral consideration this very susceptibility on her part increases with the success of the deed she has prompted and in which she has taken part. The woman could not unsex herself wholly and succumbs to the long continued and increasing strain of a burden she was not fitted to bear.

Macbeth's overthrow and death is a mere accident of
personal fortune. It might or might not have happened in real life. In his case a sort of poetic justice has been exemplified; but it was in no wise a necessary sequence of the crimes committed. That is found elsewhere, and would have been in active operation had he returned victorious from the battlefield. He himself recognized it and announced it. In the coming years he could not expect to have that which attend a happy old age,—"honor, love, obedience, troops of friends;"

"But in their stead,
Curses, not loud by deep, mouth horror, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not."

Upon him in the height of power had fallen already the penalty of violated law. It is this inflexible enforcement of the universe; it is his full acceptance and adequate representation of the far-reaching consequences which follow human action, whether it be due to fraility, or to a fault whether it spring from folly, ignorance, willfulness, irresolution or any of the darker sins or crimes; it is his insistence upon the actual rewards and penalties that wait upon conduct; these it is that entitle Shakespeare to the position he holds of the great moral poet of humanity."

"Loumsbury -- "Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist," Page 415
Hamlet

There are almost as many explanations of Hamlet's behavior as there are critics of Shakespeare's works. Ernest Jones has attempted to explain Hamlet's behavior by the application of the psycho-analytic method. The mental condition of Hamlet is analyzed on the basis of Freud's theories of mental repression and concerns the attitude of son to parent. Modern criticism of Hamlet would make us believe that his hesitation and delay of revenge were due to mental conflict and not to external obstacles. The explanation given through psycho-analysis is that the repressed love for his mother was stronger than the hate for his uncle and therefore resisted revenge. 

"The time is out of joint; O, cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right."

Goethe quotes these words and says: "These words, it seems to me, contain the key to Hamlet's whole conduct, and it is clear to my mind, that Shakespeare intended to describe a great deed laid upon a soul which was unfit for the task. It is in this sense that I find the whole piece composed. We have here an oak tree planted in a costly vase which ought only to have borne lovely flowers within its bosom; the roots expand and burst the vase." Goethe calls Hamlet a born prince, noble, moral by nature, but lacking the physical strength which makes a hero, and without power to deal with his problem or to put it aside.

Schlegel calls the tragedy, "A tragedy of thought,
suggested by continual and unsatisfied meditation on the
destiny of man, on the dark confusion of the events of this
world, and designed to awaken the same meditation in the
minds of the spectators." He believes that the aim of the
piece was to show how a study which tries to exhaust all
the contingencies and all the possible consequences of a
particular act, must paralyze the power of energy, as Hamlet
himself says:

"Thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with pale cast of thought
And enterprises of great pitch and moment,
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action" III,1

Schlegel says Hamlet is weak willed, with a predisposition
to cunning and dissimulation, wanting in powers of decision,
and in firm faith.

It seems to me that Hamlet's great difficulty in the
consummation of his scheme lies in internal resistance and
mental conflicts. We are told that he has eminent intelli-
gence, and clear judgment; that he loves poetry and the
drama; yet he has a reflective, philosophical turn of mind;
he is given to meditation; he hates hypocrisy, uncouthness,
vulgarity and falsehood.

Hamlet. "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell
And count myself a king of infinite space,
Were it not that I have bad dreams"

Guildenstern. "Which dreams indeed are ambition; for
the very substance of the ambitions is merely
the shadow of a dream."

Hamlet. "A dream itself is but a shadow."

During the reign of his father, Hamlet has given himself up
wholly to the inward bent of his mind; he does not keep alive within him a sense of the importance of a deed; actual things seem to him transitory, accidental, unreal.

He lives a life of restless vacillation, hesitation, procrastination. And so he stands upon the borders of health and disease because he cannot create for himself a new existence out of desolate ruins of a former world.

"How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained."
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep?"

His mind was upset, not exactly deranged:

"In my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep."

The natural man in Hamlet spurs him to revenge; a tender conscience restrains him. A regard for the eternal salvation of his soul forces him to hesitate in taking his own life. Throughout the play he wavers between belief in immortality and disbelief, between dependence on providence and a giving in to fate. He desires eternal sleep, but he is not sure of it; he meditates on possible dreams, on a life which might again be called into action; so he wavers, qualified neither for life nor for death. Hamlet intimates all this in his soliloquy where his character is at its height;

"To be or not to be; that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die; to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to slee;
To sleep perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause; there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despoiled love, the laws' delay
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes
When he himself might his quittance make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear
To grunt and sweat under a weary life
But that the dread of something after death
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn away
And lose the name of action."

In the presence of the ghost, a sense of his own
spiritual existence, and the immortal life of the soul
grows strong within him. In the presence of the spirit he
is himself a spirit.

"I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?"

When left to his thoughts, Hamlet wavers in uncertainty;
death is a sleep, a sleep, troubled with dreams perhaps.
In the graveyard, the affinities of human nature appeal to
his curiosity and imagination; he traces the history of
human dust through all its metamorphoses.

Hamlet is the direct opposite of Macbeth who strains
human power and manly boldness to the utmost. We see Hamlet,
the true heir, who has not the courage or inclination to
reclaim lawfully the throne that is his by right. Macbeth,
the vassal, unlawfully takes possession of a throne to
which he has no right.

Ophelia, in certain respects, has the same nature and
shares the same fate as Hamlet. She is his female counter-
part as Portia is Brutus' female counterpart. She has a
Meditative, dreamily reserved nature, with a sensitive im-
agination, but with no acuteness of intellect; she lives
only in her heart. This dreamy nature attract Hamlet and
harmonizes with that similar disposition in his. Quietly,
in lonely imagination, she has certainly pictured herself
as Hamlet's wife. And the thought has taken such deep root
that it is a part of her existence. Incapable of resisting,
she obeys her father's commands, but represses her love
until it is engraved on her soul and all her thoughts center
round Hamlet and her love. But what can she do for Hamlet?
Juliet had delivered Romeo from his dream of egoistic feel-
ing into the reality of anguish and of joy. Hamlet needed
a strong nature to deliver him from his melancholy, his
life of brooding thought. Hamlet got comfort from Horatio
who was "more an antique Roman than a Dane." Hamlet at
first believes that he can gain composure through the
presence of a weak and clinging nature like Ophelia's. But
he soon learns, and becomes embittered by the knowldege,
that Ophelia can neither receive nor give great gifts of
soul. The lovers exchange tokens but there is none of the large exchange of soul and Hamlet bitterly exclaims, "I never gave you aught." He considers his mother's weakness and Ophelia's insufficiency and says, "Frailty, thy name is woman." Juliet disregards commands of her father, mother and nurse and lives only for Romeo. Ophelia, through the sweetness and gentleness of her heart, is docile to her father and brother; she has no initiative of mind, she is unimaginative, and chooses her words with a sense of propriety.

"He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders Of his affection to me."

Ophelia says, "I shall obey, my lord" in answer to her father's direction to distrust the man she loves, to deny him her presence, and to refuse his letters. Later her conscience is disturbed, her mind pulled this way and that, and her physical and mental nature are upset by the hopeless destruction into which Hamlet's peculiar behavior plunges her. The speeches and songs of her insanity show how deeply she has been imbued with the dreams of love and how exclusively it has become the center of her thought.

"The sensitiveness of Hamlet's organism, which causes him to fear death, causes him to fear many other things more than death. His busy imagination suggests to him a condition with fearful and remote results; he pictures himself surrounded by dangers and traps, and tries to lessen them by adequate preparation. He believes in ghosts and
therefore sees them. When the ghost appears to him, he is "desperate with imagination." Horatio, too sees the ghost but hardly believes that "the thing" is the ghost of Hamlet's father. This excess of imagination and excitement in Hamlet blunts the edge of purpose and action. His will and passion are enfeebled by delays. Hamlet perceives in himself with torments, the waverings of his nature, indolence and excitement, alternative inertness and passion. When he has fought and struggled so long that he finally perceives

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough hew them how we will."

when his mind is at rest, when his task of revenge is accomplished, more by accident or Providence than by Hamlet's free action, he then dies in the hope of a better existence, not only with a firm conviction of being pardoned in Heaven, but also with a deep conviction that his beloved Denmark is about to see happier times."

"Dr. G. G. Gervinus "Shakespeare Commentaries"
Conclusion

It is when Shakespeare comes to the consideration of questions affection human life and conduct that we recognize his superiority. We feel then how fully he has penetrated into the most secret recesses of the heart, how intimate is his acquaintance with both the fellings and the motives that influence us in what we do or fail to do, how complete is his knowledge of the real rewards and punishments which wait on human action, not on the fanciful ones which we in our short sightedness should think proper to have bestowed.
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