ENGLISH RENAISSANCE DREAM THEORY
AND ITS USE IN SHAKESPEARE

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction ........................................... 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I Psychological Background: Imagination and Sleep ......................... 4-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II Internal Natural Dreams ........................................... 28-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III External Natural Dreams ........................................... 63-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV Supernatural Dreams ........................................... 75-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V Shakespeare's Use of Dreams ........................................... 95-111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography ......................................................... 112-115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

This study deals specifically with dream theories that are recorded in English books published before 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, with a few notable exceptions such as Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Though this thesis does not pretend to include all available material on this subject during Shakespeare's time, yet I have attempted to utilize all significant material found in the prose writings of selected doctors, theologians, translated Latin writers, recognized Shakespeare sources (Holinshed, Plutarch), and other prose writers of the time; in a few poets; and in representative dramatists. Though some sources were not originally written during the Elizabethan period, such as classical translations and early poetry, my criterion has been that, if the work was published in English and was thus currently available, it may be justifiably included in this study.

Most of the source material is found in prose, since this medium is more suited than imaginative poetry and drama to the expository discussions of dreams. The imaginative drama I speak of here includes Shakespeare, of course. We should not expect to find Shakespeare's characters going into elaborate discussions of dream theory unless of course such an exposition would suit the character presented. Too, such speeches would tend to lose their dramatic force through their very length and profundity. An example here might be the Queen Mab passage
spoken by Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (I.iv.53-95), though this passage's length is compensated by its light, witty dialogue. This is, in fact, the only long passage pertaining to dream theory in Shakespeare's works; other references are short and often implicit.

Bibliographical acknowledgement must be given here especially to Mr. Bain Tate Stewart and his unpublished dissertation "The Renaissance Interpretation of Dreams and their Use in Elizabethan Drama" (Northwestern, 1942), and also to Professor Carroll Camden's article "Shakespeare on Sleep and Dreams," *Rice Institute Pamphlet*, XXIII (April, 1936), 106-133.

Mr. Stewart wrote a comprehensive dissertation on dreams, tracing their usage from the early drama through approximately the Jacobean period (1625). In this survey he assimilated the sound article of Professor Camden's and two significant German studies: Max Arnold, *Die Verwendung des Traummotivs in der Englischen Dichtung von Chaucer bis auf Shakespeare* (Kiel, 1912), and Juergen Struve, *Das Traummotiv im Englischen Drama des XVII Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg, 1913).

The purpose and plan of this study differ somewhat from Mr. Stewart's objectives, however. In expanding his area of investigation Mr. Stewart used various sources not published in English nor in England; he did not limit his sources within clearly defined chronological limits, even using material written as late as 1691; and his dissertation emphasized the prophetic aspect of dreams and the interpretations made of them.
My plan, in contrast, has been to limit my sources to those published in English and in England, thus relying heavily on the *Short Title Catalogue*; to restrict myself as much as possible to works before 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death; and to enlarge on the use of dreams in characterization with a more detailed analysis of Shakespeare's illustrations of imagination, sleep, and dream theories in his works. Thus, though the first four chapters of this thesis are concerned with Elizabethan theories of imagination, sleep, and dreams, these chapters include all significant Shakespearean references to the topics being discussed. Chapter V investigates the various uses of dreams in Shakespeare's plays, both supernatural prophetic dreams and natural dreams that illustrate character, and concludes the thesis.
CHAPTER I

PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND: IMAGINATION AND SLEEP

To investigate Elizabethan dream theory properly, one must first understand what is meant by the sixteenth century "faculty" psychology, the underlying psychological principles that were to be assumed in any discussion of dreams. First, the soul was divided into various "faculties." Robert Burton discusses the views of Aristotle, Tully, Paracelsus and others on the subject, concluding that the "common division of the soul is into three principal faculties, vegetal, sensitive, and rational, which make three distinct kinds of living creatures: Vegetal plants, sensible animals, rational men. How these three principal faculties are distinguished and connected, is beyond human capacity ..."¹

John Davies of Hereford includes Burton's classification under the "Naturall" and "Animall" faculties and adds a "Vitall" faculty that is seated in the heart and infuses life spirits throughout the body.² Peter de la Primauadye, in his popular The French Academie, cites the different theories of such noted authorities as Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, and then concludes that:

² John Davies of Hereford, "Mirum in Modum" (1602), Works, ed. A.B. Grosart (London, 1878), 6; see Timothy Bright, A Treatise of Melancholie (London, 1586), 47, for a further discussion of the heart and its function as the seat of life.
...the most sensible, common and true opinion, which the wisest amongst the Philosophers had of the soule, is that which divideth it into two parts onely, under which all the rest are comprised: the one being spirituall and intelligible, where the discourse of reason is: the other brutish, which is the sensuall will, of it selfe wandring and disordered, where all motions contrarie to reason, and all evil desires have their dwelling.  

Evidently the sixteenth century was no more certain about the nature and division of the soul than we are today. In spite of this confusion in classification, however, there seems to be general agreement as to the characteristics of what Burton calls the "inward senses," namely common sense, phantasy or imagination, and memory. These senses are part of the animal or sensitive faculty located in the brain. First the common sense, situated in the forehead because, as Davies puts it, "it first takes common information/Of all the outwards Sences in their kinds," receives sense impressions from the external five senses, distinguishes them as to their nature, and sends them on to the imagination. The imagination then plays an important role. It lies in the middle area of the brain, and its function is to reassess the sense impressions from the common sense, either accepting the opinion of the common sense or forming new shapes of its own. In this regard the imagination

3 Peter de la Primaudaye, The French Academie trans. T.B. (London, 1614), 22-23; see Nicholas Ling, Polyteunhuia. Wits Commonwealth (London, 1598), 186². Timothy Bright, 44, 47, points out that the distinction of separate faculties is a distinction in function, not in kind.

4 Burton, 139; see King John V.vii.2-3: "His pure brain, Which some suppose the soul's frail dwelling house...."

5 Davies, 7; Burton, 139.
never rests, and, especially in the time of sleep, when the exter-
nal senses are quiet, does this internal sense of imagination or fancy reign free to form new shapes in visions and dreams.\(^6\)

The memory also deals with the impressions from the outer senses, like the imagination, but its function is to retain these sense impressions in the back area of the mind for future use by the middle area of the imagination.\(^7\) In this sense Macbeth speaks of his plan for King Duncan's chamberlains:

\[
\text{... his two chamberlains} \\
\text{Will I with wine and wassail so convince} \\
\text{That memory, the warder of the brain,} \\
\text{Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason} \\
\text{A limbeck only...}\(^8\)
\]

Memory acts as the warder or keeper of sense impressions for the brain's use. In this passage the brain will be so infused with fumes of wine that the memory itself will seem metaphorically but a fume, with reason merely the container for such heady vapours.

Davies adds that this back portion of the brain, where memory resides, is less moist and more solidly constructed than that of the imagination, to enable better retention. Thus there are extremes—the "hard-headed" person will have little imagination, and one with an over-moist brain will have a facile imagination but little retentive power.\(^9\) The imagination can use what the memory retains, however, and La Primaudaye thus speaks

\(^6\) Burton, 139; Davies, 7-8; La Primaudaye, The Second Part of the French Academie trans. T.B. (London, 1594), 155.

\(^7\) Burton, 140; Bright, 47.

\(^8\) Macbeth I.vii.64-67. Citations from Shakespeare in my text are to The Complete Works ed. Hardin Craig (Chicago, 1951).

\(^9\) Davies, 9.
of the imagination as "the mouth of the vessel of memorie," which Burton clarifies to mean that the imagination or phantasy can call upon both the immediate sense impressions from the common sense and the past sense impressions still retained in the memory.10

The imagination is thus of great force, and it is limited only by the total sense experience, past and present, of the individual. As La Primaudaye observes, "man can neither think, imagine, or doe any thing else, of which hee hath not some beginning and ground in nature and in the workees of God, from which after hee hath his inventions."11 Within these limits, though, the phantasy is able to create any sort of weird vision or terrifying dream that it wishes. Timothy Bright emphasizes the power of the sensible part of the soul, or the imagination, to create images in sleep that are similar to those images we receive while awake (though the imagination has not the use of the external senses in sleep), and he concludes:

Neither are these sensible actions of the minde to be accounted false: because it seeth in dreams things past as present: for as it doth also future things sometimes: which rather may argue, that both past, and to come are both present vnto the mind, of such things as fall into the capacitie of her consideration. If anie man think it much to advance the mind so high, let him remember from whom it proceeded, & the manner howe it was created, and the most excellent estate thereof before the fall ...12

10 La Primaudaye, Second Part, 146; Burton, 139; For a more detailed account of the physical aspects of memory and its function see Carroll Camden, Jr, "Memory, the Watcher of the Brain," Philosophical Quarterly, XVIII (1939), 52-72.
11 La Primaudaye, Second Part, 155-156.
12 Bright, 119.
There are various influences on the imagination, however—

foremost is the power of reason, which rules over all the internal

senses. As Davies succinctly puts it:

Shee [Reason] by the pow'r of hir discrete discourse
In th' operations of the Fantasie,
Can judge of good, and bad, and by hir force,
Swiftly surmount each Sences facultie;
And whatsoeuer interrupts hir course,
Shee it remoues with great facilitie;

For Natures bosome nothing doth embower,
That is not subject to his searching pow're.¹³

The fancy by itself causes the soul to love bodily things, but

the reason:

...mounts to higher Excellences,
And moues the spirit her nimble wings to trie,
In pursuit of divine Intelligences.¹⁴

As long as reason controls the imagination, man need not

fear. But what if the imagination is not guided by reason? La

Primaudaye warns of the inherent dangers in such a case, for the

imagination is then "stirred vp not onely by the externall senses,

but also by the complexion and disposition of the body. Heerof

it proceedeth that euen the spirites both good and bad haue great

accesse vnto it, to stirre it either to good or euill, and that

by meanes unknowen to vs." In this respect pregnant women are

often troubled with strong fancies and should be careful not to

imagine anything disagreeable lest, because of their fantasies,

their babies be malformed.¹⁵

¹³ Davies, 8; see Burton, 140.
¹⁴ Davies, 10.
¹⁵ La Primaudaye, Second Part, 156; Davies, 8; Burton, 220-

225; Thomas Nashe "The Terrors of the Night" (1593), Works, ed. R.

B. Mackerrow (London, 1910), 1, 254.
Theseus likewise does not believe the tales of lovers, madmen or poets, for:

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends,
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.  

Without the control of reason the imagination can produce "things unknown" and the poet:

Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name,
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

It is evident from the above discussion, therefore, that the imagination is a powerful and possibly dangerous force for the Elizabethans. Governed by reason, it can be beneficial, even to the extent of curing disease, but without the guidance of reason it is controlled by lower, irrational humors and passions, by sense impressions from the environment, or even by supernatural influences of good or evil. As the imagination is the molder of visions and dreams, all the characteristic theories concerning the imagination pertain likewise to dreams. Elizabethan dream theory concerns itself primarily with the nature and sources

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16 Midsummer Night's Dream V.i.4-8.
17 Ibid V.i.16-22.
18 George Gifford A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes (London, 1595), G5v.
of dreams, and the value of the dream is weighed against its source in the imagination, whether from internal body influences, from the environment, or from supernatural forces. The terms "imagination" and "dream" are thus often interchanged; Christopher Langton defines a dream as merely "an ymage made in the sleape." But before delving into the mysterious recesses of dream theory and literature, let us glance at some Elizabethan attitudes toward sleep. Since we are dealing specifically with dreams, this study limits itself to those visions or dreams that take place during sleep; there is no attempt to investigate any waking manifestations of the imagination such as hallucinations, mystical experiences, or demonic visitations that were so prevalent in the demonology lore of the English Renaissance.

There appears to be common agreement as to the nature of sleep. Most authorities agree with Burton that "sleep is a rest or binding of the outward senses, and of the common sense, for the preservation of body and soul ..., for when the common sense resteth, the outward senses rest also. The phantasy alone is free ..." In Twelfth Night Sebastian exclaims after Olivia asks him to accompany her home:

"Or I am mad, or else this is a dream:
Let fancy still my sense in Lethe sleep:
If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep!"

If the external senses are quiet and the imagination is free during sleep, then it seems apparent that dreams, the manifestations of the imagination, would be more prevalent during sleep than during the waking hours. Indeed, because the confused actions
of the external senses cease during sleep and the mind is then drawn inward to the internal senses, many authorities claim that people actually understand more in their dreams than in the waking daytime.  

Sleep, then, has a salutory effect in that the troubles of the day are ended and the mind returns to the inward senses of the imagination and memory. Marcellus Palingenius's The Zodiake of Life, translated by Barnaby Googe in 1576, tells us concerning sleep:

He [sleep] doth refresh the wearied limbs, with dayly labour past. He doth expell the cares of men, and calleth strength agayne: Without the ayde of him, no man hye lyfe well sustayne.  

19 Christopher Langton, An Introduction into physycke (London, 1550?), 87v; Cymbeline III.i.iii.31; The Winter's Tale I.i.70; Hamlet I.v.166-167, II.i.8-10; 1 Henry IV I.iii.77-78; Pericles IV.v.101-102.


22 Marcellus Palingenius, The Zodiake of Life, 39; Lemnius, 57v-95v; Giraldo Cardano, Cardanus Comforte, trans. Thomas Bedingfeld (London, 1576), 26v; Burton, 464.
Undoubtedly the most famous source of this baiming aspect of sleep, however, is Macbeth's speech after the murder of Duncan:

Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep,' — the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast. — 23

In this respect sleep has healing power for the sick. Batman states, "And if it be temperate in qualitie and in quantitie, it relieueth the sicke man, and betokanoth that kinde shall haue the masterie and the victorie of the euill and good, turning and chaunging: If sleepe doth the contrarye, it is suspect ... 24

Thus Kent recognizes the healing power of sleep as he says of King Lear:

Oppressed nature sleeps:
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure." 25

We may see yet a further illustration of this theory of sleep as a resting of the external senses while the soul is active, in the common comparison between sleep and death. As Peter Martyr Vermigli says:

23 Macbeth II.ii.35-40. see also Macbeth III.iv.141-144; Julius Caesar II.i.231-233; 1 Henry IV II.iii.44; Richard II I.iii.133; A Midsummer Night's Dream III.ii.435; 2 Henry IV III.i.5-8; Richard III IV.i.34. For other sources to this Elizabethan commonplace consult Carroll Camden Jr., "Shakespeare on Sleep and Dreams," Rice Institute Pamphlet, XXIII (April 1936), 132, n. 17-20.


25 King Lear III.vi.104-107.
When a man sleepeth, he ceaseth from actions, he walketh not, he dooth nothing; the same being afterward awaked, returneth straitwaie to his former busines. And the similitude is allowed by a forme of speech vset in the scriptures, which calleth death a sleepe: and dead men they call sleepers. 26

This comparison is frequent also in Shakespeare, as in the well known Hamlet soliloquy:

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 wish'd. 27

Likewise Prospero proclaims in The Tempest that "Graves at my command/Have waked their sleepers," and Macbeth recognizes that, in contrast to his own troubled life,

Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well. 28

There is more than a metaphorical resemblance here, though. Batman, citing Avicen, says of a person in sleep that "without hee seemeth dead, and aluye within: pale without, and ruddie within: colde without, and hot within: ..." 29 A physical correspondence between sleep and death is made here, yet the sleeper feels "ruddie within." We have noted that the external senses cease and the internal senses, especially the imagination, remain

26 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 335; Palingenius, 39, 103, 141; John Marbeck, A Booke of Notes. (London, 1531), 103; Cardano, 25v-26v; Leonard Wright, A Summers for Sleepers (London, 1589?), Alr, distinguishes between the scriptural use of "requiescere," to rest, and to sleep "in sepulchro," in the grave.

27 Hamlet III.i.60-64.

28 The Tempest V.i.48-49; Macbeth III.i.22-25; see also Measure for Measure III.i.17-19, IV.iii.49-51; Cymbeline II.ii.31, V.iv.177-180; Romeo and Juliet V.i.18-19, V.iii.152; 2 Henry IV IV.iv.61, IV.v.37-39, 61-62; Winter's Tale V.iii.18-19; Titus Andronicus I.i.31,155,173; II.iv.15; Midsummer Night's Dream III. ii.36; Macbeth I.vii.67-68; II.iii.81.
active during sleep. The movements of the imagination are some-
how related to one's internal body heat; the natural causes of
sleep warrant investigation here.

Andreas Laurentius gives us a comprehensive survey of the
various causes of sleep, dividing them into formal, material,
final, and instrumental causes. Indeed, the formal cause, con-
sists of the withdrawal of the spirits and natural heat from the
outer parts of the body to the inward. Thus a sleeping person
gets cold in the extremities, as in death. As Batman says:

...sleepe gathereth kinde heate inward, and cooleth the out-
ward parts, and draweth bloud therefrom, and heateth, & feedeth,
and comforteth the inner partes, and ripeth and feedeth that,
which is vnpure and rave; and quieteth and comforteth the vertues
of feelyng and of moviug.30

The material cause, however, is a pleasant vapour that rises up
to the brain from the concoctions or digestive process in the
stomach. This moist vapour, upon reaching the coldness of the
brain, becomes congealed and clogs up the sinews or nerves
(through which the animal spirits flow), thus causing all motion
to stop.31

A converse to this theory would deal with waking from
sleep. Robert Burton tells us that, "When these vapours are

29 Batman, 82v.
30 Batman, 82v; Laurentius, 95; James Cleland, The Instruc-
tion of a young Noble-man (Oxford, 1612), 213.
31 Andreas Laurentius, A Discourse of the Preservation of
the Sight, trans. Richard Surphlet (London, 1599), 94-95; Batman,
82r; Peter Lowe, F2r; see Hamlet III.ii.236-237; The Tempest
I.ii.484-486.
spent, the passage is open, and the spirits perform their accustomed duties; so that waking is the action and motion of the senses, which the spirits, dispersed over all parts, cause."

Prospero too, in speaking of the charmed mariners, says:

The charm dissolves apace,
And as the morning steals upon the night
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason.32

The final cause is merely the resting of these animal spirits, though Laurentius cautions that the mind must be free from worry and overwork for such a balming effect to take place. The instrumental cause is the brain itself, which must be cool and moist; if it is too hot or too dry the sleep will be troubled and restless. Thus a person of cool and moist humor or complexion is naturally inclined to sleep, whereas a choleric person of hot and dry humor would sleep hardly at all.33

From the preceding discussion we see that the digestion is really the primary cause of sleep. Without adequate digestion, without a good meal, the vapours necessary to cause clogging of the spirit-carrying sinews or nerves in the brain would never arise from the stomach. Thus, to produce sleep, Peter Lowe suggests the use of "all such thinges as maketh abundance of

32 Burton, 140; The Tempest V.i.64-66, II.i.201-202.
33 Thomas Elyot, The Castel of Helth (London, 1541), 2v, 4r-4v; Batman, 82v; Laurentius, 55; James I (England), A Counterblaste to Tobacco (1604), ed. Edward Arber, English Reprints (London, 1869), XIX, 102-103.
vapors, like as wine, ale full of barme, milke and all thinges that are moist and cold." Likewise Burton recommends nutmeg and ale or a good draught of muscadine before going to bed.34

Similarly, when in Macbeth Macduff asks the Porter what drink provokes, the Porter replies wryly, "Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine."55

Thomas Hill cautions that wine should be taken moderately, though. Moderately taken, vapours from wine easily moisten and clog the sinews of the brain, but when one drinks too much or the wine is too strong, "then dooth it dulle and vexe the powers, and instrumentes of the spyryt, whiche at that tyme placed in the motion, dooe force the persone to wake."36 Meat and drink promote digestion which in turn, through its vapours, promotes sleep, and, as the proverb goes, "He that goes to bed without his supper, is out of quiet all night."37 Pompey advocates that Cleopatra meet with Anthony and:

34 Love, F2r; Burton, 465; see Macbeth I.V.ii.63-68. Falstaff's famous speech on the virtue of sack in 2 Henry IV IV.iii. 92-135, would appear to contradict this theory in that "good sherris-sack ... dried ... all the foolish and dull and crudy vapours [in the brain] ; ...makes it [the brain] apprehensive, quick ... full of nimble fiery and delectable shapes ..." However, it is possible that Shakespeare (and Falstaff) intentionally emphasizes here only the first aspect of these vapours. There is no mention of the sluggish "after-effect," the resultant clogging of the nerves after the vapours of the moist brain have been congealed. Naturally Falstaff would want to omit this consideration from his panegyric upon sack.

35 Macbeth II.iii.31.

36 Hill, Interpretacion, G6r.

37 The Booke O merrie Riddles. Together with ... witty Proverbs (London, 1617), G6v; Andrew Boordc, A Compendous Regiment or Dyetary of health (London, 1562), C2r.
Tie up the libertine in a field of feasts,
Keep his brain fuming; Epicurean cooks,
Sharpen with clogless sauce his appetite;
That sleep and feeding may prorogue his honour
Even till a Lethe'd dulness! 38

Many writers caution, however, on the dangers of sleeping on a full stomach. One must wait a few hours until the meat has settled in the stomach; otherwise, indigestion, dropsy, or gout can be engendered. As Thomas Elyot warns, "For therby is ingendred peines & noyse in the bely, & digestion corrupted, & the slepe by yl vapors ascēding, mad vnquiet & troublus." 39

Christopher Langton, in his Introduction into Phisycke, was the only authority I found who advocated that sleep be taken directly after supper, but he also stipulates that "a lytle soft walkyng" be taken before bed to settle the meat in the stomach. Langton's position is that long watching or waking after supper would take away the beneficial effects of digestion and thus "disperses natural heat, unclean blood is engendered and causes evil humors, bringing about paleness, leanness, weakening of the brain." 40

After having got into bed, the prospective sleeper should take care which sleeping position he assumes. First he must lie on his right side until the meat has descended from the mouth of the stomach (on the left side) to the pit of the stomach. In this position the liver rests underneath the stomach and acts as the

38 Anthony and Cleopatra II.i.23-27.
39 Elyot, 45V; Boorde, Clx, C2v; Laurentius, 64; Lowe, F2V; Burton, 464.
40 Langton, 84r, 85r; Lemnius, 37r, 51v, remarks on the virtues of "seasonable exercyse" after dinner.
"fyre under the pot," aiding digestion. If one lay on the left side at first, of course, the upper mouth of the stomach would be opened and the heart would be troubled with the heavy burden of the meal. After this "first sleep" on the right side, the sleeper is free to roll over to his left side and even to lie, if he has a weak digestive system, as Langton puts it, "grouelyng upon hys face."

However, there is imminent danger if one should ever sleep upon his back. Levinus Lemnius gives us a vivid picture of this type of sleeper:

...so many as sleepe after ye sort, lye with their mouthes open, there eyes staryng, their eylids uncloased, sleepeing very vn-quietly, and without any refreshing or ease, ...they be often-tymes troubled with the night Mare, & fallynge sicknes, and are also subject to palseys, crampes, & apoplexies ...

Laurentius mentions specifically that sleeping on one's back will heat the vein that lies on the backbone: then either superfluous vapours will be sent into the brain, or else the excrements of the brain, usually emitted through the nose and mouth, will fall on the backbone.

As we see from the above discussion, sleep for the Elizabethans was dependent upon digestion. In this regard sleep is praised not only for its soothing and healing effects, but also

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41 Elyot, 46r; William Vaughn, Approved Directions for Health (London, 1612), 59; Laurentius, 64,190; Burton, 464; Cleland, 214; Lemnius, 59r; Lowe, F2v; Langton, 84r-84v.
42 Langton, 84v; Burton, 464-465; Elyot, 46r; Cleland, 214; Laurentius, 190; Vaughn 59; Peter Lowe, Whole Course of Chirurgerie, F2v, gives the dissenting opinion that sleeping on one's face causes eye troubles.
43 Lemnius, 59v, 122v; Lowe, F2v; Cleland, 214; Elyot 46r; Vaughn, 59; Langton, 84v.
44 Laurentius, 190.
for its power in aiding digestion. Andrew Boorde states appropriately:

Moderate sleep is most praised, for it doeth make perfect digestion, it doeth noryshe the bloud, and doeth qualyfie the heate of the lyuer, it doeth acuate, quycken and refresheth the memory: it doeth restore nature and doeth quyet all the humoures and pulses in man and doeth comforne all the naturall and anysmall and spyrytuall powers of man.$^{45}$

Note that Boorde speaks of moderate sleep, however. The Elizabethans were careful to specify exactly how much sleep the individual should have. As Boorde says later,

the moderacyon of slope shulde be measured accordyng to the naturall complexion of man, and in any wyse to haue a respecte to the strength and the delytelye to age and youth and to syckenes and helth of man.$^{46}$

As to the complexions or humors, sanguine and choleric men, because they are naturally hot and thus digest rapidly, need only seven hours. If these types sleep too much their over-abundance of heat causes dangerous hot fumes and inflammations. On the other hand, colder types must sleep more. Phlegmatic individuals should sleep at least eight hours, and melancholics require more than that.$^{47}$ In this respect we recall Julius Caesar's famous criticism of Cassius:

Let me have men about me that are fat; Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights: Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look.$^{48}$

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$^{45}$ Boorde, Dyetary, B7r-B7v; Elyot, 45r; Burton, 464; Batman, 81v.

$^{46}$ Boorde, Dyetary, B8r; Elyot, 45r; Laurentius, 156,190.

$^{47}$ Boorde, Dyetary, B8r-B8v; Elyot, 45v; Vaughn, 58; Burton, 465; Lowe, B2v. John Florio, Florios Second Frvtes (London, 1591), 163, gives the proverbial saying (which may have some reference to temperament): "Six houres the Student sleepe applies, seuen past the traveler will rise, eight layne the laborer vp hies, & eu'ry knaue ful nine howrs lies."
Caesar would rather have fat, phlegmatic sleepers about him, than the lean, choleric Cassius. It is interesting to note how Shakespeare deviates from his source here. In Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's Lives Caesar is quoted as saying, "as for those fatte men and smooth comed heads, ...I neuer reckon of them: but these pale visaged and carian leane people, I feare them most, meaning ... Cassius." Shakespeare adds the phrase "and such as sleep o' nights." 49

Lemnius states that adolescents have a temperament of hot and moist, or sanguinity, and thus their sleep should be temperate; Boorde disagrees with the belief that one should sleep eight hours in summer and nine in winter by maintaining that sleep should be governed by one's temperament. 50 Also Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet, though speaking of age and its relation to sleep, emphasizes mental conditions, as he says to Romeo:

Young son, it argues a distemper'd head
So soon to bid good morrow to thy bed;
Care keeps his watch in every old man's eye,
And where care lodges, sleep will never lie;
But where unbruised youth with unstuff'd brain
Doth couch his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign. 51

The implication seems generally that one's digestion, furthered or hindered by his natural temperament, determines the length of sleep. Thus healthy people who digest properly need less sleep

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48 Julius Caesar. I.ii.192-194.
50 Lemnius, 94v-95r; Boorde, Dyetary, 45v.
51 Romeo and Juliet II.iii.33-38.
than those who have weak stomachs, and one should sleep more than usual after a big meal.\(^5^2\)

Extremes must be avoided, however. Too much sleep or too much watching or waking can have serious consequences. Thomas Elyot states that immoderate sleep "maketh y\(^e\) body apt vnto palsies, apoplexis, falling siknes, reumes, \& impostumes, also it maketh the wittes dulle, \& the body slowe \& vnapt to honest exercise." Andrew Boorde concurs and adds that oversleep makes the brain giddy, dulls the memory, leads a man to sin, and induces brevity of life, while Laurentius adds that it harms eyesight.\(^5^3\) Finally, Palingenius's Zodiake, p.39, states the commonplace notion:

...for famous things, by sleepe none are perfourmed plaine
And for to sleepe in feathers soft, renowne doth eft refuse:
Shun thou this same, with all thy might thy selfe to
watching vse.

Without the modern alarm clock, however, Elizabethans had to resort to various means to prevent oversleeping. James Cleland advocated the Aristotelian practice of holding a brass bowl in one's hand over a basin; when the bowl fell from the sleeper's hands and clattered into the basin, the sleeper would awaken. Then, to prevent going to sleep, one should mash up a garlic and drink it or eat a combination of parsley and fennel.\(^5^4\)

Likewise one must not sleep during the day. Peter Lowe warns that daytime sleeping or slumbering fills the brain full

\(^{5^2}\) Elyot, 45\(^r\)-45\(^v\); Lemnius, 57\(^v\), 73\(^r\), 82\(^v\), 122\(^v\).
\(^{5^3}\) Elyot, 46\(^r\); Boorde, Dystary, B7\(^v\); Laurentius, 63; Vaughn, 58; Lowe F2\(^v\); Palingenius, 39.
of humidity, hinders digestion, and brings on ganting (yawning), ristig (belching), heaviness, and catarrh of the head, while Laurentius adds that it blows up the cheeks, troubles the sight, and makes one lazy. Thus Prince Hal berates Falstaff the night fellow as being "fat-witted, with drinking of old sack and un-buttoning thee after supper and sleeping upon benches after noon...." James Cleland, in The Instruction of a young Noble-man, agrees with Hippocrates that the natural time for sleep is at night, when it is cold, dark and drowsy, and he therefore pities many such noble gadabouts who stay up at night and thus pervert the course of nature. If one must, however, it is better to sleep from daybreak to eight or nine o'clock rather than during the day.

Though one must not oversleep nor sleep during the day, the converse of such practices is equally dangerous. One must not stay awake too long. Whereas too much sleep produced giddiness and dull wits by the overabundance of moist vapours reaching the brain, a lack of sleep hinders digestion, makes the body apt to consumption, and dries up the brain. The natural heat from digestion is wasted and the brain becomes cool and dry.

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54 Cleland, 213; —, A newe boke of medecynes ... The Treasure of poro men (London, 1539), 21v-22r.
55 Lowe, F2r; Laurentius, 63-64, 189-190; Lemnius, 59v; Vaughn, 59; Burton, 465; Merchant of Venice II.v.47-48.
56 1 Henry IV I.i.i.2-4.
57 Cleland, 213; Lowe, F2r; Peter Lowe, Pressage of deuyne (bound with Lowe, Course of Chirurgerie), B4r; see also John Florio, His firste Fruites (London, 1578), 33v, the proverbial saying: "To watche in the Moone, and sleepe in the Sunne, is neither profite nor honour."
58 Elyot, 46r; Laurentius, 157; Lowe, F2v; Lemnius, 59v; The Taming of the Shrew IV.iii.8-9.
These cold and dry characteristics would of course refer to melancholy men, who are indeed most seriously afflicted with insomnia. Love melancholy is thus noted in Shakespeare, as when Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* says, "Love hath chase'd sleep from my entralled eyes," and it is recognized that insomnia could lead to madness, as the abbess judges of Antipholus in *The Comedy of Errors*. Likewise one of the witches in *Macbeth* would drain the shipman "dry as hay:/ Sleep shall neither night nor day/ Hang upon his pent-house lid...."

There are various sleeping potions available to procure sleep for such melancholic (cold and dry) or choleric (hot and dry) individuals. Robert Burton and Andreas Laurentius discuss numerous remedies, dividing them into internal remedies, such as the oil and seeds of poppy, violets, henbane, mandrake, roses, opium, and lettuce, or external aids used as head powders, frontlets, ointments, plasters, nosegays, and leg lotions. Thus Iago speaks of poppy, mandragora, and "drowsy syrups" to Othello, while Cleopatra asks Charmian for some mandragora to "sleep out this great gap of time/ My Anthony is away."

It is important too, that one have a quiet mind when he goes to sleep. His last thoughts of the day should be pleasant;

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60 *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* II.iv.133; *Midsummer Night's Dream* II.ii.80–81.
61 *The Comedy of Errors* V.i.68; *The Winter's Tale* II.iii.31–39.
there should be no anger, heaviness, sorrow, or pensive thoughts to trouble and disquiet the mind. 65 Brutus says of his boy Lucius:

Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber:
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
Which busy care draws in the brains of men;
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound. 66

King Henry, in his lengthy soliloquy on ceremony, says that no King:

Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
Who with a body fill'd and vacant mind
Gains him to rest, cram'd with distressful bread;
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell,
But, like a lackey, from the rise to set
Sweats in the eye of Phoebus and all night
Sleeps in Elysium; ... 67

In this regard Laurentius and others stipulate that you should not apply yourself to any deep meditation or study after supper, for, as Thomas Nashe says; "Who study most, dreame most."

Such studious pursuits by Elizabethan candlelight might turn the course of natural heat away from digestion. Christopher Langton mentions Seneca's story that Asinius would not open a letter after dinner so as to go to bed with a quiet mind. 68 Likewise Rosalind


66 Othello III.i.330-333; Anthony and Cleopatra I.v.4-6.

67 Boorde, Dyetary, C1v; Cleland, 214; Burton, 465-466.

68 Julius Caesar II.1.230-233; Romeo and Juliet II.i.35-38.

69 Henry V IV.i.285-291.
tells Orlando that "a priest that lacks Latin ...sleeps easily, because he cannot study." Sweet music can also soothe one to sleep, as Burton suggests.

Up to this point we have investigated to some extent the sixteenth century beliefs as to the nature of sleep and its effects. We have seen that during sleep the imagination is free, that sleep is primarily caused by digestion, and that sleep is related to one's bodily humors. Before entering into a discussion of dreams and their relationships to sleep and to the individual, it might be well to mention briefly one other related topic, that of sleepwalking, as a further illustration and clarification of Elizabethan sleep theory.

Palingenius raises the question for us. If moving is the chief sign of life, since through movement of the vital spirits the mind imparts commands to the body and in turn receives stimulation from the body, how can there be movement in deep sleep? How can one distinguish sleep from death? The phantasy is free, but how does it act? Palingenius answers significantly:

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68 Laurentius, 157; Andrew Boorde, The breuiary of Healthe (London, 1552), 457; Batman 82v; Thomas Nashe, "The Praye of the Red Herring," Works, III, 197; Langston, 85v; Robert Burton, Anatomy, 465, advocates the bedtime reading of "some pleasant Author," implying that there should be no mental effort involved. Plutarch, 623, agrees that a little mental exercise is better for digestion, as long as it is "not biting in any wise, nor offensive and odious."

69 As You Like It III.ii.336-337.

70 Burton, 465; Henry IV III.i.215-218; Midsummer Night's Dream IV.i.87.
It must be knowne that of the thing the Image doth remaine
In vs, of all that we doe see, or Senses can retaine.
This makes vs think we see the face that late we gased on,
And that we seeme to heare the words were vted longe ago.
These forms within the secret celles inclosed in the braine,
A vapour moues, which to ascende the stomack doth constraine,
And minde deluded so doth moue, the body styres thereby,
If the Resemblance be of force, that in thy head doth ly.71

Burton and others elaborate further that it is usually a hot
vapour from the stomach, which, upon reaching the brain, troubles
and moves the fantasy. The fantasy in turn releases animal
spirits which cause the body to move.72

The important aspects here, then, are the images of waking
thoughts retained in the memory -- one should expect that a
sleepwalker would betray his innermost thoughts through his
actions and speech. In Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene, the
only sleepwalking instance in Shakespeare, this is exactly
what happens. The Doctor comments on this "great perturbation
in nature," Lady Macbeth recalls the murders of the chamberlains
and King Duncan, of Lady Macduff, of Banquo, and the Doctor con-
cludes that:

... unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.73

71 Palingenius, 120-121; Thomas Hill, Interpretation, C4v-
C5r, relates sleepwalking especially to the fears of conscience.
72 Burton, 220; Leamius, 131r; Thomas Churchyard, The Firste
Parte of Churchyardeas Chippes (London, 1575), 78r.
73 Macbeth V.i.10, 79-81. In reference to the dramatic
function of Lady Macbeth's action and speech here, as giving the
audience a means besides the soliloquy or aside to be aware of
the character's thoughts, this would only be significant if the
audience, like the doctor and Macbeth, accepted the fact that
sleepwalking is partly caused by and illustrates one's memories.
The Doctor well realizes that Lady Macbeth's memories are reflected in her actions and speech. There is no question here of idle movements, of vague, incoherent speech — the Doctor immediately accepts Lady Macbeth's movements and speech as motivated from her inner thoughts. Thus he adds significantly:

More need she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her. (V.i.82-85)

The Doctor realizes that he cannot administer to the Queen's conscience; he is only a physician — moral psychotherapy or spiritual comfort to the wife of the King is beyond his ken. As in the confessional, Lady Macbeth has revealed her sins; the natural physician is not a priest. All he can do is look toward the future and see to it that any disturbing factors are removed from her, with the hope that, without further stimulation to waking thoughts on these dire subjects, Lady Macbeth will gradually forget.

Macbeth is also aware that sleepwalking is due to past memories, as he asks the doctor later:

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain...(V.ii.40-420)

But again comes the Doctor's considered reply, as he realizes that the world of the soul is beyond his medical cures:

Therein the patient
Must minister to himself. (V.ii.45-46)
CHAPTER II
INTERNAL NATURAL DREAMS

In the discussion given above we have seen that sleep occurs after digestion. Vapours rise from the stomach, clog the sinews in the brain, and thus inhibit the animal spirits from moving and acting. The external senses are quieted, while the internal senses of imagination and memory are free. When these vapours are spent, the passages are gradually opened, the animal spirits move once more, the outward senses return, and the sleeper awakens. Thus Imogen recognizes the difference between sleep and dreams under the influence of the internal imagination, and waking, under the influence of the external senses, as she says with surprise:

The dream's here still: even when I wake, it is Without me, as within me; not imagined, but felt!¹

During the sleeping hours the imagination may be moved and troubled by an overabundance of vapours, by the physical condition of the body itself, or by various external influences such as harsh noises, astrological influences, demons, and even God himself. These disturbances, then, would cause the imagination or fancy to create various dreams, and the validity and nature of the dream are determined from its source and whether, in this whole process, the imagination has been controlled by the mind's reasoning power.

Plutarch in his Morals, translated by Philemon Holland

¹ Cymbeline IV.ii.306-307.
in 1603, mentions the dangers of the imagination uncontrolled by reason, whereas:

...they whose sensuall part of the soule is made trainable and obedient, tame and well schooled by the discipline of reason, will neither in dreams nor sicknesses easily suffer the lustes and concupiscences of the flesh, to rage or break out unto any enormities ... [and] have no illusions arising in their braines to trouble them, but those dreams or visions onely as be joious pleasant, plaine and evident, not painfull, nor terrible, nothing rough, maligne, tortuous and crooked..."^2

The primary cause of dreams is a movement in the imagination. Thomas Nashe states that in sleep we are "agasted and terrified with the disordered skirmishing and conflicting of our sensitive faculties," and Daldianus Artemidorus, a famous ancient soothsayer who wrote a comprehensive compilation of dreams and their interpretations, says simply that "a dreame therefore is a motion or fiction of the soule in a diverse forme: signifying cyther good, or euill to come."^3

There must be a force to stimulate movement of the inward sensitive faculties, however. These further or secondary causes, as I have intimated, can be either the internal influences of the bodily humors, mental passions, or physical condition, or the external influences of nature, the devil, or God (usually through his angels). Raphael Holinshed speaks of the dream of Henry I and suggests that the diligent reader turn to the Commonplaces (1583) [Vermigl], and it is here that I found the most extensive discussion of dreams in this period.

^2 Plutarch, Morals, 255.
^3 Nacho, Terrors, 373; Daldianus Artemidorus, The Judgement of Dreames (London, 1606), 1; Bright, 118-119.
We may recall that Vermigli repeats his discussion in his earlier Commentary vpon the Booke of Judges (1564), which Commentary is mentioned as a source by Batman vpon Bartholome (1582). 4

Vermigli\(^5\) begins his discussion with the classification of the early Hebrews. The scriptures, we are told, separate dreams into natural, divine and "mixt" types. The distinction here between divine and "mixt" depends on the nature of sleep—God appears to the sleeper, but if God puts you to sleep, as he did Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:18), this is divine; if you fall asleep by yourself, as did Jacob before seeing the ladder (Genesis 28:11), this is a "mixt" dream. Vermigli does not belabor this point, though, and passes on to a comprehensive analysis of natural and supernatural dreams.

Vermigli's primary authority on natural dreams is Aristotle's De divinatione per somnium. Aristotle is said to relate all dreams to natural causes, denying the influence of God and supporting the theory of natural prophecy. Dreams can be signs of the affections of the body, deriving from the humors, or signs of the affections of the mind, deriving from the passions or desires which occupy our thoughts during the day. Moreover, dreams can be due to indigestion and overeating. A dream can not only be caused by these natural forces, but it

\[^4\] Raphael Holinshed, The Third volume of Chronicles (London, 1587), 44; see n. 20, chapter 1.

\[^5\] Vermigli, Commonplaces, 32-39. The following discussion will derive from this specific reference.
can act as a cause itself, precipitating further action once the sleeper awakes.

There is no specific supernatural guiding force to dreams, but they may be prophetic by chance. In this regard men may be able to prophesy, and those that dream more than others, such as idlers, melancholics, madmen, and kinsfolk, will naturally have more chances for prophetic dreams. Here Vermigli mentions Democritus as another authority who believed that dreams came by chance, without the influence of God. Galen is said even to deny the influence of the passions, relating all dreams to either the excess or want of humors. Hippocrates, on the other hand, is said to recognize certain divine dreams and thus to be doubtful about the natural prophets, even advocating prayer to the gods after dreams occur.

Besides these above internal causes, Vermigli mentions the external influence of the heavens on dreamers. However, it is difficult to determine which specific stars are to be accounted the causes of such dreams. Interpreters of these dreams are of doubtful authority. Peter is skeptical about the whole question of dream interpretation, concluding that, as for natural dreams, "they may more easilie be judged of by the cvents, than the cvents can be concieuted of by them." He recalls that Homer and Vergil spoke of the horn and ivory gates of dreams—more dreams passed through the opaque ivory gate of false dreams than through the horn gate of true dreams. Besides,

6 Ibid., 35.
it is not like a Christian to depend on such "perilous and
uncertaine conjectures;'' the devil may have his hand in it.

Divine dreams, though, are another matter. Divine dreams
can come from God or from his angels, and Vermigli states
that there are two conditions necessary for divine prophecies
by dreams. First there must be an image put in our imagina-
tion by God, and then there must be judgment given to be able
to interpret this dream properly. God can either give a dream
that is self-evident, or he can present a symbolic dream that
needs interpretation by a God-inspired prophet such as Joseph
(Genesis 40, 41) or Daniel (Daniel 2,4).

Saint Augustine serves as the principal authority on
demonic dreams. These include the ancient pagan oracles in
which evil spirits appeared to sleeping men and answered their
requests. It is a difficult task sometimes to distinguish
between divine and demonic dreams. To know the origin, one
must observe the effects of the dream, since dreams from the
devil always lead men to wicked opinions and deeds. As
Vermigli quotes from Augustine's 100th letter to Erodius:

I would to God I could perceiue the difference betweene
visions, which are giuen to deceiue me; and those which are
giuen to saluation. But yet we must be of good cheere, bi-
cause God suffereth his children sometime to be tempted, but
not to perish.7

Vermigli continues his discussion with a refutation of
many of Aristotle's theories and strongly argues the power of

7 Ibid., 37.
God in our dreams, though he acknowledges that there may be natural dreams; certainly animal "dreams" are caused by nature, not God. Epicurus may have agreed with Aristotle, but Plato and the Stoics taught that our dreams are "a familiar and domesticall oracle" from God. As for natural dream interpretation, Vermigli agrees with Augustine that the soul receives its power of prophecy not from nature but from God; the only valid use of natural prophecy is in judging of the humors that might have caused the dream. Finally, lest dreams come from the devil, we must pray for God's protection throughout the night.

From the above we can see that the medieval tendency toward use of numerous "authorities" still prevailed in Vermigli's comprehensive discussion in the sixteenth century. This practice was also common with other writers on dreams in this period, the most often quoted sources being Aristotle, Galen, Hippocrates, Artemidorus, the patristic writers Augustine and Tertullian, and Macrobius (who wrote a fifth century commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio).

Vermigli's discussion of dreams is possibly the most extensive one of the period, while a concise and yet revealing commentary available to the Elizabethans is a speech of Pandarus in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde. Pandarus berates Troilus for his reliance on dreams; they are caused by the melancholy humor

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8 Ibid., 38.
and have no significance. At least, no one can know what dreams truly signify:

For prestos of the temple tellen this,  
That dremes ben the revelaciouns  
Of goddes, and as wel they telle, ywis  
That they ben infernals illusions;  
And leches seyn, that of complexions  
Proceden they, or fast, or glotony.  
Who woot in soth thus what thei signifie?  
Ek oother seyn that thorugh impresions,  
As if wight hath faste a thing in mynde,  
That therof comen swiche avysiouns;  
And other seyn, as they in bokes synde,  
That after tymes of the yer, by kinde,  
Men drume, and that th'effect goth by the moone.  
But leve no drem, for it is nought to done.9

When natural dreams are analysed, it is seen first, as has been pointed out, that the imagination in sleep may be moved by the humors or complexion of the body. Pierre Le Loyer speaks of the inward senses being moved by a "locaal motion of the humors," and Thomas Wright notes specifically that dreams may be caused by "spirites, which ascend into the imagination, the which being purer or grosser, hotter or colder, more or lesse, (which diversiteit dependeth vpon the humours of the bodie)...."10

Lemnius relates these "spirites" to fumes arising from the humors or from mental disturbances as he says that dreams:

... are caused and styred by vapours & fumes proceeding out of the humours & agitation of the Spyrite Animall: in some of which Dreams and Imaginations ... playnely signifi the abundaunce of Humours, or els some earnest & greedy desyre to copasse somewhat, which wee would very fayne bring to passe.11

9 Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, V.365-378; see also Chaucer, House of Fame, 21-52. Citations from Chaucer in my text are to The Complete Works, ed. Fred.N. Robinson (2d ed: Boston, 1957).
11 Lemnius, 113v.
In *Cymbeline* Imogen speaks of these same fumes in reference to her supposed dream:

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I hope I dream;
For so I thought I was a cave-keeper,
And cook to honest creatures: but 'tis not so;
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot at nothing,
Which the brain makes of fumes... 12
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The humors release fumes that agitate the imagination, but it is necessary at first to understand what those humors and complexions are. Thomas Elyot defines one's complexion as "a combynation of two dyuers qualities of the foure elementes in one bodye, as hotte and drye of the fyre: hotte and moyste of the Ayre, colde and moyste of the water, colde and dry of the Erth...." Thus one in whom hot and dry predominates will have a fiery or choleric disposition; a hot and moist individual will be airy or sanguine; a cold and moist person will be watery or phlegmatic; and a cold and dry body denotes an earthy or melancholic temperament. 13 These various complexions or temperaments are produced by the four humors arising from the liver, namely, choler, blood, phlegm, and melancholy, so that we may speak of the person's humor as being identical with the complexion it produces.

Good health depends on a proper proportion of these various humors in the body. One has a natural temperament, but if one humor predominates too strongly he becomes deranged. This theory applies likewise in one's dreams. The force and disturbance of a dream is corollary to the abundance of the dominating

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12 *Cymbeline* IV.ii.297-301.
13 Elyot, 2v-3r.
humor of the dreamer. Thus Pertelote chides Chaunteleer in the Nun's Priest's Tale for his dream, saying that it due to "compleccious, / Whan humours been to habundant in a wight."

His dream must come of "the greete superfluyte / Of youre rede colera, pardee ...." Vermigli quotes Aristotle as his source for the classification of dreams from humors, and I have found this grouping to be a commonplace among writers discussing this type of dream. As Vermigli says:

Where choler aboundeth, there flames, fire, coles, lightening, brallings, and such like are scene. If that melancholie have the upper hand, then smoke, great darknes, all blacke and ill faured things, dead corse, and such like, present themselves. But flegme raiseth vp the likenes of showers, raines, fluds, waters, haile, isc, & whatsoever else hath plentie of moisture joined with coldnes. By bloud are stirred vp goodlie sights, cleere, white, and fragrant, and such as resemble the common purenes, and usuall forme or face of things.

In this respect humor dreams serve a useful purpose for the physician, since by knowledge of the dream he can learn his patient's inward complexion. Galen, Hippocrates, and Boethius were said to use this form of dream analysis with their patients, and Reginald Scot adds that these early doctors were often suspected of dealing with the devil because of their ability to diagnose disease from dreams in this manner. Plutarch speaks of the topic thus:

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We must besides, regard our very dreams; whether they be strange and unusual; for if there be represented extraordinary fancies and imaginations, they testify and show a repletion of grosse, viscusious or slimy humours, and a great perturbation of the spirits within. 18

This diagnostic practice is more conclusive during sleeping dreams than during the day, when the patient is awake. Peter Vermigli states that the motions in the imagination caused by humors are always small, and when one is awake, with his mind drawn to strong impressions from the external senses, the awareness of the humors is lost. However, when one is asleep and free from the external sense impressions of the day, the humors are of more force and the phantasy is able to be moved by them. 19

Dreams arising from choler, as Vermigli says, may deal with fires and flames. Thus Pertelote speaks of the results of a superfluity of red choler:

Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,
Of rede beestes, that they wol hem byte
Of contek, and of whelpes, grete and lyte. 20

Levinus Lemnius writes at length of the "tertian agewes" or burning that is enkindled by red choler, resulting in terrible

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16 Vermigli, 33; see also Batman, 83^v; Elyot, 2^r-3^r; Laurentius, 95,99; Lowe,2^v; Sebastian Michaelis, The Admirable History ... of a Penitent Woman ... wherevato is annexed A Discourse of Spirits, trans. W.B. (London, 1613?), 106; Gervase Babington, ... Notes vpon ... Genesis (London, 1592), 157^v; William Perkins, A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft. (Cambridge, 1609), 624; Adams, 841-842.
17 Laurentius, 99; Scot, 101; Babington, 157^v; Michaelis, 106; Thomas Wright, 65; Hill, A2^v-A3^v, D2^v; Lemnius 112^v; Vermigli, Commonplaces, 33; Artemidorus, B2; Nashe, Terrors of the Night, I, 368; Batman, 84^v.
apparitions and vain terrors in the sleep of cholerics, for "they dreame of fyer and burning of houses & Townes, and thincke all the worlde to bee in an vproare and hurlyburly, killinge and sleying one an other." Soldiers would thus be more liable to dreams of this sort, and indeed the heat and anger of a choleric disposition was well suited to a military man. In this regard Tullus Aufidius recalls to his enemy Coriolanus:

...thou hast beat me out
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me;
We have been down together in my sleep,
Unbuckling helms, fistng each other's throat,
And waked half dead with nothing! Likewise Hotspur, whose very name suggests the choleric temperament, is troubled in his sleep and murmurs "tales of iron wars ... and all the currents of a heady fight." Artemidorus cautions that to dream of combat prophesies calamity unless the dreamer lives by bloodshed, as do surgeons, butchers, and cooks. Anne seems to include Gloucester in this category as she accuses him of her father-in-law's death:

Thou wast provoked by thy bloody mind,
Which never dreamt on aught but butcheries.

18 Plutarch, Morals, 618.
19 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 33; Batman, 84r.
20 Chaucer, Nun's Priest's Tale, 4119-4122.
21 Lemnius, 132v; Nash, Terrors, I, 369, even adds skirmishing with the devil.
22 Coriolanus IV.v.119-124.
23 1 Henry IV II.iii.51-58; Artemidorus, 37.
24 Richard III I.ii.99-100.
Phlegmatic individuals, we recall, dream of moisture and cold. Lemnius elaborates this aspect somewhat as he states:

Thus, they that be of Cold and moist Complexio, in Dreames imagine and thyncke themselves dyuinge ouer head and ears in water, or to be in Bathes and Baynes: which straught argueth great store of Phlegme to fall out of the head, into the nape of their Neckes, Jawes, vocall Artery, and Lungen. Semblably, if they dreame of Hayle, Snow, Yse, storme, & Rayne, it betokeneth abudaunce of Phlegme, sometime thicke and grosse, sometime thinne and liquide.25

Christopher Langton adds significantly that phlegmatic dreamers imagine themselves swimming or drowning, and Thomas Nashe speaks of Hero's dream while waiting for Leander to cross the Hellespont. She was troubled with the rheume, a sign that she should hear of some drowning, and towards daybreak she dreamt that "Leander and shee were playeing at checkestone with pearls in the bottome of the sea."26

In Richard III Clarence has a similar type of dream as he bides his time in the Tower. He dreams of a voyage across the English Channel during which Gloucester accidentally pushed him overboard:

Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!  
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!  
What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!  
Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;  
Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;  
Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,  
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,  
All scatter'd in the bottome of the sea. (I.iv.21-28)

Sanguine persons, on the other hand, usually have encouraging dreams. Thomas Hill notes that such dreamers believe

25 Lemnius, 112°.  
26 Langton, 87°; Nashe, Prayse of Red Herring, III, 197.
that they can even see angels and saints in their dreams, but
Hill points out that this is merely an illusion of the red
colour of blood mixed with white phlegm. In Richard III the
Earl of Richmond, the sanguine leader of the forces against
Richard, has the "sweetest sleep, and fairest-boding dreams /
That ever enter'd in a drowsy head" (V.iii.227-228) on the eve
of battle, in contrast to Richard's fearful dreams. Likewise
Romeo, brightened by cheerful thoughts, has an unusual but
hopeful dream:

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!
(V.i.6-11)

Melancholy men, though, are subject to dark and fearful
dreams. Timothy Bright emphasizes the fearful aspect as he
says:

... their dreams are fearefull: partly by reason of their
fancie waking, is most occupied about feares, and terrours,
which retayneth the impression in sleepe, and partly through
blacke and darko fumes of melancholie, rising vp to the braine,
whereof the fantasie forgeth objectes, and disturbeth the sleep
of melancholy persons.28

In Richard III Richard seems beset with such dreams, as his
wife Anne tells her mother-in-law Queen Elizabeth:

For never yet one hour in his bed
Have I enjoy'd the golden dew of sleep,
But have been waked by his timorous dreams.
(IV.i.83-85)

27 Hill, Interpretacion, D2r.
28 Bright, 151; see also Bright, 102-103, 114.
And, moreover, on the eve of battle ghostly apparitions appear to Richard and he awakes, saying to Ratcliff, "O Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!" (V.iii.212). Hamlet speaks of his bad dreams (II.ii.263), and Leonato in Much Ado attempts to give a pleasing description of his niece Beatrice as he says to Don Pedro:

There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad when she sleeps; and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamt of unhappiness, and waked herself with laughing. (II.i.357-362)

Thomas Nashe even states that "melancholy is the mother of dreams, and of all the terrors of the night whatsoever." This may have some relevance to Julius Caesar as Cassius says of the monarch:

For he is superstitious grown of late,
Quite from the main opinion he held once
Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies:
It may be, these apparent prodigies,
The unaccustomed terror of this night....(II.i.195-199)

Plutarch in his Morals makes the point that such melancholic dreams are more prophetic than others, simply because the melancholy person dreams constantly, and "it can not chuse but they meet with the truth otherwhiles: much like as when a man shoots many shafts, it goeth hard if he hit not the marke with one." George Gifford contradicts this theory of natural prophecy, however, on the basis of demonic influence. He says that the devil:

...can set a strong fantastic in the mind that is oppressed

29 Nashe, Terrors, I, 357.
30 Plutarch, Morals, 1349-1350; Vermigli, Commonplaces, 34.
with melancholic, that such or such a matter was, which indeed was never so. Men must be wise in these causes, or else they soon be circumvented by the craftes of Satan and drawn into great sinne.\textsuperscript{31}

Melancholy dreams are not only fearful and powerful, but they are imbued with the color and connotations of blackness. The melancholy humors, having become wild and black, range throughout the brain, darkening the light of the understanding and setting before the imagination all manner of "darke and obscure things."\textsuperscript{32} Thus Chaucer's Pertelote speaks of melancholics seeing "blake beres, or boles blake, / Or elles blake deceles."\textsuperscript{33} Thomas Hill points out that such sights have no supernatural demonic significance though:

\begin{quote}
... although devils of their proper nature have no colour at all, yet because by this especially as by the black, they are manifested to the people, therefore when it so happeneth that the adust humour or fume doth occupye the spirites and ... passages, then the cogitatyue ruled by the, doth cause the dreamers to beleue that ye similitudes or black kyndes to be very diuils.... \textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

Macbeth gives us the connotations of night's blackness and terrors in the dagger scene:

\begin{quote}
Now o'er the one half-world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; now witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings... (II.1.49-52)
\end{quote}

Yet another aspect of melancholy dreams is experienced by a sufferer under love melancholy, who, as we recall, often cannot sleep. In \textit{Cymbeline} Imogen misses her husband Posthumus

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item George Gifford, \textit{A Dialogue concerning Witches}, K3\textsuperscript{r}.
\item Vaughn, 63; Laurentius, 95-96.
\item Chaucer, \textit{Nun's Priest's Tale}, 4125-4126.
\item Hill, \textit{Interpretacion}, DL\textsuperscript{v}-D2\textsuperscript{r}.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and resents the implication of her infidelity as she speaks to Pisanio:

\[
\text{False to his bed! What is it to be false?}
\text{To lie in watch there and to think on him?}
\text{To weep 'twixt cloak and cloak? if sleep charge nature,}
\text{To break it with a fearful dream of him}
\text{And cry myself awake? (III.iv.42-46)}
\]

In Richard III, when Anne tells the king that he, as one martially choleric, "never dreamt on aught but butcheries," Richard blames his conduct rather on love melancholy, saying:

\[
\text{Your beauty was the cause of that effect:}
\text{Your beauty, which did haunt me in my sleep}
\text{To undertake the death of all the world,}
\text{So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.}
\text{(I.ii.121-124)}
\]

Dreaming on love can even lead from melancholy to madness, as Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night wryly suggests concerning the duped Malvolio, "Why, thou hast put him in such a dream, that, when the image of it leaves him, he must run mad."

\text{(II.v.211-213).}

An indirect reference to humor dreams concerns the quality of one's blood. The humors pass into the brain via the blood, so that the disposition of the blood itself may indicate certain dreams. Thus clear blood points to dreams of joy and mirth; watery blood to fearful dreams; thin and hot blood to dreams of choleric anger "sone kindled and sone qualifyed;" and dis-tempered, corrupt blood to dreams of long-lasting ire or of visits to stinking, unclean places. 36

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35 See Two Gentlemen of Verona IV.iv.81-84.
36 Nash, Terrors, 357; Hill, Interpretacion, B5v-B6r; Batman, 85v.
The humors themselves may not be the only bodily cause of dreams, however. Sleep being dependent on the efficacy of digestion, the Elizabethans extended this theory to include dreams caused by the nature and quantity of food that one ate before sleep. Peter Vermigli, on the authority of Galen, thus argues as to the specific nature of one's meal:

... there be certaine kinds of meats, which being natural-lie cholerike, flegmatike, or melancholike, doo by reason of their qualities stir vp about the phantasie of men in their sleepe, as it were shapes and similitudes of things agreeable to those humors; although the temperature of the bodies of such, doo not of it selve offend by those humors. Which thing also a physician must observe in dreams; namelie to see what maner of meate the sicke man vsed. Yea and wine (as teacheth Aristotle) being immoderateli taken, dooth in the time of sleepe make manie de-formed shapes of things.37

Specifically, coleworts, beans, peas, garlic, and onion engender melancholy, bringing about sorrowful and terrible dreams.38

Thomas Hill is wary of the value of all this, however. In dreams from meat and drink the vapours are not as perfectly carried to the brain as from humor dreams; thus the former type is more obscure than dreams from humors. Besides, any dream can be misinterpreted, "euen as the Grammarian may wryte barberouslye and the Phisition also harmeth in his cures."39

Thomas Nashe, ever the skeptic and wit in matters of this sort, discredits this general theory, especially in relation to dreams supposedly caused from specific foods. This is what "old beldames" would say:

37 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 33; Michaelis, 106; Churchyard,73r.
38 Vaughn, 65; Hill, Interpretacion, D6v; Burton, 599.
...they would verie soberly affirme, that if one at supper eat birds, he should dreame of flying; if fish, of swimming; if venison, of hunting, and so for the rest: as though those birds, fish, and venison beeing dead and digested, did flie, swim, and hold their chase in their braynes....

Such skepticism does not refer to indigestion, however. Nashe and others agree that overeating or improper foods can cause vain and dismal dreams. The fiery inflammation of the liver or stomach can motivate our imaginations to analogous dreams. In this respect bright sanguine young men, with better digestion and more natural heat, sleep more soundly and may not dream as often as do their colder, weak-stomached, more melancholic elders.

Since digestion takes time, the exact hour of dreaming becomes significant. One does not dream in the beginning of the night, or if he does it is vain and of no effect, because the digestive fumes are then clogging the passages in the brain. After midnight, however, when digestion is over, dreams are considered of more consequence. At this time they are not derived from meat or drink, but probably from some supernatural cause. Otherwise, if one sleeps soundly, untroubled by natural afflictions, he will not dream at all.

Overeating, according to Thomas Hill, can cause one to have vain dreams until morning. The best solution is to rely on dreams that are either just before sunrise or in the early morning, when the blood is more pure than at other times. Hill agrees with other authors on this point, though also

39 Hill, Interpretacion, D5\textsuperscript{V}, E3\textsuperscript{r}-E4\textsuperscript{r}.
40 Nashe, Terrors, 369.
relating this to the influence of the sun:

And dreams moved or caused in the rising of the Sun, and before or after unto the third hour, be for the more part true. But those dreams at the noone time of the day and at the setting of the Sun, be not so true. For that the Sun is the author of the true and constant things. So that when he shall be nere the angels, he doth then cause the truer dreams. 46

Such a theory might refer to Lord Stanley's true dream in Richard III. Hastings opens his door to receive Stanley's messenger "upon the stroke of four," and is therewith informed that Stanley dreamt to-night "the bear had rased his helm." The bear would be a symbolic reference to Richard, and the dream later is fulfilled when Hastings is hanged. 47

In 2 Henry VI, when the despondent Duke of Gloucester will tell of his "troublous dream," his wife Eleanor answers saucily:

What dream'd my Lord? tell me, and I'll requite it With sweet rehearsal of my morning's dream. 48

Whereas Gloucester has dreamed of losing his staff and seeing two noblemen beheaded, Eleanor has had an ambitious dream of being crowned Queen at Westminster. Gloucester's dream is fulfilled, but the Duchess is banished to the Isle of Man. 49

41 Ibid., 357, 369-370; Hill Interpretacion, A2²-A2⁷, D4⁵; Bonde, 36².
42 Hill, Interpretacion, C3 Everybody, Michaelis, 106.
44 Fullonius, Acolastus, II.i. (p.66); Lennius, '52², 95²; Vaughn, 61-62; Hill, Interpretacion, D4⁵.
45 Hill, Interpretacion, B6⁶.
In this case, then, Eleanor scoffs at her husband and his
dependence upon dreams; if his dream is true, then her morning
dream is even more true. Her exaggeration is meant only to
make her husband's dream seem likewise foolish.

The humors and the digestive process are not the only
physical sources of dreams, however. One's state of health
can be upset by disease, and sick persons are thus known to have
frequent dreams. Thomas Hill believes that the sick have
fearful dreams, while Thomas Nashe indicates that there are
specific dreams for each disease:

He that is inclining to a burning feuer shall dreame of
frayes, lightning and thunder, of skirraising with the diuell,
... He that is spiced wyth the gowte or the dropsie, frequencly
dreameth of fetters & manacles, and being put on the billbowes,
that his legges are turned to marble or adamant, and his feet,
like the giants that scal'd heauen, kept vnder with Mount Ossa
and Pelcon, and earst while that they are fast locked in
quagmyres.50

Not only physical sickness, but also mental disturbances
can cause dreams. As Vermigli says, "the phraetike sort
also, bicause their mind is void both of the knowledge of the
outward senses, and eke of the use of reason, therefore they
by wholic vp to idle imaginations." These madmen, Batman adds,
have "wonderfull dreamos, that neuer man heard speake off
before" Shakespeare's Theseus in A Midsummer Night's Dream
states likewise that:

46 Vaughn, 61; Scot, 104; Hill, Interpretacion, Clv, D&F.
47 Richard III III.i.i.2, 11; III.iv.83-85.
48 2 Henry VI I.i.i.22, 23-24.
49 Ibid., I.i.i.25-40; II.iii.1-14.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends. (V.1.2-4)

But he goes on to say that madmen have bad dreams: they "see
more devils than vast hell can hold." (V.1.7).

One does not have to be mad to dream, however. We recall
the necessity to go to sleep with a quiet mind. Elizabethans
believed, as do modern dream analysts, that our waking actions,
conscious desires, and thoughts were powerful causes of dreams.
It was extremely important, therefore, as pointed out before, that
the sleeper go to bed with a quiet mind, untroubled by cares,
sorrows, fears, feelings of guilt, or weighty matters gathered
from studious bedtime reading.

Thoughts, desires or passions, and past actions caused
dreams in a specific manner. La Primaudaye reminds us that
during sleep, while the external senses are retired and with-
drawn from activity, "the imagination, thought, consideration
and remembrance of those things we have seen, heard, tasted,
smelt, touched and perceived with corporal senses, remaine
still in us." The memory, then, holds these images presented
to it from the day's sensual impressions and mental deliberations,
and at night these images are presented to the phantasy, often
in somewhat confused order. The phantasy is not necessarily
controlled by the judgment of reason, and so dreams resulting
from such impressions are often confusing and false. As Thomas
Nashe says:

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50 Hill, Interpretacion, B4r; Nashe Terrors, I, 569; Church-
yard, 78r; Cardano, 26v-26v; Vermigli, Commonplaces, 33, disagrees
and says bluntly, "For sickness or health be no tokens of dreams."
No such figure of the first Chaos whereout the world was extrautgh, as our dreames in the night. In them all states, all sexes, all places are confounded and meete together. Nashe adds that the humors can become aligned with these images, causing even more confusion and foolishness:

Of those things which are most knowne to vs, some of vs that have moyst braynes make our selues images of memorie: on those images of memorie whereon we byulld in the daye, comes some superfluous humour of ours, lyke a Tacke-anapes in the night, and erects a puppet stage, or some such ridiculous idle childish invention.

If these images are confused because of their disordered mixture in the body, they are even more so because of each individual's varied actions during the day. As Thomas Hill points out, nobody has identical experiences; no two men dream alike. Moreover the dreams of women differ from those of men because women's impressions do not move similarly in the brain.

This type of dream, originating in the actions, speeches, and thoughts of the day, was considered the most commonplace type by many Elizabethans, and they often went to elaborate length to distinguish and classify dreams according to these qualifications. Thomas Adams, using Claudian and Augustine as sources, says that:

51 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 34; Batman, 83\textsuperscript{v}; Boorde, Breuiary, II, D\textsuperscript{3\textsuperscript{v}}; Bondo, 36\textsuperscript{r}; Churchyard, 78\textsuperscript{f}.

52 La Primaudaye, Second Part, 145; Palengenius, 121; Hill Interpretacion, B2\textsuperscript{v}, D\textsuperscript{7\textsuperscript{f}}; Laurentius, 100.

53 Nashe, Terrors, I, 356; Scot, 102; La Primaudaye, Second Part, 145; Bright, 118.

54 Nashe, Terrors, I, 356, 370; Lemnius, 95\textsuperscript{r}; Palengenius, 121, relates this to sleepwalking, above, p. 23.
The hunters mind is in the forrest, while his wearied bones are reposed on a soft bed. The soul disrues of batteries, assaults, encounters: the Lawyer of quirkes and demures: The Citizen of trickes and fraudes: the Musician of crotchets, the Seminary of equivocations. The glutted Epicure dreams of daintie dishes, and fat morsels. The thirsty drunkard dreams of his liquor... The vsurer dreams of his trunkes, and that he is telling his gold: and starts, as if every Rat were a theefe breaking in vpon him.57

Christopher Langton adds that carters dream of their carts, and Laurentius, mentioning Theocritus, says that fishermans dream of fish and "the amorous raue of nothing in the night but of their loues object." People likewise dream often of their friends and kinsfolk because such friends and relatives are constantly in one's thoughts.58 All these remarks bring to mind the passage about Queen Mab in Romeo and Juliet, as Mercutio says:

An in this state she gallops night by night
Through lover's brains, and then they dream of love;
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight,
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees,
O'er ladies lips, who straight on kisses dream,
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are:
Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail
Tickling a person's nose as a' lies asleep,
Then dreams he of another benefice:
Sometime she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of breaches, ambuscades, Spanish blades,
Of healths five-fathom deep; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again. (I.iv.70-88)

55 Hill, Interpretacion, B4r; Nashe, Terrors, I, 355; Michaelis, 106.
In this regard Hotspur's dreams are of iron and wars and fighting; Tullus Aufidius in Coriolanus dreams of nightly skirmishes; and Shylock, the Jewish usurer, warns his daughter:

> There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Cleopatra dreams of her lover Anthony, but he is of such worth that the imagination cannot really form an image of him to match nature's masterpiece. Thus she says to Dolabella:

> But, if there be, or ever were, one such, It's past the size of dreaming: nature wants stuff To vie strange forms with fancy; yet, to imagine An Anthony, were nature's piece 'gainst fancy, Condemning shadows quite.

The day's action's also impress themselves on one's memories and cause dreams. Thus Banquo says to Macbeth, after having seen the weird sisters:

> I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters: To you they have show'd some truth.

Macbeth answers, accepting the theory that thoughts cause dreams, "I think not of them."

The impressions and thoughts of the day are not the only mental causes of dreams, however. There is also, as Lemnius

56 Marbeck, Booke of Notes, 317; Marcus Tullius Cicero, Fovro Sconerall Treatises ... Conteyninge ... Scipio his Dreame, trans. Thomas Newton, (London, 1577) 122v; Burton, 466; Churchyard, 73v; Calvin, On Genesis, 733; Calvin, On Daniel, 39v; Babington, 157v; Nashe, Frayse,III,197; Nashe, Terrors, I, 356, 372; Terence, Andria, trans. Maurice Kiffin, (London,1588), V.v. K4r; Lemnius, 95v, 113v.
57 Adams, 842; see Chaucer, Parliament of Foules, 99-105.
58 Langton, 87v; Laurentius 100; Vermigli, Commonplaces, 34.
59 1 Henry IV II.iii.51-65; Coriolanus IV.v,119-124; Merchant of Venice II.v.17-18.
puts it, "earnest & greedy desyre to copasse somewhat, which wee would very fayne bring to passe." Desire can be of various types, usually related to the seven cardinal sins, as Stephan Batman illustrates:

...the couitous dream, yt they imbrace riches; the lecherous, that they imbrace those which the day before they secretly desired: the wrathfull, that they are fighting, killing, robbing, and brauling: the careless, that they are piping, singing, whisteling, hawking, hunting, dauncing and such lyke. Thomas Adams adds that jealous men dream of their wives' errors, even though the wives lie chastly by their husbands' sides, and that ambitious people dream of kissing the king's hand and mounting into "the saddle of honour." As for those that are hungry and thirsty, they dream that they gluttonously "swill vp drinke" and "deuoure meate," but to no avail; the more they eat or drink, the more they are hungry or thirsty when awakened.

We find this type of desire dream illustrated also in Shakespeare's plays. Shylock's dream of his money-bags would be likely not only because he was a usurer, but also because he was greedy. Likewise Lucullus, in Timon of Athens,

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60 Antony and Cleopatra V.ii.96-100.
61 Macbeth II.i.20-21.
62 Lemnius, 113v.
63 Batman, 84r; Vernigli, Commonplaces, 33; Lemnius, 113v.
64 Adams, 842; Batman, 83v; Lemnius, 113v; Ling, Politeuphonia, 20v.
65 Merchant of Venice II.v.17-18. Thomas Nashe, Terrors, I, 368, argues however, that it is a blessed thing to dream of gold, and that such a dream keeps flesh and blood from despair.
awaits Flamininus with greedy anticipation: "One of Lord Timon's men? a gift, I warrant. Why, this hits right; I dreamt of a silver basin and ewer tonight." (III.i.4-6).

Iago tells Othello of Cassio's supposed lustful dream for Desdemona, as Iago says:

In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona, Let us be wary, let us hide our loves; And then, sir, would he grip and wring my hand, Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard, As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd....

Othello, without hesitation, accepts the dream as a proof of Cassio's thoughts and passions as he exclaims, "O monstrous! monstrous!" In spite of Iago's reply that this was "but his dream," Othello asserts:

But this denoted a foregone conclusion: 'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream. 66

Dreams incurred by wrath deal with fighting and pillage, as do Tullus Aufidius' dreams of his nightly encounters with his enemy Coriolanus. Coriolanus recognizes this possibility as he speaks earlier of

... fallest foes, Whose passions and whose plots have broke their sleep To take the one the other.... 67

More common, however, is the Shakespearean use of dreams in relation to the sins of pride and ambitions. We are given an insight into the character of Gloucester, the future Richard III, in 3 Henry VI, as he speaks in a soliloquy about dreaming

66 Othello III.iii.419-425, 427, 428, 429-430. See also Richard III ii.121-124.
on sovereignty:

Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And whiles I live t'account this world but hell,
Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head,
Be round impaled with a glorious crown. (III.i.165-171)

Metaphorically speaking, Henry V, before the battle of
Agincourt, speaks of greatness and its ceremony as "thou proud
dream, / That play'st so subtly with a king's repose." In
3 Henry VI Warwick urges his companions "stay we no longer,
dreaming of renown." Such dreams are usually of small value,
as the Lord in the Induction to The Taming of the Shrew
speaks of a "flattering dream or worthless fancy." Similarly Romeo,
after his visit with Juliet in the balcony scene, says:

O blessed, blessed night! I am affeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
To flattering-sweet to be substantial.68

In this same regard Guildenstern, after Hamlet has spoken of his
bad dreams, assumes that the Prince has been dreaming ambi-
tiously for the crown and replies, "Which dreams indeed are
ambition, for the very substance of the ambitious is merely
the shadow of a dream." (II.ii.262-265).

If dreams of ambition are to be taken so lightly, then it
does not seem unusual that Gloucester chides his wife for her

67 Coriolanus IV.v.119-124; IV.iv.18-20.
68 Henry V IV.i.274-275; 3 Henry VI II.i.199; Taming of the
Shrew, Induction.i.43; Romeo II.ii.139-141; see Pallegninius,
Zodiak, 97: "Fame, Glorie, Praise and else Renowe are dreams,
and profitless;/ Because with Chaunce they are obtayned, and not
by Vertuousnesse."
ambitious morning dream in *2 Henry VI*. As we recall, this dream is typical of ambitious persons, as Eleanor says:

> Methought I sat in seat of majesty  
> In the cathedral church of Westminster,  
> And in that chair where kings and queens are crown'd;  
> Where Henry and Dame Margaret knoo1'd to me,  
> And on my head did set the diadem.  

Such a dream, because of its pride and flattery, should be taken as false regardless of its temporal fortuity. And, as we recall, the dream comes of little consequence, as Eleanor is banished from England for her ambitious scheming. Indeed, Posthumus in *Cymbeline*, after a masque-like dream (possibly interpolated into the play by Fletcher for audience appeal), awakes to find his vision gone. He exclaims, contrasting the difference between ambitious and humble dreams:

> And so I am awake. Poor wretches that depend  
> On greatness' favour dream as I have done,  
> Wake and find nothing. But alas, I swerve:  
> Many dream not to find, neither deserve,  
> And yet, are steep'd in favours. (V.iv.127-131)

Dreams from thoughts and desire could lead to action, of course. In this sense the dream would be considered a cause itself, leading the dreamer to act upon awaking. Peter Vermigli gives the example of a man cured of spleen because he bled himself on the back of his hand as he saw done in a dream. Also he mentions the cases of scholars who find and read books in their dreams, thereby uncovering material that they were unaware of during the day. Reginald Scot, however, writes in

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69 *2 Henry VI* I.i.ii.36-40; Robert Greene, *Orlando Furioso* (1591), Malone Society Reprints (1907), 11. 264-265.
detail of the folly of digging and searching for money seen in dreams. Such treasure hunting was evidently a current practice, as Scot elaborates on the ritual necessary: Make three crosses on a hazel wand, read psalms while digging, dig fast lest the devil take the money away, etc. 71

The efficacy of dreaming as a stimulation to action is recognized by Maria as she speaks to Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*, after they have made plans to dupe Malvolio. As they are parting, she says, "For this night, to bed, and dream on the event." (II.iii.191-192).

And as for actions brought about through dreams of desire, Edgar tells King Lear that he was once a serving-man, "one that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it." 72

Besides these dreams related to the sensual impressions of the day and to the desires or passions, there were also those dreams arising from guilty or troubled minds. Such dreams would arise from anxiety, sorrow, fear, or from one's guilty conscience. Thus Imogen's "fearful dreams" while her husband Posthumus was away might be considered dreams caused by anxious thoughts for his safety, as similarly Calpurnia has troubled dreams concerning the fate of her husband Julius Caesar. The Duke of Gloucester has a troubled dream in *2 Henry VI*, a dream arising from anxious concern over the King's marriage and Cardinal Beaufort's hostility. As he tells of it to his wife:

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70 Commonplaces, Vermigli, 33-34; Mill, *Interpretacion*, B3r.
71 Scot, 104-105.
Methought this staff, mine office-badge in court,
Was broke in twain; by whom I have forgot,
But, as I think, 'twas by the cardinal. (I.ii.25-27)

Sorrow and woe can cause insomnia and troubled dreams.

As Shakespeare says in *Lucrece*:

> Short time seems long in sorrow's sharp sustaining:
> Though woe be heavy, yet it seldom sleeps;
> And they that watch see time how slow it creeps. 74

Similarly in *Julius Caesar* we note Brutus' condition, the noble Roman torn between his respect and love for Caesar and his sense of duty:

> Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar
> I have not slept.
> Between the acting of a dreadful thing
> And the first motion, all the interim is
> Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:
> The Genius and the mortal instruments
> Are then in council; and the state of man,
> Like to a little imagination, suffers then
> The nature of an insurrection. (II.i.61-69)

In this regard Robert Burton wryly remarks that Juan Vives wondered "how Schoolmen could sleep quietly, and were not terrified in the night, or walk in the dark, they had such monstrous questions and thoughts of such terrible matters all day long." 75

Dreams can also result from fear. Stephan Bateman and Thomas Adams state that the fearful man dreams that he flees from danger, 76 and that superstitious men are especially susceptible to this type of dream. Plutarch says that the sleep of superstitious folk seems like a very hell, with visions of

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72 *Lear* III.iv.92-94.
73 *Cymbeline* III.iv.43-46; *Julius Caesar* II.ii.2-3, 76-82.
devils and fearful dreams constantly tormenting them. Not only this, but upon waking, these people "deceive and trouble themselves in good earnest, spending their substance and goods infinitely upon magicians, jugglers, enchanters, and such like deceivers." Thus Cassius remarks that Caesar is:

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

Bishop Joseph Hall, moreover, shows to what extent a superstitious man will depend upon dreams and their interpretation:

...if his troubled fancie shall second his thoughts with the dreame of a faire garden, or greene rushes, or the salutation of a dead friend, he takes leave of the world, and saies he cannot live....

Superstitious fears and dreams are most dreadful, however, with those suffering from a guilty conscience. As Thomas Nashe says:

Dreames to none are so fearfull, as to those whose accusing private guilt expects mischief euery hower for their merit. Wonderfull superstitious are such persons in observing euery accident that befalls them; and that their superstition is as good as a hundred furies to torment them.

Thus in Richard III Clarence spends a sleepless night in the Tower, beset by "ghastly dreams ... full of dismal terror." He dreams of seeing the ghosts of his dead father-in-law Warwick and the murdered Edward appear to him and enclose him with a "legion of foul fiends." Upon awakening, Clarence realizes

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74 Lucrece, 1573-1575; Richard III I.iv.76-77; see also Ling, Politeophilia, 59; Tempest II.i.193-196; Plutarch, Moralia, 79, mentions the proverbial, "If that I sleepe, when sorowes me surprice, then fearfull dreames me kill before I rise."

75 Burton, Anatomy, 466.
that this has been a dream from guilt and seeks to pray for remission of his sins:

O Brakenbury, I have done those things,
Which now bear evidence against my soul,
For Edward's sake, and see how he requites me!
O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease thee,
But thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds
Yet execute thy wrath in me alone,
O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children! 81

Richard also has fearful dreams and ghostly visitations. His wife Anne states that he has timorous dreams, and on the eve of battle the ghosts of his murdered victims appear to him in sleep and prophesy defeat and death. Richard wakes in a start, then recognizes his dream as being a product of his conscience:

Give me another horse: bind up my wounds.
Have mercy, Jesu! — Soft! I did but dream.
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight.
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.

and later:

My conscience hath a thousand several tongues, And every tongue brings in a several tale, And every tale condemns me for a villain.82

The "cold fearful drops" and sudden awakening would comply with the statement of Thomas Churchyard concerning the subject of conscience dreams:

76 Batman, 84r; Adams, 842; Babington, 157r.
77 Plutarch, 261-265; Ling, 177r.
78 Julius Caesar II.i.195-197.
79 Joseph Hall, "Characters of Vertues and Vices" (1603), Works (London, 1634), I, 171; Adams, 842.
80 Nashe, Terrors, I, 358.
81 Richard III I.iv.3-7, 9-61, 66-72.
Yet whoare the conshens is not clean
Thear seeks the deuell for to lean
And leans no way that may be sought
To plant ther in dispaired thought
And makes the dreamer lowd to cry ... 
... And sweats for fear his known haue
And hard howe som do vse to raue
And start vpright as they wear woed
Som saye hit cometh of a bloed
A bloed I fear as doctors saith
That springoth of defaut of fayth. 83

The terrible dreams that afflict Macbeth and Lady Macbeth
seem to derive from guilt feelings of conscience, 84 especially
with Lady Macbeth near the end of the play, when she talks and
walks in her sleep. The observing physician recognises that
her conscience bothers her and that she needs spiritual aid:

... unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician. 85

Dreams of conscience thus reveal the nature of the dreamer,
and this may be applied generally to dreams from thoughts and
desires. Evil men dream evil dreams, and vice versa. In
2 Henry VI the King does not believe Gloucester's deceit:

The duke is virtuous, mild, and too well given
To dream on evil, or to work my downfall. (III.i.72-73)

Likewise in Lucrece the same thought is expressed:

For unstain'd thoughts do seldom dream on evil;
Birds never lined no secret bushes fear. 86

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82 Ibid., V.iii.177-181, 193-195; This is also a dream
in The True Tragedy of Richard III (1594), Malone Society
Reprints, 1929, 1874-1885.
83 Churchyard, 78f, 78v-79r; Adams, 342.
84 Macbeth III.ii, 16-22.
Thus, by observing one's own dreams, an individual "may gesse at the corruption of his owne heart: and knowe to what sinnes he is most naturally inclined."\textsuperscript{87} As with dreams deriving from the humors, it is possible to learn something about the dreamer from his mental dreams. From humor dreams the physician can learn what physical distempers disturb the body; from mental dreams, induced by thoughts or desires, one can learn what mental troubles disturb the mind. Beyond these limits of diagnosis and psychoanalysis, however, natural dreams are not to be carried. The art of natural dream interpretation, of prophesying events on the basis of natural dreams, lay beyond the limits of man's intelligence. Such power was within the province of God. Thomas Adams comments lucidly on the general use of dreams:

But if you desire to make any use of dreams, let it be this. Consider thy selfe in thy dreaming, to what inclination thou art mostly carried and so by thy thoughts in the night, thou shalt learn to know thy selfe in the day. Be thy dreams lustfull: examine whether the additions of thy heart run not after the byas of concupiscence.... Thus God may be said to teach a man by his dreams still; ... not what shall be, but what he is. Not future events, but present conditions may be thus learned. Neither day nor night escapes a good man without some profit: the night teaches him what he is, as the day what he should be. Therefore said a Philosopher \[Heraclitus\], that all waking men are in one common world: but in sleepe every man goes into a world by himselfe. For his dreams doe signifie to him those secret inclination, to which hee thought himselfe a stranger, though they were home-dwellers in his heart. Even those fancies are speaking images of a mans disposition.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Ibid.}, V.i.79-82; Hill \textit{Interpretacion}, B4\textsuperscript{5}, states that talking in one's sleep is a sign of sickness.  
\textsuperscript{86} Lucrece, 37-38; see Artemidorus, 6.  
How modern this statement seems! Evidently the sixteenth century was aware of the theories of the subconscious mind and dream analysis long before Freud and others systematized them. We recall the interpretation that Othello makes concerning Cassio's supposed dream of Desdemona, that it "denoted a foregone conclusion;" likewise Richard III and Clarence consider their dream visitations to be images of "coward conscience." Macbeth, having learned of Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking, attributes it to her troubled conscience and tells the physician:

Cure her of that,
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

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83 Adams, 842-843; Plutarch, Morals, 262.
89 Othello, III.iii.428-429; Richard III I.iv.66-68; V.iii.181,195-195; see also Richard Edwards, Damon and Pithias (1565), Malone Society Reprints (London) XCVI (1957), 11.327-335. Here Staphano tells of the case of Marcia who dreamt he killed the king; the king hears of the dream and promptly had Marcia killed for conspiracy.
90 Macbeth V.ii.39-43.
CHAPTER III
EXTERNAL NATURAL DREAMS

Not only are there internal forces causing dreams, such as the body humors and mental desires, but dreams may be caused also by the influence of the natural environment during sleep, including such aspects as the heavens, the night air, disturbing noises, sleep apparel, and seasonal variations. Though the writers I have read did not go into these causes at great length, yet it seems apparent that the nature of the sleeper's environment was influential in causing dreams.

First, various authors emphasize the influence of the heavenly bodies on dreams. Cornelius Agrippa states that:

... as the heavenly influences doo bring forth divers forms in corporal matter, so of the same influences, visions and dreams are printed in the fantasticall power, which is instrumental, with a celestiall disposition meete to bring foorthe some effecte, and chiefly in sleepe, because the minde then free from bodily & outwarde cares, maie more freely receaue the heauenly influences....

These influences are "printed in the fantasticall power," Peter Vermigli suggests, by the changing of the air about the sleeper. The air carries celestial influences, and Vermigli mentions the theory of Democritus that the air more easily moves at night because the motions of moving creatures do not hamper it and

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Agrippa, Vanitie of Artes and Sciences, 52\textsuperscript{v}-53\textsuperscript{v}; Churchyard, 73\textsuperscript{r}. Thomas Hill, Interpretacion, D8\textsuperscript{r}, mentions the influence of the sun as the "authour of the true and constante thinges," on dreams, and thus believes that morning dreams, not night dreams, are most true.
drive it into diverse directions. This air touches the sleeper's body and thereby changes the body to "a new kind of qualitie." The changed body, in turn, brings forth new impressions to the brain, which impressions are then finally printed in the phantasy and result in dreams.²

The quality of the air, therefore, is of singular importance here, and Thomas Hill suggests that windy and boistrous weather works contrary to the power of the stars, bringing about false dreams. Thus we would expect that seasonal variations would have their effects on such dreams, and that people would have more substantial dreams during the calm summer or winter months, rather than during the turbulent spring and autumn. Such is exactly the case, Hill tells us.³

Plutarch, on the other hand, gives more reasons besides the quality of the air for seasonal differences in dreams. Besides referring to the theory mentioned above, in that in autumn the air is of unequal strength and thus may touch the body too faintly or too powerfully, Plutarch mentions the opinion of Aristotle, who relates seasonal variation to food and the humors. Thus in autumn, when fruits are overripe and overabundant with strength and vigor, one's meals and digestion will bring about more vapours than usual, causing troublous and vain dreams. Plutarch does not really agree with either theory, though, and he concludes that autumn brings false

² Vermigli, Commonplaces, 35,34; Batman, 83v; Hill, Interpretacion, B7r-B7v.
dreams because it is the cold and dry, the melancholy age of the year. The heat of summer is gone, and people are susceptible to disease. The mind, in a parallel condition, has thickened spirits, which in turn result in a dulled and unhealthy imagination.  

Returning to Agrippa's statement earlier, we note that once the celestial influence is imprinted in the imagination, there is a "celestial disposition" given to bring forth an effect. This statement would imply that dreams caused by heavenly influences are prophetic and true; all one needs is an interpreter. Philippus Paracelsus, a doctor and astrologer mentioned by Thomas Nashe and Robert Burton, states that there are many such interpreters for these natural dreams:

The firmament foreknows all future things, nor does anything escape its knowledge, whether of things past or things present ... In this manner old men and women, unendowed by any knowledge, as it were their simplicity and fatuity, have often made prophecies which the event marvellously verified ... Their writings and doctrines are not to be considered sacred, although they have a certain singular authority, given by the constellation and influence, by the spirits of Nature, not of God.  

Other writers, however, are skeptical of such divination by celestial dreams. Theologians, of course, were opposed to such practices. As Calvin points out in his Admonicion against Astrology, King Nebuchadnezzar's astrologers could not interpret his dream. Only God-inspired Daniel could do so, for "it is God which is in heaven to whom this doth appertaine, 

3 Hill Interpretacion, D7v-D8r; Chaucer, Troilus and Criseyde, V, 376.  
to wit to declare secrets." Thomas Hill rejects the idea completely, and Vermigli states doubtfully:

And if it be agreed upon, that the cause of such effects or affections is in the stars, who yet can refer these signs to their own proper cause, that is, unto some stars rather than to others? Ssurely I thinkes veryfew. I will not saie none are able to doe it. And yet besides, if they should be referred to their proper starres, what can we judge will come to passe by them, especiallie as touching things contingent, seeing judicall astrologie was ever accounted a most vncerteine art?

Other external natural causes of dreams, besides the influence of the stars and the secondary influences of the winds and seasons, include the various noises that may bother the sleeper's tranquillity. Some writers argue that we hear small noises much better during sleep than while awake, though this seems to contradict the theory that the external senses are quiet during sleep. Small noises from the environment appear as great thunders in our dreams. Thus Thomas Nashe speaks of noises and other external influences that may influence our dreams:

As for example; if in the dead of the night there be anie rumbling, knocking, or disturbance nere vs, wee straight dreame of warres, or of thunder. If a dogge howle, we suppose we are transported into hell, where we heare the complaint of damned ghosts. If our heads lye double or vneasie, we imagine we up-hold all heaven with our shoulder like Atlas. If wee bee troubled with too manie clothes, then we suppose the night mare rides vs.

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5 Nashe, Terrors, 366; Burton, 464.
In this regard the dream of Balthasar in Romeo and Juliet is pertinent. Balthasar falls asleep under a tree, and during the half hour or so that he is asleep his master Romeo, meets the Montague, Paris, fights and kills him. The sounds of battle must have reached Balthasar's sleeping ears, for when awakened by Friar Laurence he says:

As I did sleep under this yew-tree here,
I dreant my master and another fought,
And that my master slew him. (V.iii.137-139)

Likewise the sense of taste may be active. A bit of sweet phlegm on the tongue or roof of the mouth, Vermigli tells us, makes us "thinke that wee taste either honie, or sugar, or sweet wine, or some daintie meates: and sometime that wee cate and drinke verie liberallie." 11

To summarize to this point, we have seen to what extent many Elizabethans classified the causes of natural dreams. Such dreams might arise from the humors, from digestion, from past thoughts and actions of the day, from desires, from pangs of conscience, anxiety and grief, or from various astrological and other environmental causes. There yet remains one aspect of sleep and dreams which is considered a natural phenomena by some authors I have studied. This is the ominous, suffocating

8 Hill, Interpretacion, B6v-B8v; Vermigli, Commonplaces, 35.
9 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 33, 34, 38; Batman, 84f.
10 Nashe, Terrors, I, 356-357.
11 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 33; Batman 84f.
nightmare or incubus.

Pierre Le Loyer and Reginald Scot give us the prominent characteristics of this disease. Heavy, cold vapours, engendered by excess drink or a raw stomach, rise up into the brain and afflict the imagination, which then creates images of gigantic men or women who gag the sleeper's throat, stop him from crying out, and then seduce him.  

Timothy Bright adds that these melancholic vapours also bring about difficult breathing (and the fancy that a figure sits on one's chest) by clogging the brain passages that carry animal spirits to the muscles of respiration. Moreover, such afflictions happen chiefly to those who sleep on their backs, because, as Dr. Bright puts it,:

...both the midriffe (a chiefe muscle of respiration) is more pressed with the bowelles, which lye vnder it, the stomach is not so firmly closed, whereby vapours more easily have vent, and the whole bulke of the chest in that position of the bodie, lying more heauily vppon them, requireth greater force of moving faculties, whose spirit receaueth impediment of passages by these thicke and melancholicke fumes.

We recall here the general dangers of sleeping on one's back; now that these dangers are coupled with the additional and rather formidable risk of nightmares, the practice of sleeping supine must have seemed extremely dangerous and unnatural to the Elizabethans. Thus Oliver's description of his former self is heightened with even greater emotional impact as he tells Celia and Rosalind in As You Like It:

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12 Scot, Discoverie, 42, 49-50; Le Loyer, 101v-102r; Batman, 84f, 85r; Boorde, Breuiary, 45r; Burton, 220; Bright, 131-132.
13 Bright, 132; Burton, 220; Vermigli, 35; Vaughn, 59; Langton, 87v; Boorde, 45r.
Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age,
And high top bald with dry antiquity,
A wretched ragged man, o'er grown with hair,
Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck
A green and gilded snake had wreath'd itself,
Who with her head, nimble in threats, approached
The opening of his mouth... (IV.iii.105-111)

Oliver ends by saying that this wretch was Orlando's brother,
and Celia, shocked by the terrifying description, answers:

O, I have heard him speak of that same brother;
And he did render him the most unnatural
That lived 'mongst men. (IV.iii.122-124)

Other writers emphasized different aspects of the malady
of nightmares. Andrew Boorde and King James I of England
specified that a thick rheum descended into the breast and
upon the heart, thereby stopping the flow of vital spirits
and causing one to think some spirit lay upon his chest.14
Levin Lemnius and Thomas Hill relate the disease to apoplexy
or the falling sickness, which, as Lemnius recalls from Galen,
brought on unusual dreams. In this regard Falstaff characteri-
izes apoplexy as "a kind of lethargy, ... a kind of sleeping
in the blood, a whoreson tingling.... I have read the cause
of his effects in Galen."15

To prevent this disease, therefore, one must not sleep
on his back and must keep a reasonable diet so as not to irri-
tate the stomach. Andrew Boorde and others also recommend
honest company, less taxing studies, lest the brain become

14 Boorde, 45v; James Daemonologie, 69; Langton, 87v.
15 Hill, Interpretacion, D3v; Le Loyer, 126v; Lemnius,
113r; 2 Henry IV, i.ii.126-133.
disordered by overwork, and above all sound medicines to withdraw troublesome fumes from the brain and stomach. Thus Pliny speaks of the scent of annise, hung about the bed, as a remedy against troublesome dreams and fantastic visions, while Chaucer's Portelote and others mention laxatives such as laurel berries, ellebor, etc. To procure pleasant dreams Robert Burton tells us that Baptista Porta recommends balming herbs in distilled water, and Thomas Nashe tells the story of Gabriel Harvey's mother who, in order to dream true dreams, was instructed to sleep under a laurel tree.

We have considered the nightmare thus far as a purely natural phenomena, as did numerous physicians of the day, but the nightmare also had its supernatural adherents. Possibly because of its horrifying effects — strangulated gagging of the voice and throat, oppression on the chest, and awesome fantasies that appeared to sit on one's chest or forcibly to seduce the sleeper — most common folk of the sixteenth century attributed the phenomena to supernatural rather than to physical causes. To the average Elizabethan the medieval beliefs in demonology and mysticism were not yet abated. The scientific rationalism of the physicians did not yet prevail.

Moreover, the breach between natural and supernatural causes of dreams and nightmares was narrowed by the belief

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16 Boorde, 45f; Vermigli, 35; Vaughn, 64; Batman, 35f; Scot, 49.
17 Pliny, Natural History, 65; Chaucer, Nun's Priest's Tale, 4150-4159; Boke of Medecynes, 21v.
18 Burton, 592-599; Scot, 104; Nashe, Have With You to Saffron-Walden (1596), III, 60-61.
that the Devil could act through the use of physical causes, especially the humors. As Thomas Adams says, in reference to the Devil; "He working upon mans affections, inclinations, and humors, causeth in them such dreams, as seduce them to wickednesse, and induce them to wretchedness."\^19

In this regard the devil acted especially on individuals afflicted with melancholy, and melancholics must be wary lest the crafts of Satan draw them into great sin.\^20 Reginald Scot even goes so far as to say that there is no distinction between natural melancholy and supernatural dreams. Demonic dreams are merely results of melancholy:

Those which in these daies are called magickall or diabolicall dreams, maie rather be called melancholicall. For out of that black vapor in sleepe, through dreams, appeareth ... some horrible thing; and as it were the image of an ouglie divell: sometimes also other terrible visions, imaginations, counsels, and practises.\^21

It would not seem unusual to the Elizabethans, therefore, to relate the melancholy vapours of the nightmare with demonic influence, and vice-versa. Writers who considered the nightmare as supernatural went for their authority to St. Augustine, who distinguished two types or sexes of evil spirits: the incubus, who ravished women, and the succubus, who attacked men.\^22 The spirit's power of copulation was stressed, and everyone, though dishonest people more than others, was subject

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19 Adams, 842.
20 Gifford, Dialogue concerning Witches, K3r; Nashe, Terrors, I, 353.
21 Scot, 105.
22 Boorde, Breuiary, 44V; Batman, 84r, 84V; Michaelis, Discovrse, 151.
to such dangers. Stephan Batman mentions that the Arthurian Merlin was born of such a cause, and Andrew Boorde even recalls a nun of St. Alban's who said she had such an experience. Sebastian Michaelis thus reasons aptly concerning the question:

And heereupon it is, why the Turkes do not thinke it strange which we haue amongst the Articles of our Creed, that a Virgin should be conceiued by the Holy Ghost, because they thinke that this may bee easily done vnto all Virgins, since they are assured by experience, that bee there Virgins neuer so closely restrained and kept from the company of men, yet are they many times found to bee with childe: and this is the cunning and practice of the Diuell.... 24

Likewise we recall in Romeo and Juliet, as Malvolio says of Queen Mab:

This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,  
That presses them and learns them first to bear,  
Making them women of good carriage. (I.iv.92-94)

Intercourse through this agency was not always of favorable result, however; Pierre Le Loyer speaks of men and women turned into wolves as a result of such union, and Scot mentions the theory of Cardan who said that such experiences resulted in abnormal birth. For example Batman tells the case of the Scottish lass who thought an enchanted devil was only "a faire young man;" when a deformed baby was born, the populace considered him a monster and promptly burned the child. 25

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23 Batman, 84v; Boorde, Breuiary, 44v.
24 Michaelis, 152; Nashe, Terrors, I, 359.
25 Le Loyer, 126v; Batman, 84v.
Batman does not agree with this theory, though, nor
does James I in his *Daemonologie*. James gives physical reasons
why the devil, as a spirit that has only the use of dead bodies,
cannot procreate, and Batman makes the point that it is not the
devils themselves, but evil thoughts spurred on by devils, that
bring forth abnormalities.\(^\text{26}\)

There are various remedies for nightmares of this sort,
both physical and spiritual. Boorde mentions "fuga Demonum",
or St. John's wort, as a herbal remedy, and Reginald Scot
says a stone with a natural hole in it, strung above the sleeper's
bed, will keep nightmares away.\(^\text{27}\) For the most part, though,
spiritual aid is necessary, especially through prayers and
spells. One should pray before going to sleep and upon rising,
and if necessary cite a charm such as Edgar says in *King Lear*:

\[
\begin{align*}
S. Withold footed thrice the old; \\
He met the night-nare, and her nine-fold; \\
Bid her alight, \\
And her troth plight \\
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee! \\
\end{align*}
\]

Similarly Scot repeats a spell of St. George:

\[
\begin{align*}
S. George, S. George, our ladies knight, \\
He walkt by day, so did he by night; \\
Untill such time as he hir found, \\
He hir beat and he hir bound, \\
Untill hir troth she to him plight, \\
She would not come to hir that night. \\
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{26}\) James, *Daemonologie*, 67-68; Batman 34\(^{\text{v}}\)-35\(^{\text{r}}\).

\(^{27}\) Boorde, *Breuiary*, 45\(^{\text{r}}\); Scot, 49.

\(^{28}\) *King Lear* III.iv. 125-129; Churchyard, 79\(^{\text{r}}\)-79\(^{\text{v}}\); Vermigli, 35, 39.

\(^{29}\) Scot, 49; See Camden, "Shakespeare on Sleep and Dreams," 118-119, for more examples of such spiritual charms and spells
to protect against nightmares.
The importance of prayer before sleep therefore seems commonplace for England in the sixteenth century. In Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*, Enobarbus makes a distraught prayer to the moon before dying. Onlooking soldiers think he has fallen asleep, but one says significantly:

'Swoons rather, for so bad a prayer as his
Was never yet for sleep! (IV.ix.26-27)

In *Richard III* Clarence prays before falling asleep, as does Lear, and Mercutio says Queen Mab vexes a soldier:

Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,  
And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two  
And sleeps again.  

Yet another example of this practice is Macbeth's narration of the murder of the chamberlains and King Duncan. As he tells his wife of the chamberlains:

There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried 'Murder!'  
That they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:  
But they did say their prayers, and address'd them  
Again to sleep ...  
One cried 'God bless us,' and 'Amen' the other.

This emphasis on prayer and spells, almost too familiar to be noticed, apparently had its origin in the desire to ward off the evil spirits and bad dreams of sleep. This discussion of nightmares leads on to a more specific analysis of the various categories of purely supernatural dreams, deriving from God or from the Devil.

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31 *Macbeth* II.i.23-26, 28.
CHAPTER XV

SUPERNATURAL DREAMS

Knowledge of the various theories concerning nightmares would seem to indicate that to sixteenth century England, superstition and belief in supernatural visitations was one of the accepted explanations for what today we might call psychosomatic traumatic experiences. Indeed, the rationalistic, scientific attitude of various physicians and skeptics was overruled by widespread belief in witchcraft, ghosts, good and evil spirits, and possibly most significant, a tradition of Catholicism which emphasized the omnipresence and guiding power of God. These beliefs of course have particular relevance to theories of sleep and dreams. If man's sleep is likened unto death, with his soul free and mortal body at rest, then such time would seem particularly appropriate for God to speak to man. Dreams might therefore be symbolic messages from God, and it would be pure folly to disregard God's messages. Man's fate is circumscribed by the will of God, and God can warn and guide us in sleep. Hamlet echoes this theme as he speaks to Horatio of the sea voyage to England:

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
That would not let me sleep: methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly,
And praised be rashness for it, let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall: and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will, -1

God may influence us in sleep, but not all dreams are
divinely inspired. On the contrary, a dream may arise from a purely natural source, such as the humors or desires, or perhaps from Satan cleverly disguised as an angel of God. The ability to interpret the meaning and cause of dreams becomes singularly important here. This problem, of determining exactly what dreams signified, remained essentially an enigma to the Elizabethans, and, if one today could for a moment disengage himself from scientific bias, he would likewise be at a loss for any facile explanations. There were various theories, of course. We have noted various explanations of dreams which are due to natural causes; notice should be taken of prevalent theories relating dreams to the supernatural, to God and his evil counterpart, Satan.

The populace gave credence to demonic nightmares and dreams whereas divine dreams were theologically considered part of the Biblical past. Now that Christ had come and the Gospels had been written, there was little need for divine intervention through dreams. As the cleric Thomas Adams puts it, speaking of dreams in which God reveals matters plainly:

These dreams were most specially incident to the newe Testament: when God at the very rising of the Sunne, began to

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1 *Hamlet* V.ii.4-11; Vermigli, *Commonplaces*, 38; see Robert Greene, *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (1587), *Malone Society* (1926), 11, 1186-1188. Iphigina has protested her father's dream, but Medea warns:

In vaine it is, to striue againste the streame,
Fates must be followed, and the gods decree
Must needs take place in euery kinde of cause.
expell the shadowes of darke mysteries. Now the Sunne is gotten vp into the midst of heaven; the Gospell into the full strength, these shadowes vanish: the more light the lesse shadow. So that now to expect revelation of things by dreams, were to intreat God to lend vs a candle whiles wee haue the bright Sunne.\(^2\)

Not all authors agreed with this position, of course. Scot mentions that Bodin still upholds that contemporary dreams can come from God, and of course the whole question of soothsayers, astrologers and dream interpreters depended upon whether or not God inspired prophecy as He had done in the past.\(^3\) For the most part, though, this type of prophecy was condemned and writers maintained the theological norm.

In spite of the emphasis on the past, however, many writers wrote to great length, especially in the Biblical commentaries, on the Biblical dreams of Joseph, Daniel and others.\(^4\) These dreams were divided into two groups: plain or demonstrative dreams, with clear meanings, and mystical or allegorical dreams, in which an interpretation was needed by a God-inspired prophet.\(^5\)

Peter Vermigli states this another way when he says there are two elements necessary for prophetic divine dreams: images must be printed in the imagination, and judgment must be given to evaluate these images. And, as he says further:

\(^2\) Adams, 842; Scot, 103, 107; Perkins, 623; Cleland, 214; Burton, 466. I cannot agree with Bain Tate Stewart, "The Renaissance Interpretation of Dreams and their Use in Elizabethan Drama," unpubl. diss. (Northwestern, 1942), 73, who maintains that this was a minority opinion among Renaissance writers. Nearly all writers I investigated either stated this belief or else, by referring only of Biblical examples, implied that God-inspired dreams were phenomena of the past. Folk belief might possibly have maintained the other view, but most people who wrote about the subject expressed the accepted theological position.
Teachers which instruct schollers, may by their paines and diligence in teaching, print sundrie kinds of images in the minds of their hearers; although it be not in their power to give them judgement, and the verie right understanding of things. But God giueth both, yet not alwaies indeed at once.

These dreams which are demonstrative appear for the most part in the New Testament, such as the dream warning Joseph to flee with Mary to Egypt, whereas allegorical dreams are of the Old Testament, such as those of the butler, baker and Pharoah that Joseph interpreted, or the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar explained by Daniel. As a dream prophet, Daniel is said to exceed all others, for he not only interpreted the King's dreams, but also when the King couldn't remember his own dream Daniel was able, through a vision from God, to recall it for him. Reginald Scot uses this instance as an argument against contemporary dream interpreters as he says:

Finallie, Nebuchadnezzar teacheth all men to knowe a true expositor of dreames: to wit, such a one as hath his revelation from God. For he can (as Daniel did), repeate your dreame before you discover it: which thing if anie expounder of dreames can doo at this daie, I will beleve him.

The mention of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, brings

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3 Scot, 107; Lemnius 95V; Thomas Lupton, A Dreame of the Diuell and Diues (London, 1589), 48V-BlV.
4 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 36-37; Vaughn, 61; Perkins, 623;
Scot, 106-107; Laurentius, 100; Calvin, On Genesis, 595-600, 776-779, 785-793; Calvin, Upon Daniel, 6r-18v; Nashe, Terrors, I, 372, includes the early church Fathers as dreamers of true, divine dreams.
5 Adams, 842; Batman, 83r.
6 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 36; Batman, 84r.
7 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 36.
8 Scot, 107.
up an interesting question. God here sent dreams to the un-
godly, to such wicked pagans as the King of Babylon or the
Pharaoh of Egypt. Yet, as we have mentioned before, good men
dream good, true dreams, whereas evil men dream evil, vain
dreams.\(^9\) The religious writers solved this paradox by pointing
out that these dreams to the ungodly were usually of the al-
legorical kind. God sent these dreams to unbelievers for two
reasons: first, to warn the ruler to save the people whom he
governed, and then to make the prophets Joseph and Daniel known
to the world.\(^10\)

There are also demonstrative dreams sent to the ungodly,
however, such as the incident in Judges, 7:13-15, when a
fellow soldier interprets the dream significance of a cake
of barley bread as the sword of Gideon. Here the clerics merely
answer that this is an example of God's bounty. The grace of
God is available for all men, and such prophetic dreams testify
not to the holiness of man but to the limitless love of God.
He instructs the wicked to make them good, and, as St. Paul is
quoted (1 Corinthians 1:26), "the calling of God did cheeflie
appertain to the poore, to the unlearned, & to the weaker sort."\(^11\)

Divine dreams could thus come to both good and wicked men,

\(^9\) Artemidorus, Bl; Calvin, On Genesis, 437, 439; Bonde,
Pilgrimage, 36r.
\(^10\) Vermigli, Commonplaces, 36; Babington, 157; Calvin, Upon
Daniel, 8r.
\(^11\) Vermigli, Commonplaces, 37; Vermigli, Commentary, 134r;
Batman, 83r-84r; Churchyard, 73v.
and could be interpreted, according to God's whim, by either prophets or sinners. There are other less ambiguous characteristics of these dreams, however. First, either God or his angels appeared to man and gave him direct warnings for the future or printed allegorical images on the imagination for further interpretation. The admonishing aspect of such dreams is noted, as Lemnius tells us:

For our heauenly father vaeth now and then to admonish and awake our drowsy myndes and retchlesse natures, laying before vs in visions and dreames somwhile good and holesome, sometime ill and lamentable happes, thereby to try, whether yet at length wee will be obeysaunt to his admonitions or shrinck asyde and refuse the lore of his prescriptions and commaundemets.  

Thomas Nashe wryly remarks, however, that the fear of the situation warned against is often worse than the situation itself.  

In Shakespeare's *Pericles* there is an instance of a supernatural dream for motivational purposes, when Diana appears to Pericles and orders him to go to Ephesus and speak of his lost wife. Pericles obeys and is reunited with his wife Thaisa. As Bain Stewart points out, however, this is a play based on mythology, and the idea of Diana does not reflect contemporary religious belief.

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12 Lemnius, 95; Churchyard, 73, 80; Scot, 101.  
14 *Pericles*, V.i.244-253, V.iii; Stewart, 169.
Possibly the appearance of the ghosts to Richard III and Richmond before battle is a clearer example of admonishing dreams from supernatural origin. The ghosts of Richard's murdered victims appear to Richard prophesying despair and defeat, whereas to Richmond they predict good cheer and victory. Richard, upon waking, blames these dreams on his conscience. It is easier to thwart a troubled conscience than a supernatural prophecy; Richard is still fearful, but he says with daring:

Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls:
Conscience is but a word that cowards use
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe. 15

These dreams normally take place during sleep for much the same reasons that the natural humors are better recognized during sleep than during waking hours. During sleep, when the body is at rest and the soul is awake, the mind is more fit to apprehend divine wisdom than when the external senses plague the mind with the impressions of the day. 16

The characteristics that set divine dreams apart from demonic dreams and natural dreams are well summarized by William Perkins. Divine dreams, he says, are generally concerned with serious matters, whereas natural and Satanic dreams deal with light, trifling concerns that are easy to understand. 17

15 Richard III V.iii.108-181, 193-195, 308-310. The question here, whether this is a conscience dream or a supernatural one, is a matter of degree. Though these ghosts were depicted on the stage as real figures, and the audience must have believed in them as spirits of the dead (see The Winter's Tale III.iii.16-19), still these spirits acted upon the dreamer through the mind. Thus it might be said that the supernatural forces, embodied in ghosts, acted upon the mind and conscience. Richard here denies the supernatural underlying cause that would make such dreams prophetic.
Divine dreams are always agreeable to God's will and maintain true doctrine, while natural dreams favor animal nature and are repugnant to God's will. Satanic dreams, moreover, cross the will of God, aim to subvert true religion, and withdraw the heart from obedience. Finally, divine dreams are either quite plainly presented or, if in allegory, they have certain evident signs by which they may be interpreted correctly. Their meanings are not ambiguous or doubtful, as with dreams caused by the Devil. Since the Devil does not have the power to determine the future accurately, the dreams that he inspires will be likewise unsure, whereas divine dreams always foretell the future and are reliable.\textsuperscript{18}

In \textit{Cymbeline} there is a dream that illustrates the reliable character of divine foretellings. The Soothsayer tells Lucius of his dream:

\begin{quote}
I saw Jove's bird, the Roman eagle, wing'd
From the spongy south of this part of the west,
There vanish'd in the sunbeams: which portends --
Unless my sins abuse my divination --
Success to the Roman host. (IV, ii, 348-352)
\end{quote}

Though Cymbeline the Briton wins the battle against the Romans, yet he agrees to submit tribute to Caesar, and the Soothsayer thus verifies that the dream has been prophetic:

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\textsuperscript{16} Bright, 118-119; Vermigli, \textit{Commonplaces}, 38.
\textsuperscript{17} Perkins, 624; Langton, 89\textsuperscript{v}.
\textsuperscript{18} Perkins, 624; Babington, 157\textsuperscript{v}; Calvin, \textit{On Genesis}, 595, 600, 733; Batman, 84\textsuperscript{v}; Marbeck, 317.
The fingers of the powers above do tune
The harmony of this peace. The vision
Which I made known to Lucius, ere the stroke
Of this yet scarce-cold battle, at this instant
Is full accomplish'd.... (V.v.466-470)

There are dreams from God, but there are also dreams from
the Devil. As we have seen in regard to nightmares, the presence of evil spirits during the night was accepted by many
Elizabethans. In an age of superstition and supernaturalism it is always easy to transfer any natural disturbances, abnormalities, and hardships to the hands of Satan and his legions of foul spirits. If the populace believed that God and his angels could influence dreams, it was but an evident converse that Satan and his angels might do the same.

As has been noted before, the Devil was considered able to utilize the humors, especially melancholy, as vehicles for evil images that he printed on the imagination. Likewise he might influence one's thoughts during the day, so that nightly dreams would lead the dreamer to wickedness. It was considered more common practice however, that the devil would attack those with bad consciences. In these cases God would allow the Devil to do so as a punishment for the dreamer's past sins. Thomas Hill does not generally believe in devils, but he accepts this theory:

Yet sometymes those bee trewe deuilles, which showe themselues sodeinlye, before the soule departeths out of the mans bodye vnto a greater payne, or rather parhappes that God will, that suche call to remembreanc their wicked dedes, and that the sick in conscience may therof repente, and amend before death.20
The Devil is inordinately wicked, though, and he does his best to thwart God's purposes. He may even disguise himself as an angel of God, as Christ, or as God himself, presenting vain illusions to beguile the masses. Thomas Nashe even states that the Devil may appear in the likeness of one's father, mother, or mother-in-law, because:

... in those shapes which he supposeth most familiar unto vs, and that wee are inclined to with a naturall kind of love, we will sooner harken to him than otherwise. Should he not disguise himselfe in such subtil formes of affection, we would flie from him as a serpent.

Satan, disguised as the parish priest or as a loving mother-in-law, then has great powers over man. The Devil's prophetic dreams are often false, but he has advantages over unguided man in certain respects. Having lived from the beginning of the world to date, Satan has exceptionally broad experience in the ways of the world. Moreover, he has greater intelligence than does man. And, as indicated above, he may be allowed by God to torment man or to reveal God's prophecies.

Regardless of Satan's greater knowledge than man, Satan's power is limited by God. He cannot act nor prophesy more than God allows. Sebastian Michaelis says of the Devil, quoting St.

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19 Gifford, Dialogue, K3r; Adams, 842; Lambert Daneau, A Dialogue of Witches (London, 1575), I2r.
20 Hill, P2r; Vermigli, Commonplaces, 39; Bonde, 36r; Churchyard, 78r; James I, Daemonologie, 37, 41.
21 Bonde, 34v; Bateman, 83v; Scot, 103; James I, Daemonologie, 75; George Gifford, A Discourse of the Subtill Practices of Deuillos (London, 1587), D3r.
22 Nashe, Terrors, I, 348.
23 Bonde, 36v; Gifford, Dialogue, G2r.
Thomas Aquinas, "he cannot make an impression of colours into the phantasie of one that is borne blind."  

One must recognize devilish dreams, though. In contrast to divine dreams, they will be ambiguous, trivial, and wicked. They will tend to establish heretical opinions and loathsome manners. Yet, to distinguish readily from dreams of good and evil spirits, one must have the gift of discerning of spirits. This gift is given by God, and there remains a great deal of speculation as to the ability of various contemporary dreamers and dream interpreters to analyse dreams accurately. As St. Augustine is quoted, "I would to God I could perceive the difference between visions, which are given to deceive me; and those which are given to salvation."

The Satanic influence in dreams has been common to all ages, various authors assert. Before the coming of Christ, the pagan oracles were considered diabolical. Here men, after fasting, and abstinence, slept beside pagan oracles and received from evil spirits dream answers to their questions. In later periods the superstitious Anabaptists, Papists, and those who dream of the theatre have devilish dreams, since in each of these instances the devil is attempting to establish wicked customs and practices.

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25 Vermigli, 37; Perkins, 625; Langton, 90r-90v; Marbeck, 316.
26 Vermigli, *Commonplaces*, 37; Batman, 84v; Marbeck, 316.
27 Perkins, 624; Langton, 90r-90v; Adams, 842; Vermigli, *Commonplaces*, 37; Batman 84v.
If either God or the Devil may influence our dreams, it becomes significant by whom and in what manner they are interpreted. One must know whether dreams are of the future, or whether they are merely due to natural disturbances of the mind and body. And, if prophetic, whether these forewarnings are true messages from God, or merely illusory tricks of the Devil. Finally, if these dreams are allegorical, they must be judged as to their meaning and significance. Thus far various dream theories in the Renaissance have been investigated; the related problems of dream prophecy and prophesiers should reveal more clearly the prevailing popular attitudes toward dreams.

One group of writers advocated that man himself, without supernatural assistance, could have prophetic dreams. Thus the soul would have the power of prophecy by itself, and certain gifted men would be more able to interpret dreams than others. This theory, then, is a defense of natural prophets and dream interpreters. Thomas Hill, the writer of a book called The Moste pleasures Arte of the Interpretacion of Dreames, naturally defends this position most strongly, and his entire Epistle Dedicatory and Preface to the Reader are but prolonged answers to his critics.

Hill first makes a distinction between vain and true dreams. Vain dreams are merely due to various natural causes and have no prophetic significance, whereas true dreams, seen by "grace & sober persons," do signify matters to come. 28 Or, as

28 Hill, Interpretacion, A2x-A2y.
Christopher Langton says:

... as one man is better skyllld, in musycke then an other, & an other more nimble to clyme than he, so many by a peculyar gyfte or nature, have dreames that declare thynges to come by allegories and prouerbs.... Of these ky ndes of dreames there is no euident cause, neyther in the mouynge of humours, nor yet in theyr quantitie or qualitie, but that there be certayne natures that foreseeth thynges to come....

Dreams of this sort occur after the fumes of digestion have ceased, of course, and are thus related to morning dreams, which, as has been pointed out before, are most likely to be true.

Pierre Le Loyer also recognizes this type of dream, mentioning that this was classified as a vision by Macrobius in his Commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio.30

Furthermore, by laws of statistical probability some dreams are bound to be prophetic. As Aristotle is quoted by Vermigli, "those things which be received in a maner of all men, are neuer altogether false."31 Prophetic dreams can occur by accident alone, and thus those who dream most would be most likely to have an occasional prophetic dream or two. Those who dream most, as Aristotle has taught, are: idlers and gossips, who are always imagining fantastic happenings; melancholics, who are ever brooding or pining for love; madmen, who

29 Langton, 88r-89r.
30 Vaughn, 61-62; Le Loyer, 2r; Levin Lemnius, Touchstone, 37r, qualifies and says that such morning dreams "signifye no vayne or friulous prediction ..., but caryth a presage that is well to be cosidered, and not lightlye to be neglected."
31 Vermigli, Commonplaces, 32.
have no reason or common sense and therefore are given up
to their imaginations; and friends and kinsfolk, who con-
tinually dream of loved ones. Surely these dreamers would
have a true dream occasionally.

Besides, Hill continues, physicians interpret dreams
to cure the sick; the Bible has numerous examples of prophetic
dreams; and soothsayers were used by the Romans, Greeks,
Arabians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians to foretell the future.

In the sixteenth century, however, there are so few people
that have true dreams, and even fewer who can interpret them,
that the art has fallen into disrepute. Both Hill and the
earlier Artemidorus stress that a good, virtuous, honest man
is necessary for correct dream interpretation; in the Renais-
sance there must not be many honest men available.

Yet, Hill pleads, don’t let the ignorance and falseness
of contemporary soothsayers condemn the whole art of dream
interpretation. If there are errors made, blame the inter-
preter and not the art. Unfortunately, though, dream inter-
pretation is usually criticized in general. As Hill says,
giving an insight into Renaissance attitudes toward dreams:

...[most people] esteem it as a vain dream, laughing at
his own conceit, having more regard to the present spec-
tacle, than to the circumstances to come, making no more
account of them, than of things casual, natural, or im-
possible.

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32 Ibid., 34.
33 Hill, A5r-A4v, D7v; Artemidorus, Bl.
34 Hill, A4v-A6r, A6v-A7r.
This attitude does indeed seem to be a characteristic one toward dreams, for numerous reasons. First, it is very difficult to determine a dream's true cause. The allegorical nature of the dream is usually so doubtful and obscure that no accurate meaning can be definitely established. And of course to relate all dreams to divine causation is folly — God does not cause all dreams; many are a result of natural disorders and other causes. There is no standard rule to determine the cause of a dream or the interpretation, as Thomas Nashe points out:

Could any men set downe certaine rules of expounding of Dreames, and that their rules were generall, holding in all as well as in some, I would beginne a little to list to them, but commonly that which is portentiue in a King is but a frilous fancie in a beggar, and let him dreame of Angels, Eagles, Lyons, Griffons, Dragons never so, all the augurie under heauen will not allot him so much as a good almes.

A more significant criticism of the theory of natural prophecy and prophets, however, is the religious heresy it implies. Nashe tells us that preachers continually attack the vanity of dreams, for, as St. Augustine teaches, the soul does not have natural power to prophesy. Visions and dreams obtain their truth not from nature, but from God. Only God knows what lies in the future, and it is within His power to declare His secrets. As John Harvey says:

35 Vermigli, 32, 35, 37; Calvin, On Daniel, 7v; Perkins, 624; Agrippa, Vanitie, (1569), 53r, lists various authors such as Plato, Aristotle, Democritus, Avicen, Albert, and Cicero, all of whom disagree as to the cause of dreams. This discussion is repeated verbatim in Scot, Discoverie (1584), 102.
36 Nashe, Terroris, I, 362; Babington, 157v.
37 Nashe, Praye of Red Herring, III, 197.
The spirit of prophecy is not like the spirit of the buttery: it is a divine, and powerable spirit of heavenly essence, and of supernatural nature, not employed or set on work by any, but only his omnipotent Creator... In this sense, after the Duke of Gloucester has had a troubled dream in 2 Henry VI, he recounts it to his wife, ending, "This was my dream: what it doth bode, God knows." Though the expression "God only knows" is colloquial today, it has specific connotations here in dramatic context. His wife Eleanor is unable to interpret the dream correctly, and the dream is later prophetically fulfilled. 40

To interpret dreams one must be able to discern their origins. Thus, whereas the physician can often determine the natural cause of dreams, no-one is able to determine the supernatural cause, whether from God or Satan, without God's inspiration. 41 And moreover, as has been noted in reference to divine dreams, since the coming of Christ and the writing of the Gospels there has been no need for divine inspiration and forewarnings through dreams. As Reginald Scot says:

For although we may receive comfort of mind by those, which are called divine dreams, and health of bodie through physicall dreams; yet if we take upon us to use the office of God in the revelation or rather the interpretation of them, or if we attribute unto them miraculous effects (now when we see the gifts of prophesie, and of interpretation of dreams, and also the operation of miracles are ceased, which were speciall and peculiar of God ... to establish his people in the faith of the Messias, who is now exhibited unto us both in the testament, and also in the bloud of our Saviour Jesus Christ) we are bewitched, and both abuse and offend the majestic of God, and also seduce, delude and cousen all such as by our persuasion, and their owne light beliefe, give us credit. 42

38 Vermigli, 38; Perkins, 624; Chaucer, The House of Fame, 43-52.
On this basis, therefore, contemporary dreams were not to be considered originating from God. They would be either natural or diabolical, and neither type of course would have any prophetic significance. And further, if there is ever any doubt as to whether the dream is natural or diabolical, William Bonde, on the authority of St. Gregory, would have the dreamer consider it Satanic. Though Christopher Langton wrote an elaborate exposition on natural prophecy, he later states his own belief with numerous examples that such dreams are full of ambiguity. He concludes:

Therefore let them be as conjectures, which somtyme chauce or happen. But I wolde that every man shulde thynke, that they be both deceitfull conjectures, and also uncertayne, as many nor be. Let superstition be set asyde, and let vs remeber the sayyinge of Salomon: where manye dreames be, there is moche vanitie and error.

As the proverb goes, says Scot, "dreames proove contrarie." This same attitude toward dreams, that they are vain, idle, mocking, lowly, etc., is repeated throughout Shakespeare; one of the prominent examples is in The Winter's Tale, when Antigonus tells of his past dream of Hermione. As he says:

39 John Harvey, A Discovrsive Problem concerning Prophesies, (London, 1586), 38; Gifford, Dialogue, G2v; Calvin, Admonicion against Astrology, C5v; Scot, 101; Chaucer, Parson's Tale, 605-607;
40 2 Henry VI I.i.i.31, 32-34. See 2 Henry VI II.iii.30-31; IV.i.142; 3 Henry VI I.1.16.
41 Lemnius, 112v; Calvin, On Daniel, 8v; Marbeck, 316.
42 Scot, 103.
43 Bonde, 36v; Perkins, 623.
44 Langton, 91r-95r; Lemnius, 95r-95v.
I have heard, but not believed, the spirits o' the dead
May walk again: if such thing be, thy mother
Appear'd to me last night, for ne'er was dream
So like a waking.\textsuperscript{46}

Antigonus obviously has heard of the current superstitions
concerning supernatural visitations in dreams. He does not
believe them, of course, but the dream was so awesome -- a
sorrowful creature in pure white robes, weaving her head,
placing a curse on him, and then vanishing with a shriek!
Maybe this was a divine dream after all! He continues:

\begin{verbatim}
Affrighted much,
I did in time collect myself and thought
This was so and no slumber. Dreams are toys:
Yet for this once, yea, superstitiously,
I will be squared by this.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{verbatim}

Another typical Shakespearean view of dreams in the drama
is Mercutio's answer to Romeo after the Queen Mab passage in
\textit{Romeo and Juliet}. Romeo, we recall, had earlier suggested that
sleepers "dream things true". Mercutio then replied with the
Queen Mab speech, which Romeo stops short with:

\begin{verbatim}
Peace, peace Mercutio, peace!
Thou talks't of nothing. (I.iv.95-96)
\end{verbatim}

Mercutio is quick to reply:

\begin{verbatim}
True, I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is as thin of substance as the air
And more inconstant than the wind.... (I.iv.96-100)
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{46} The Winter's Tale III.iii.16-19.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.,III.iii.37-41. See Pericles V.i.164-165; Midsummer Night's Dream IV.i.71-72, V.i.2-3, 430-436; King John IV.ii.143-146; Measure for Measure IV.1.59-64.
If dreams were considered frivolous and of little prophetic significance, the interpreters of these dreams were considered of even less value. As Peter Vermigli quotes St. Augustine as saying, "If an evil spirit doth possess men, he maketh them either demonsakes, or out of their wits, or else false prophets." These false prophets professed to have divine inspiration, but this was merely the guidance of Satan, disguised as God or a good angel. Through this influence of Satan, therefore, such prophets were labeled as witches; we recall Scot's comment that even physicians were considered under demonic influence for their diagnoses by dreams.

In answer to Thomas Hill's claim that Biblical and pagan soothsayers were regarded highly, William Perkins points out that, in both Deuteronomy (13:1-5) and Jeremiah (23:16, 25-32; 27:9-10; 29:8-9), God expressly warns against false prophets. As for ancient soothsayers, Thomas Nashe states wryly, "An easie matter was it for them to prognosticate treasons and conspiracies, in which they were underhand inlinked themselves." These diviners were active likewise in Renaissance England, using the same practices as their predecessors. Thus, as Reginald Scot says, "they knowe not before the dreame, nor

48 Vermigli, 35, 37, 38.
49 Gifford, Discourse, B3v; James I, Daemonologie, 75; Vermigli, Commonplaces, 38.
50 Scot, 49, 101, 103; Perkins, 623.
51 Perkins, 623; Scot, 107; Calvin, On Deuteronomie, 535, 680-681.
yet after, any certeintie; yet when any thing afterwards
happeneth, then they applie the dreame to that which hath
chanced."52 In conclusion, John Harvey lashes out at these con-
temporary interpreters and their prophecies, which:

... are neuer grounded vpon any sensible, artificiall, or
substantiall foundation, according to sound reason, or learning:
do they not most-what ever proceede from some odde vaine phan-
tasticall, or phreneticall braines, either strangely deluded by
some cogging diuell, or extraordinarily possessed with rauing
furio, or unnaturally disguised with melancholy fumes, or at
least wilfully disposed to seduce, and beguile the world with
I knowe not what colourable, & superstitious flimflams, intended
to the advancing, or atticheuing of some deepe secret diabolical
purposes.... 53

52 Nashe, Terrors, I, 362-363. Nashe, Terrors, I, 363-
368, gives a full satirical and witty discussion of the practices
of contemporary soothsayers. Scot, 102; Adams, 842.
53 Harvey, 34-35.
CHAPTER V

SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF DREAMS

From the preceding discussion of supernatural dreams and dream interpreters, it seems apparent that many writers of Shakespeare's time did not believe that dreams had prophetic power. Theologians, it is recalled, emphasized that there was no need for prophetic dreams since the coming of Christ and the writing of the New Testament. What God had to say to man had been already exemplified through Christ's life and teachings. Dreams therefore must originate from the Devil or from natural causes; neither of these types would have prophetic significance except in two instances: either when a prophetic dream happened by chance, or when God granted the Devil knowledge of the future in order to torment sinners with fearful dreams of their future sufferings.¹

Bain Tate Stewart, the author of a broad study of Renaissance dream interpretation and its use in the drama, comes to a different conclusion, however. Mr. Stewart maintains that in the Renaissance "almost everyone recognized the power of God to impress a knowledge of the future upon the mind of man through dreams."² Upon this assumption he builds a theory that,

² Bain Tate Stewart, "The Misunderstood Dreams in the Plays of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries," *Vanderbilt Humanities Studies*, II (1954), 201. This article is a summary of Stewart's unpublished doctoral dissertation, cited previously.
since many characters scoff at dreams in the drama (as elsewhere in the writings of the day), and since many of these dreams usually are prophetic of later events in the play, such dreams serve as foreshadowing for the plot and such dream scoffings are examples of dramatic irony. Furthermore, the prophetic dreams take over the function of the early dumb show in symbolic foreshadowing the later action of the play, though these dreams do not outline the complete development of the play but focus attention only upon the crux of the action.

This theory is dependent, though, on an assumption that the audience recognized dreams as being usually prophetic. From my investigation this assumption does not seem valid, as there were often vigorous attacks on the superstitious belief in dreams and severe condemnation of dream interpreters, other than medical diagnosticians. Mr. Stewart is quite right that the audience might consider dreams as being from supernatural origin, but this origin would be demonic, not divine. Thus, though dreams might add supernatural elements to the drama, these dreams would not necessarily be interpreted by the audience as prophetic and therefore foreshadowing later action in the play. If demonic forces were explicitly mentioned such dreams might be prophetic only in a specific instance. God might have given the Devil power and authority to vex sinners and their evil consciences. However, even in these instances there would be reasonable doubt. The audience would not be sure what significance a dream would have; not foreshadowing,
but heightened suspense, audience interest, and an aura of supernatural-mystery would result from the use of a dream. Neither audience nor character would be sure what a dream indicated until the action of the play revealed its truth or error.

Occasionally the Devil is given power to bring prophetic dreams to sinners. Thus in Richard III the dream of Clarence in the Tower is prophetic of his impending death. Clarence's opening speech in this scene indicates to the audience that his dream has been influenced by evil forces, certainly not by God:

O, I have pass'd a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghastly dreams,
That, as I am a Christian faithful man, I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days, So full of dismal terror was the time!(I.iv.2-7)

Clarence tells Brakenbury of his dream of being drowned and meeting his murdered victims, Warwick and Edward; after the meeting Clarence is surrounded by demons:

With that, methought, a legion of foul fiends Environ'd me about, and howled in mine ears Such hideous cries, that with the very noise I trembling waked, and for a season after Could not believe but that I was in hell, Such terrible impression made my dream. (I.iv.58-63)

This dream seems clearly of Satanic origin, and the sixteenth century audience must have accepted it as such. Here then are supernatural forces guiding man, leading him to inevitable ends. Even Clarence realizes that this dream is from the Devil; God has sent this dream through the Devil to torment Clarence's conscience. Clarence implores in prayers:
O God! if my deep prayers cannot appease thee,
But thou wilt be avenged on my misdeeds,
Yet execute thy wrath in me alone,
O, spare my guiltless wife and my poor children!
(I.iv.69-72)

In the same play Richard has a prophetic dream on the eve of battle at Bosworth field against the forces of the Earl of Richmond. Earlier in the play Queen Margaret, the widow of Henry VI, has cursed Richard and mentioned just this type of conscience dream from devils:

No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be whilst some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!
(I.iii.225-227)

Then, before battle, Richard has a dream in which ghosts of his past victims appear, prophesying death and despair. The play does not state the source of this supernatural dream, though Richard accepts it as a plague to his conscience (V.iii.179-199). Since the Devil was known to torment one's conscience, though, in this instance by a series of vengeful Protestant ghosts, one may conclude that these apparitions are probably inspired by Satan, with God's permission. The same ghosts appear to Richmond prophesying victory and long life; here their visits serve to blacken the dark messages to Richard by contrast.

Some supernatural dreams in Shakespeare are clearly of divine origin, but they usually originate from pagan deities. Such dreams, having no relationship to contemporary religious beliefs, would be accepted by the audience as prophetic of the future action of the play. Thus in Pericles the goddess
Diana instructs and motivates Pericles to go to Ephesus and find his lost wife. Pericles does so and is reunited with his wife in the final scene of the play. In Cymbeline a soothsayer prophesies victory to the Romans from a dream he had from "the very gods" after the oracular rites of fasting and prayer (IV.ii.346-352). The dream is prophetic in that Cymbeline agrees to pay tribute to Rome (V.v.458-462). The dream which Jupiter sends to Posthumus in the same play (V.iv.30-122) is prophetic of Posthumus's future good fortune, but the book left with Posthumus contains symbolic information that seems too obscure for the audience; possibly the whole masque-like passage is an interpolation. The dream of the Duke of Gloucester in 2 Henry VI is likewise prophetic of the Duke's future and seems to derive from God (I.ii.25-31), but the effect of this dream is lessened somewhat since the prophecy is not completely fulfilled until Act I of 3 Henry VI (I.i.16).

In other supernatural dreams, however, the origin is not explicitly given and the audience and characters are left to puzzle out the dream for themselves. The question of the dream's nature and meaning remains unanswered until the action of the play itself reveals it. These dreams cannot foreshadow the future events of the play, therefore, because the dreams themselves are unsure of interpretation. They may be demonic or merely natural dreams. This uncertainty is expressed by Romeo after a dream he has had in Mantua:
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. (V.i.1-2, 6-9)

The dream is prophetic, but only partly. This dream is possibly an example of the Devil's ability to determine the future, yet only in part, for, though Juliet finds Romeo dead and kisses him, this kiss does not lead to his return to life but rather to Juliet's death.

In *The Winter's Tale* Antigonus has had a supernatural dream, yet he is unsure of its nature. As he says, "I have heard, but not believed, the spirits o' the dead / May walk again."(III.iii.16). Once more he reveals his uncertainty to the audience as he mutters:

Dreams are toys:
Yet for this once, yea, superstitiously,
I will be squared by this. (III.iii.39-41)

This dream has told Antigonus that he will never see his wife Paulina again, and with his death soon thereafter the dream prophecy is fulfilled. Yet another prophetic dream is in *Julius Caesar*, when Calpurnia dreams of her husband's death. She begs Caesar to stay from the Senate on this specific day, the ides of March, but Decius Brutus puts a favourable interpretation on the dream, causing Caesar to change his mind and go to the Senate and thus to his assassination.³

These various prophetic dreams heighten the sense of fate that pervades so much Shakespearean drama. That the exact
origin of dreams and therefore their prophetic significance is a matter of contemporary controversy would only add to the emotional force of these elements in the drama. The Ghost in *Hamlet* creates somewhat the same effect — neither Hamlet nor the audience is sure whether the Ghost is really a true wandering spirit or else a devil in disguise until the action of the play itself provides the answer. Supernatural dreams similarly are apt to be ambiguous; neither audience nor actors know how to interpret them until the action itself reveals their true prophecy or false claims. If these dreams are indicated to be from Jove, Jupiter, or Diana, or if the Devil is doing God's will in attacking the consciences of murderers, such dreams would be clearly accepted as prophetic of future events in the play. However, without these signs dreams could not be easily labeled. The audience awaited eagerly the outcome of the dream, aware of an undefined supernatural force possibly lurking in the shadows, and yet never quite sure. Certainly the use of dreams would have dramatic effect in such instances.

Shakespeare makes other uses of dreams of course. It has been shown in the first three chapters of this thesis that

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3 *Julius Caesar* II.i.76-82, 83-89. This dream and its interpretation correspond closely to Plutarch's "Life of Julius Caesar," Hector's rejection of Cassandra's prophecies in *Troilus and Cressida* V.iii.62-80, is also a matter of source and tradition. According to Greek tradition Apollo had ordained that Cassandra's prophecies should not be believed.
Shakespeare's plays and poetry illustrate various theories and commonplaces of his time concerning the imagination, sleep, and dreams. This fact does not imply that Shakespeare was a professional psychologist, nor that he consciously intended to write at length on these topics. However, the doctrine of humors and the common relationship between desires and dreams could not be ignored before an Elizabethan audience. If Shakespeare used dreams at all he had to clothe them in contemporary dress. Moreover, dreams were useful dramatic devices; we have seen how Shakespeare used supernatural dreams to heighten the mood of the drama and possibly foreshadow the plot; there yet remains the significant use of natural dreams for purposes of characterization.

A prominent example of this use of dreams for characterization is Richard III. In the earlier play 3 Henry VI Richard's character is revealed to the audience in a memorable soliloquy in Act III. He is not suited for love, for nature has created him with an abnormal shape. Nature has been bribed:

To shrink mine arm up like a wither'd shrub;  
To make an envious mountain on my back,  
Where sits deformity to mock my body;  
To shape my legs of an unequal size;  
To disproportion me in every part,  
Like to a chaos, or an unlickt bear-whelp  
That carries no impression like the dam. (III.ii.156-162)

Therefore, since Richard cannot be a dashing lover, since he is unloved, he will concentrate his thoughts and dreams on ambitions for the crown:
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll make my heaven to dream upon the crown,
And, whiles I live, t'account this world but hell,
Until my mis-shaped trunk that bears this head,
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.(III.ii.165-171)

This ambition will be fulfilled by any Machiavellian or dia-
 bolic means that are necessary, including murder and deceit:

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile;
And cry 'Content' to that which grieves my heart;
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.(III.ii.182-185)

In this play, then, we see Richard as a hunchback and cripple,
scorned by women and unloved. To compensate for his deformi-
ties and his unhappiness he will become the wily Machiavellian
villain, centering his thoughts and dreams on eventual kingship.

This same characterization carries over to Richard III,
with Richard's intrigues and witty repartee concealing only
slightly his ambitious fervor. After both Henry VI and his
son Edward have been murdered, Richard confronts Anne, the widow
of murdered Edward, with aplomb. Though Anne reviles Richard
as a dreadful minister of hell, foul devil, lump of foul
deformity, villain, hedgehog, etc., Gloucester is unruffled.
His path to the crown demands that he marry Anne, and as he
says in soliloquy:

What though I kill'd her husband and her father?
The readiest way to make the wench amends
Is to become her husband and her father;
The which will I; not all so much for love
As for another secret close intent.... (I.i.154-158)

Thus Anne's curses have little effect on scheming Richard.

Whereas Anne tells Gloucester that his deeds were provoked by
a bloody mind, "which never dreamt on aught but butcheries" (I.ii.100), Gloucester replies that such timeless deaths were brought about by love melancholy:

Your beauty was the cause of that effect:
Your beauty, which did haunt me in my sleep
To undertake the death of all the world,
So I might live one hour in your sweet bosom.
(I.ii.121-124)

Later in the play Queen Margaret also attacks Gloucester in a curse that Richard ignores but which is prophetic of Richard's future as a king. Queen Margaret calls Richard a cosmic disturbance, "the troubler of the poor world's peace:"

The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be whilst some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!
Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog!
Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity
The slave of nature and the son of hell!
(I.iii.222-230)

The emphasis in these curses on Gloucester as a devil is characteristic of the Machiavellian villain of other early dramatists, but this emphasis is also most appropriate to Gloucester. From the discussion of nightmares, it is recalled, folk belief held that Satan was instrumental in causing abnormalities of birth. Thus Richard's misshapen body would imply demonic origin in itself, and the attitude of Richard's own mother, the Duchess of York, would seem more plausible as she says to her son:

Thou camest on earth to make the earth my hell.
A grievous burden was thy birth to me; ...
Thy age confirm'd, proud, subtle, bloody, treacherous,
More mild, but yet more harmful, mild in hatred.
(IV.iv.166-167, 171-172)
Richard's mother also puts a curse on her son that foretells the later prophetic dream at Bosworth field:

My prayers on the adverse party fight;
And there the little souls of Edward's children
Whisper the spirits of thine enemies
And promise them success and victory.
Bloody thou art, bloody will be thy end;
Same serves thy life and doth thy death attend.

(IV.iv.190-195)

Richard is still unruffled by these curses, however. His ironic wit and carefully developed intrigues do not fail him until he has reached the throne. Once crowned, though, Richard's character takes on new dimensions. His ambition has been reached through murder, deceit, and Machiavellian cleverness, emphasized in the various references to him ambitious dreams. However, once Richard is on the pinnacle his habits and dreams change. In his rise to power Gloucester need trust no one; now, as King, he must depend on allies to maintain his position.

In this latter part of Richard III, following the King's coronation in Act IV, Shakespeare's use of the dream in developing Richard's character is of significant effect. Richard's dreams are not ambitious now; instead, his wife Anne notes his "timorous dreams," and Queen Margaret's curse is fulfilled in the prophetic dreams at Bosworth when ghosts appear prophesying defeat to the King. This dream has been discussed earlier, but it is significant to note once more that Richard's conscience is tormented by the ghosts of past victims. He is strongly affected, and, as Queen Margaret's curses specified, is suspicious of his friends:

O Ratcliff, I have dream'd a fearful dream!
What thinkest thou, will our friends prove all true?

(V.iii.212-213)
And, though Ratcliff reassures him, King Richard answers weakly:

O Ratcliff, I fear, I fear — (V.iii.214)

In contrast, Richmond’s dream of Bosworth is fair-boding and joyful. Joyful dreams were said to come to persons of sanguine complexion, and Richmond, as the first Tudor monarch, was portrayed in such manner. Thus Richmond’s dreams add to his characterization as sanguine, in contrast to Richard’s fearful, melancholic dreams. The blackness of Richard’s character seems overdone, but it must be pointed out that Richard was crowned whereas Richmond’s forces were rebels.

To fight the ruling monarch was considered rebellion against God-established order (to the Elizabethans). However, in this case Richard is portrayed so emphatically as a bloodthirsty tyrant, with Richmond his sanguine opposite, that rebellion is considered lawful. Richmond addresses his army before Bosworth and states that Richard is to be considered not a true monarch but an usurper:

A bloody tyrant and a homicide;
One raised in blood, and one in blood establish’d;
One that made means to come by what he hath,
And slaughter’d those that were the means to help him;
A base foul stone, made precious by the foil
Of England’s chair, where he is falsely set;
One that hath ever been God’s enemy:
Then, if you fight against God’s enemy,
God will in justice ward you as his soldiers;
If you do sweat to put a tyrant down,
You sleep in peace, the tyrant being slain.
(V.iii.246-256)

Macbeth is an interesting contrast to Richard in respect to imagination, sleep and dreams. Macbeth is also ambitious
for the crown (I.vii.25-28), yet his ambition is stimulated by the prophecies of the Weird Sisters, whereas Richard's ambition seems to have originated from his own crafty nature and defiant attitude prompted by his deformity. While Richard moves rapidly toward his goal, Macbeth is tormented by uncertainty as to the nature of the supernatural prophecies he has received:

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill, cannot be good...(I.iii.130-131)

Macbeth's imagination is tempted by ambitious thoughts, thoughts even of murder of King Duncan, but he cannot accept these thoughts wholeheartedly and act upon them. For the moment his imagination controls his actions and he is occupied in a reverie or "daydream:"

Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man that function
Is smother'd in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not. (I.iii.137-142)

Macbeth's ambition, urged forward by his wife, leads Macbeth to the murder of Duncan, but, unlike Richard, Macbeth is immediately plagued with pangs of conscience. Before the murder he sees a vision of a bloody dagger before him and "wicked dreams" are said to torment sleep (II.i.34-51), and after Duncan's death a voice cries out "Macbeth shall sleep no more" (II.ii.43). Lady Macbeth scoffs at such flights of the imagination and Macbeth's "brainsickly" preoccupation with them (II.ii.43-46), but her scoffing has little effect.
Macbeth is crowned as sovereign, and here, as in Richard III, the murderous ruler's conscience is tormented by terrible, fearful dreams. Macbeth realizes that he can trust no one; one murder must lead to another. Any means is valid to bring about a secure power on the throne and stop these vexing dreams:

We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it ...  
But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer;  
Ere we will eat our meal 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. (III.ii.13, 16-22)

Murder is not the solution, however. Banquo is killed but Fleance escapes, and soon Banquo's ghost appears at the banquet table to haunt his murderer Macbeth. Up to this point Lady Macbeth has remained unshaken by her husband's actions and dreams -- these are but scorpion fears of the mind, air-drawn daggers, outbursts of passion, and gusts of wind. In the familiar sleepwalking scene near the close of the play, however, the audience sees that she too has been affected by her memories and sufferings of conscience. These are "thick-coming fancies," as the Doctor says, that arise from unnatural deeds (V.i.79-80); (V.ii.37-39). Throughout the play, as illustrated, dreams, sleeplessness, supernatural visitations, and visions add to the general mood of the drama and reflect character through the reactions made by the two principal figures, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

There are other instances in which dreams are used to
illustrate character in Shakespeare's plays, but they have been mentioned previously and do not really serve as focal points in the plays. Thus dreams from humors would indicate and elaborate the character's basic complexion and allied attributes. In this regard we have mentioned the choleric battle dreams of soldiers Tullus Aufidius in Coriolanus (IV.v.119-124) and Hotspur in 1 Henry IV (II.iii.51-58); the phlegmatic drowning dream of "simple, plain" Clarence in Richard III (I.i.118, I.iv.21-28); the sanguine dream of Romeo while expecting good news in Mantua (V.i.6-11); and the melancholy bad dreams of Hamlet (II.ii.263) and fearful love melancholy dreams of Imogen in Cymbeline (III.iv.42-46).

Dreams originating from the thoughts of the day would of course reveal the character's thoughts, as with Banquo's dream of the Weird Sisters in Macbeth (II.i.20-21). Dreams from desires would be acknowledged by the audience as appropriate to the character's innermost yearnings, as for example the ambitious dream of Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester in 2 Henry VI (I.ii.36-40); and the greedy dreams of Shylock for his money bags in The Merchant of Venice (II.v.17-18) and Lucullus for a silver basin in Timon of Athens (III.i.4-6). Othello

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4 Stewart, dissertation, p. 166-167, has an interesting theory concerning Hamlet's character on the basis of this mention of "bad dreams." In Hamlet's soliloquy on suicide (III.i.56-88) Hamlet's inventive mind hit upon the comparison of the dream state with that of the soul after death. Since he is a melancholy man afflicted with terrible dreams, Hamlet would be afraid of death at this time. At the end of the play, however, Hamlet does not fear death, there are no dreams in the afterlife (V.ii.369: "The rest is silence"), and the Dane is thus less dominated by his humor.
attributes a supposed lustful dream to Cassio upon Iago's telling of it (III.iii.419-430), which interpretation of the "dream" would of course reflect more of the character of Othello then it would of Cassio.

The dramatic utility of all these natural dreams, of course, is limited by the audience's ability to interpret them correctly. There is unusual consistency, though, in the writings of numerous Elizabethan authors on the subject of natural dreams, and it seems apparent that the audience of that time must have responded to and recognized these dreams whether from the character's humor or from his desires. In some instances, as for example with the dangers attributed to sleeping on one's back, the Shakespearean audience differs considerably from a modern one, but much of this dream theory is acknowledged even today. The humors have become assimilated into our language as descriptive terms, and modern dream analysis is based on the theory that dreams arise from thoughts and desires.

Of course, so much of this dream theory seems commonplace today that we tend to overlook it in the drama. Since Shakespeare's characters do not discuss these theories at length, the criticism may be made that this study is searching unduly for minutiae that the drama itself is not concerned with. In answer to this criticism, I can only answer that the dream had specific dramatic uses -- supernatural dreams for prophetic foreshadowing of the plot or heightened dramatic suspense,
natural dreams to delineate character -- and that Shakespeare used whatever would suit his purposes. As for elaborate discussions of dreams in the plays, this practice is limited by the nature of the characters themselves. In drama the story must be told and the action furthered by the living people involved in the toils of the plot. The extent of the knowledge of each dramatis persona is limited, as in real life, to the bounds demanded by versimilitude. Thus the knowledge of dreams must be limited by the experiences and knowledge of the characters represented by the actor on stage.
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