Not Just in a Play

Talk for launch of Dream Sequences in Shakespeare *click for audio*
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The trouble with writing a book about Shakespeare is that you feel you've been preparing for it ever since you learned to read or were taken as a child to your first Shakespeare performance (in my case *Romeo and Juliet* age twelve – these days they start them younger). Of course one has published various individual essays on aspects of Shakespeare over the years but an entire book is different, it seems to demand completeness. It begins to feel like the culmination of your life's work and you hardly dare start because you haven't got your life in order yet.

Then you realise it's never going to happen. It's never 'entire'. You can relieve yourself of the burden of trying to write everything you know about every play written by the man who as we know knew everything about human nature. The cumulative knowledge-box of human nature, investigated or plundered over 400 years, the repository of psychic riches like Keats's Moneta with her 'aching brow'; Shakespeare has informed the muse of every poet since – the 'goddess of complete being' as Ted Hughes termed it. Harold Bloom called his ultimate Shakespeare book *The Invention of the Human.* What about Chaucer, Euripides, the cave painters? Shakespeare was part of a tradition going back to the origins of the species. Current academic criticism, striving to go beyond Bloom and the humanistic generation that practised character analysis, recoils from the concept of human nature and even more the concept of 'the mind'. We are no longer postmodern, apparently we are 'posthuman' now (does the formulation of such a category represent a denial of our dependence on the planet?)

I decided to go backwards. What is the common thread in my previous writings – the focus of my astonishment, puzzlement and wonder, urging me to do something about it in response. I had enjoyed chanting witches' spells in *Macbeth* at primary school but I was puzzled that the hero was such an idiot, he really did ask for double trouble. *Romeo and Juliet* was an enthralling spectacle but I couldn't empathise with those star-crossed lovers and their idiotic vanity; the episode that really impressed was Mercutio the poet getting killed by Romeo's sanctimony. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was another matter, I really had to do something. At age thirteen I badgered some friends into enacting the play-within-a-play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, in the back garden; and gave myself the part of Bottom, though like Bottom I really wanted to act all of them. By then I had a wonderful English teacher, Joie Macaulay, who began her Shakespeare lessons by shoving the classroom furniture to the walls to create an acting space. At the same time she focussed on the poetry of the words, but in action.

She gave me the part of Cassius in *Julius Caesar* and I realised that the play was about me and my schoolfriends, although it purported to be about ancient Roman politics. It took me longer to get into *Hamlet* despite 'doing it' for O-level, though I was fascinated by his capacity for intellectual rationalisation. You had to admire the cleverness of his arguments but they didn't seem to get him anywhere. He seemed to understand everything apart from himself. By the time he reappeared as Prospero (at A-level) – the ruler of the theatre-world who could do anything but finally comes to accept his own helplessness – many Shakespearean tempests had flowed under the bridge.

Yet *Hamlet* was really the beginning of my preoccupation with the theme of this book: the underlying dream-structure, created above all by the poetry, and the way it clashes with the superficial action of the plot – just as the poetic meaning of words (in their dramatic context) often clashes with their apparent discursive meaning. Hazlitt famously said, 'It is *we* who are Hamlet', pointing to the emergence of a different kind of identification in this play, and a radical shift in structure from play to dream-play, where the hero is at the epicentre of dreams that surround him 'like thunderclouds' as EM Forster said of the emotions in Wuthering Heights. It pushes the boundaries of reality. The cloudy emotions are his ghosts, taking the shape of realistic people, actors. Or as Frank McCourt says of his first acquaintance with the play:

> I was so moved by the play because so much of it was about me and my gloomy life… I wished I could have attached a note to let Hamlet know who I was and how my suffering was real and not just in a play.

Hamlet's suffering, or rather his struggle between suffering and avoiding suffering (in Bion's sense of 'feeling it') *is*, of course, the reality of the play. The father-figure who hides behind his mother's arras, the invading army that marches over the stage of the court, the picturesque drowning of Ophelia as videoed by the Queen – are all his dreams. They chart the intense turbulence that Bion denotes by the oscillation between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, followed by his gradual fixation in the paranoid-schizoid state of social respectability, as the idea of Ophelia slips like Eurydice back into Hades. His analyst-father Horatio is helpless to divert his relentless course: all he can do is 'tell his story'.

Shakespeare seems to work out something very specific here about his own function as a playwright, and his relation to the audience, including the audience of the future. He is our analyst but it turns out his favourite Hamlet is not going to save the world after all; as a character, his imaginative dreams find no containment within the play – they reach beyond its boundaries. Shakespeare gets out of his own too-close reliance on Hamlet as hero by turning his attention and interest to Ophelia, the one who slipped away. It is she who is potentially a real thinker by the end, not Hamlet. She is not one of those proto-feminist double-crossdressed heroines like Rosalind who command the action; indeed the fantasy of many a female reader seems to be that if only *they* had been in the play rather than Ophelia, Hamlet would have found

a proper match and a happy ending. Rather, Ophelia escapes the Mousetrap of claustrophobic values by what appears to be madness: she deals in the 'unthought' – the preverbal, drowned roots of poetry which find no container in civilised courtly phraseology:

> Her speech is nothing,
> Yet the unshaped use of it doth move the hearers to collection …
> Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
> Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

She turns to words that are writ in water, the leaves where the Sibyl's oracles are scattered (as Dante put it); because 'words, words, words' have become what Bion calls 'definitory caskets preventing the birth of an idea'.

So *Hamlet* is all about the hero's failure to develop a thinking process – it's not about a failure to take action owing to thinking too much. In Bion's terms, alpha-function is arrested midway, most precisely in fact at the point of acting out the Mousetrap, where thought is not inserted between impulse and action. The potential thought – in this case the future shape of a real prince (the 'rose of May') – is never symbolised, though Horatio is now open to it and can develop it in future plays – future dream-symbols whose darling buds are not nipped by narcissistic frosts.

So, not only are the plays driven by the battle between developmental and anti-developmental forces (as in literature generally) but it is impressed on us again and again that this doesn't mean simply good versus bad characters, but the truthful or deceitful use of words – usually for display or persuasion rather than for communication. From *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare had been suspicious about the use of words to manipulate or tell fictions (lies), as though he were ambivalent about his own facility. Indeed, before *Hamlet*, the plays glory in the power of words. But from early on, Shakespeare shows he is conscious of the dangers of this form of intoxication. The use of words is evidence of the battle between basic-assumption formulae – social and rhetorical conventions – and authentic, sincere communication when the links between characters create a work-group: Edgar's 'Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.' Sometimes (in the later plays especially) these moments are expressed in the simplest language, like Ariel's uncharacteristic 'Do you love me, master?' or Cleopatra's 'Not know me yet?' and Antony's 'I am dying, Egypt, dying'. There is nothing flowery or poetic about them in the standard sense. Yet in their context they are like a flash of lightning.

But that's the point – it is a poetry of context. What does one mean by the poetry of a play? It is the whole situation, not just the anthologisable verse. Although it was *Hamlet* that first brought it home to me, it was of course the case that Shakespeare had been writing dream plays all along, in the sense of incorporating dreamlike sequences into the action: sequences that emerge from a different underlying necessity than that

of plot or even depiction of character. Meltzer's description of the dream-world is a 'theatre for the generation of meaning'. Both the mind and the theatre are literally places where meaning is created by the interaction between different characters or aspects of the mind. So there is a real structural sense in which the theatre is the most congruent of all art forms to the concrete world of unconscious phantasy as revealed by Mrs Klein, a three-dimensional virtual space. The genre is by nature immersive – to use the modern jargon. The relation between the actors and the audience is more like countertransference than like voyeurism – we are energised, alert. The moment the lights go out in the auditorium we are in internal space, the dream-world – not a mirror to nature but a mirror to psyche. Where would we have been if Shakespeare had only written sonnets? 'So long lives this/ And this gives life to thee.' Wherein lies his durability? Undoubtedly in the theatre of his dreamlife, which he accessed via the ineffable qualities of words not merely their discursive significance – the so far 'unthought'. Which of course is why the English language expanded to such a degree after incorporating his magical phraseology.

In an author less perceptive of his latent or embryonic feelings (not repressed but not yet conscious, in Bion's distinction), the persuasive power of many poetic passages would remain unchallenged. Even in the early play *Richard II* (still in rhyming verse) the stirring 'little Eden' speech – propaganda material for the next 300 years of British history – is starkly contrasted with the dream-world inside Richard's head, when he loses his hollow crown and gains access instead to something that may look like death but in fact contains the seeds of new life, where the 'brain is female to the soul' and generates new thoughts. It is interesting that in the late play *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare puts elements of the same Eden speech into the mouth of the wicked Queen. Eden was always a chimera, but the 'working brain' (to borrow Keats' phrase) has endured as a goal even though still unfathomed.

In the same way, Ulysses' speech on 'Degree' in *Troilus and Cressida* is considered the supreme expression of the Elizabethan world order, extolling the virtues of an orderly hierarchy ('Observe degree, priority and place … in all line of order'). 'Untune that string' and all chaos is supposed to be let loose. But in context, it is a justification for the repression and bartering of the powerless, as exemplified by Cressida. These are the basic assumptions that rationalise political brutality. Like anyone with a classical education Shakespeare was trained in rhetoric to present both sides of an argument. But he wants to get beneath the level of rhetorical argument, to Ophelia's 'unthought'. It's not enough just to manipulate the ideas intellectually – that's just wordplay – you have to really inhabit that part of the self, like the actor, at the level of unconscious phantasy or dreamlife. (The good, the bad, and the humdrum.)

Lorenzo's speech about the Orphic power of music in *The Merchant of Venice* is similarly undermined by its context: he and Jessica sit high on a hill of privilege basking in the moonlight, whilst down below in the city of real life with its dark alleyways, despised elements of society – exemplified by Shylock – are baited and

tortured, though it is Shylock's money that has provided the means for his daughter's elevation. Orpheus himself was torn to pieces by the rabble but here is turned into a mascot for the nouveau riche who supposedly have music in their souls. We have the impression that Shakespeare (who was probably devoutly Christian) may indeed have intended the play to 'mean' something else. He may have really set out to write a moral fairytale about three caskets and the evils of dirty lucre. But as the 'intentionalist fallacy' made clear, we cannot know or even care what the author's intentions are – we are only interested in the meaning that's expressed by the art-symbol, the work as a whole, the complete performance. It is this underworld of latent feeling that is the dream-level of the plays, and that sometimes emerges through an uncomfortable friction with the surface meaning. The dissonance between sophisticated poetry and the ugly but authentic 'unthought', that can find no socially acceptable expression, seems to be particularly a feature of the middle-period plays, a dark or troubled era in Shakespeare's oeuvre.

As is well known, poetry can be risky for the author as well as the reader in so far as it is not controlled by the omnipotent self, the giant talent that like Prospero (or the witch Medea) bedims the noontide sun. Given its freedom, the poetry of the play takes on a life of its own, making the author a mere instrument of his muse. The dream-meaning lies in this deep grammar (Bion's O, the truth of a specific emotional conflict, that is captured by the participating parts of the self – the mind's actors). Sometimes what gets trapped in the drama are the many ways in which meaning can be destroyed – the negative rather than positive links between characters. The meaning of a play can be the destruction of meaning, as in *Macbeth*'s equivocations or the nihilism of Iago.

We remember that Shakespeare acted as well as wrote. To be an actor you need to acquire a fluid identity, to be prepared to change into unfamiliar roles and clothes. Artaud describes the actor as allowing himself to be 'penetrated by feelings that do not relate to his own condition' – as a person; he is in a sense plague-ridden, until his body 'dissolves in universality' (*Theatre and the Plague)*. These apparently alien feelings do of course relate to his condition as a human being; they are monstrous because unknown. The actor, in dialogue with the playwright, taps latent truths that can never be expressed by a single character or persona, but only by creative links and containing contexts. (This was shown first in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Bottom's eagerness to take on all the roles; only through identifying with everyone can the actor-playwright attain the vision of the Fairy Queen. 'O Bottom thou art translated!' – he becomes something other than, more than, himself, in the service of Theseus' dream.*)* Shakespeare used his immersion in the genre from the perspective of more than one role to access the underlying dream, given that theatre itself (as Artaud puts it) 'impels the mind to the source of its conflicts', for 'it is beneficial for men to see themselves as they are'.

Coleridge said that Milton gathered everything into himself, while Shakespeare set aside his own identity to enter into that of others, and that these represented two universal, complementary approaches to poetry, like playwright and player. It's a useful way of describing two types of identification through which the author explores his dream material – one journey is epic or lyric, the other is dramatic, its multiple voices inhabiting different personae or psychic vertices. In fact these two approaches are not mutually exclusive and they probably oscillate in all creative writing. Whichever perspective is functioning, however, there is always an essential dichotomy between the creative and the omnipotent selves of the poet: in the Miltonic stance it is poet versus preacher, in the Shakespearean, it is dream-language versus wordplay. Milton supposedly didn't know he was on the devil's side (according to Blake) (but he probably did – depending on how you define knowledge). Shakespeare supposedly isn't on anyone's side in particular – he just inhabits the identities of others. But it isn't really so difficult to detect his moral or ethical views: it is rather that he tests them in action through their interplay, including speaking devil's advocate, and in this way they become more complex; and at times the dream-meaning is the reverse of the apparent meaning. Shakespeare does not just present thoughts, he demonstrates by example his own thinking process as a participant in the play, not merely its controller. (This only becomes comprehensible psychoanalytically since Bion's description of unconscious thinking as the only real thinking, based on the feeling that draws attention to a dream-process where the real mental action is taking place.)

The point is that Shakespearean values are worked out experimentally rather than decided beforehand – he follows the poetry just as Ferdinand and Caliban follow Ariel's song, led by the nose. The play's action itself is his analysis of some emotional crux that requires to be contained and thought through. Generally in Shakespeare the nondescript protagonist is male, confronting the mysteries/vitality of a heroine who is in the last resort a representative of the play itself and its world of internal objects waiting to be born – the idea of the feminine elevated to a more abstract status. (Or the perverse counterpart, such as Lady Macbeth or Cymbeline's Queen.) In psychoanalytic terms the internal mother is the container of potential thoughts/babies and the male component begins as a little-boy figure and, if willing to surrender his kingship, grows into a man worthy of his internal mother resurrected-as-wife. There again it's not enough to identify with the heroine – Hermione or Cleopatra; you actually do need to identify with all the characters, like Bottom (as did Shakespeare) in order to plumb the dream depths, swirl around five fathoms deep and resurface sea-changed.

It's not that the ethics of an individual called Shakespeare, long dead and gone, matter to us today; it's the process by which he worked on them. We are not just the brilliant Hamlet or Rosalind, we are the less prepossessing Theseus, Enobarbus, Leontes, Cymbeline, and a whole series of ordinary characters who represent the human mind in a position in which it needs to learn something by means of dreaming about it. These colourless types are perhaps the hardest to identify with, yet they represent our way in to experiencing the play as a whole. We need to see beyond their

boringness to the colourful dreamlife behind, listening to the myriad voices which are poetic not because they are clever wordplay but because they represent the true facts of feeling that can be transformed into thoughts and then build up into more advanced values. In Bion's model, the structure of the personality expands through this process of real thinking. Like Theseus, we all inevitably carry on our lives in a protomental city, until emotional turbulence prompts us to look with the mind, in a new key.

It is the 'unthought' words (like Ophelia's) that are the stuff of Shakespeare's dream-sequences, if we consider the play as a total art-symbol rather than a treatise. He dredges them up from their watery depths using the organ of consciousness. They are born fledged, they don't need decorating. In this sense every play is about the nurturing and birth of an idea – in Susanne Langer's sense of the 'underlying Idea' of a musical composition or any artwork; it brings what Bion calls the 'O' of the emotional conflict into the language of achievement. This is both because of, and in spite of, Shakespeare's genius at word manipulation.

For of course the richest of Shakespeare's plays combine linguistic facility with the dreamworld; the unspeakable (in Wittgenstein's sense) becomes speakable. Shakespeare tackles the primitive origins of language first in *Lear*, imagining its object-relations context, focussing on the point of catastrophic change at which the infant becomes a talking and walking being and is correspondingly weaned from the breast. It is the next major developmental transition after birth itself:

> We came crying hither:
> Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air
> We wawl and cry…

The poet's task is how to transform wawling and crying into words without losing its musical-emotional dream significance. Shakespeare enters into the spirit of the preverbal child, and presents the whole play as a series of dreams for which the poet serves as mouthpiece. We think of Lear shaken by the storm, and in his turbulent dream discovering his 'philosopher' (thinking part) in a hovel on the heath, then running on the grasslands on top of Dover cliffs, and finally carrying Cordelia – the emptied breast – in his arms. These unthought, dreamed origins are the source of his capacity to develop a thinking process (we remember Bion uses the image of the infant becoming a 'walker' as his example of alpha-function). Walking and talking are not just motor functions, they are inextricable from the object relations that govern the child's sense of identity.

Shakespeare miraculously combines the whole picture in this joyous tragedy. Tragedy in its original sense of 'serious play', not in the sense of disaster. Edgar, the new king, is the grownup self, the restructured mind that has emerged from turbulence. He is also the playwright who has weathered the dream and renovated

his relationship with his own muse, introjecting the spirit of its knowledge, like Lear with Cordelia in his arms. Also, of course, ourselves, if we can stand it – because of all Shakespeare's plays, this is the one that has been most subject to the temptation to rewrite the story. We hate the necessity for 'tears and smiles together'. We can't stand the aesthetic conflict, even as spectators at one remove, even when the really hard emotional work has been done for us. 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods' – the cruel gods of psychic development.

Only two of Shakespeare's tragedies are known, rightly, as 'tragedies of synthesis' – *Lear,* and *Antony and Cleopatra.* They are the ones in which the aesthetic conflict of love, hate, and its solution – the leap toward knowledge – is most fully realised. Love and hate felt simultaneously are the stimulating emotions; who is to provide the knowledge that will give them meaning, make them food for the mind? After his middle-period suspicion of language has been exorcised, Shakespeare just lets the Muse take over the poetry, immersing himself in the new, more complex dream-mode. He abandons or rather transmutes his previous command, like Antony, and Cordelia becomes Cleopatra and is allowed to write the final act that clinches the meaning of the play as art-symbol. For what becomes clear now in this play is that love is the same thing as thinking. Baby Lear is not just a walker and a talker but a thinker.

The dream-play (by contrast with the superficial plot-line) demonstrates that love is not antagonistic to thought, as commonly assumed, but rather the foundation of thought. Propelled by its magnificent poetry, the play is worked out on a stage on which fluid interactions between parts of the mind, take on what Bion calls 'commensal' relationships. They share their differing points of view, rather than seeking to destroy the other. Not just Cleopatra and Antony but her girls, together with Caesar, Octavia, Enobarbus, the unnamed soldier, are all lovers in their different ways. They have dreams about each other – from the serpent of old Nile to the stag on snowy pastures, the market-maid of Rome, the battle-scarred and faithful soldier. Above all, the battle-line between male and female worlds. And something of the other's perspective seeps osmotically into their own; identity is made by identifications with the other or others.

From the male perspective, this is worked out through the partnership between Antony and Enobarbus, the faithful embodiment of experience and commonsense who tells Antony ironically that 'truth should be silent' – that his obsession with Cleopatra is folly but he shuts his ears to what is evident to all. We see, from the Roman point of view, that Enobarbus is right and Antony is just being self-indulgent. Anyway has Cleopatra really earned this devotion? The answer is no, not yet – she is still preoccupied, on her part, with treating Antony like a river fish and fixing her Egyptian hooks in him. But gradually as a more genuine commitment grows subterraneously, the original male and female values (based on control) dissolve. It is the dream of evaporation, when identity becomes fluid, and the previously known self takes on unknown boundaries – 'Dissolve my life', says Cleopatra; or as Antony puts it,

even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.

Thinking changes the shape of identity, 'discandying' its protective shell, its 'exoskeleton' as Bion calls it – it's what he means by catastrophic change, the evolution of the personality. One kind of thinking departs – the commonsense Enobarbus type – as imaged by Enobarbus' desertion, saying that Antony's brains have left him. But it turns out this kind of thinking was inadequate anyway; it took no account of the love between them, which finds expression only in the dream of Antony sending Enobarbus' box of treasure after him to the deserter's camp. This kills the old Enobarbus, with his cynical, political side, reuniting him with his vision of Antony's generosity. He states explicitly that he is killed by 'thought'. His identity is then transformed, possibly even using the body of the same actor (as often happens in Shakespeare plays); he reappears newborn as the young squire Eros, the servant of love.

It is on the basis of introjecting Antony's new identity that Cleopatra acquires the Roman courage to complete the play, developing her own internal masculinity. She doesn't instantly say yes to his marriage proposal. That would be to rush into the secret house of death before she has her emotional affairs in order. In the intense last act, when she is the sole protagonist, she builds her internal combined object step by step, housing it in the new monument to the Ptolemies with its new and ancient idea of womanhood, a new kind of playhouse that is a fertile space for the type of unconscious and exploratory thinking that is based on the dreamworld and absorbs all constructive if foreign impulses, in preparation for her transformation:

Husband, I come:
Now to that name, my courage prove my title!
I am fire, and air; my other elements
I give to baser life.

It is significant that the final stage in her fencing-match with the remaining Romans who still want to conquer her, begins with her recognition that they just deal in 'words' not in emotional realities:

He words me, girls, he words me, that I should not
Be noble to myself.

Hamlet's 'words words words' have met their match. It is only the words that come from the Muse-governed dreamworld that are worth listening to.

In a sense, Shakespeare has no more to say in this particular dream-mode (the tragedy of synthesis) – he has said it all. Male and female principles, whether they take the shape of husband-wife or baby-mother, transform into a 'combined object'

that can think and digest emotional conflicts in a way that the existing personality could not. In the late romances, those traditionally thought of as dream plays, he goes back to the fairytale world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to the nondescript courtly ruler, to the regenerative playspace beyond the basic assumptions of everyday protomental order, and to the workgroup of the mind who like Blake's 'fairy hands' re-set the mind into an 'organised anarchy' (to quote Artaud again) which is outside the domain of any ruling consciousness.

In the uncharted realms of this type of dreamplay, the character directions or plot patterns entwine around the non-hero in a way beyond his help, desire, or knowledge. If his internal world is still alive and not destroyed by his internal devils it is not thanks to his own efforts but to his objects. In *Midsummer,* Theseus' marriage is on the rocks before the new moon has even risen in the sky. The rebuilding process is done literally by the workmen of the mind, the basis for theatre, in literal conjunction with the mind's muse-goddess, the Fairy Queen, and on a more mechanical level, the Fairy King. It happens in the twinkling of an eye – the space of one dream. Where the earlier play concentrates on looking with the mind rather than the eyes, *Cymbeline* is concerned with vision in Freud's sense of an 'organ of consciousness' which can be directed outward or inward. The problem here is locating and operating the organ. There is no Quince to gather together a workgroup – its members are scattered, banished. Vision can be abused, captured, paralysed. Cymbeline's excuse for his dependence on his wicked poisoning Queen is 'Mine eyes were not in fault for she was beautiful' – an excuse so lame that we wonder what he really means – it must be something else. But Othello's 'Fool, fool, fool' would be out of place in this more abstract play. Cymbeline does mean it; he really can't see; and it's no use blaming his sensuous organ of vision. If the key question in *Lear* is 'Who is it that can tell me who I am?', the key question in *Cymbeline* is 'Who is't can read a woman?' The questions mean much the same. Yet Cymbeline, unlike Lear or Antony, is not suffering from emotional turbulence, but from confusion to the extent of mental paralysis. He falls into Money-Kyrle's category of 'misconception'; he has never had a clue about what Hamlet calls 'the difference between is and seems'. To *read* beauty requires the use of a special organ – conscience or consciousness (etymologically from the same root) – which is lodged in his daughter Imogen, split off from his empty-headed cognitive absence. She is the one who suffers, empathically, in order to restore this lost capacity, surviving various types of metaphorical death and ultimately revealing the fruit of her labour in an image of a lightning-strike, as she repopulates Cymbeline's internal family by means of inclusive attention (in Bion's loaded sense):

> And she like harmless lightning throws her eye
> On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting
> Each object with a joy; the counterchange
> Is severally in all.

She has exorcised the initial voyeuristic mentality represented by Iachimo seeing the mole on her breast; and replaced it by countertransference, as required by the acting troupe. The work-group members are linked up again. 'Think but this and all is mended' – it all happened in a dream while we were slumbering.

If this Aspergery inability to pay attention is Cymbeline's tragic fault (according to the classical formula), Leontes' is jealousy of the new baby. *The Winter's Tale* is Shakespeare's most rich and graphic dramatization of the Kleinian concept of reparation. And again, the only place this can be worked out is in the dreamworld, known as Bohemia, both landlocked and only reachable over turbulent seas – the place that never was on sea nor land. Its cleansed perceptions restore joy and fertility to the wintry narcissism of Sicily, whose king discovers he is not the moving force of creativity after all, and falls apart when his illusion is shattered. He has drunk and seen the spider – which shows him that his kingly penis-sceptre is just a 'pinched thing'. 'How came the posterns so easily open?' We are back in the Lear realms of aesthetic conflict and its ambivalence toward the mother and her play.

Bohemia is also the play-world which governs the audience's response and relation to the dreams of the playwright, mediated subterraneously by Paulina the analyst-figure. She comes the nearest to parental discipline, but that is not enough to bring out the sun, however many years Leontes fasts on his frosty mountain-top: these things can only be repaired by 'great creating nature' and that can only be contacted emotionally in dreams. Paulina can facilitate but not recreate. Her husband Antigonus transports the baby (the mind's growing-point) to its new soil, impelled by a dream of Hermione in pure white robes spouting milk from her eye-nipples. He understands by this the kind of psychic milk the baby needs. Just as his ship is wrecked off the coast, so his old corporeal identity is eaten by a bear, and he is reborn as the good old Shepherd whose values of love and hospitality have never yet been infected by courtly narcissism. This is the soil in which Perdita, the lost spirit of creativity, flourishes in both mind and movement: she is a 'dancer'. In Florizel's words:

> When you do dance, I wish you
> A wave o'th'sea, that you might ever do
> Nothing but that, move still, still so,
> And own no other function. Each your doing,
> So singular in each particular,
> Crowns what you are doing, in the present deeds,
> That all your acts are queens.

'All your acts are queens' echoes and reinterprets Leontes' 'Your actions are my dreams', drawing the poison from the idea of dreamplay and womanhood, always inextricably linked.

The ultimate dream of course is the astonishing piece of theatre-craft, so close to ultimate reality as to be near-blasphemous, when Hermione is resurrected from being a stone statue. Paulina is the mediator or artist but not the creator. All the same, as

audience we depend on this mediator as much as do the characters in the play – we need a tissue of links, what Bion calls 'intersection with O', not direct contact with reality. It is only when Paulina directs the final 'turn' from back to front that Hermione becomes fully real to us, the audience, linking our dream to that of Leontes.

> Turn, good lady,
> Our Perdita is found.

Only now does Hermione speak, and she speaks only to Perdita:

> Tell me, mine own,
> Where has thou been preserv'd?

The reawakening culminates in the restoration of the crucial emotional link between mother and child, the model for all internal reparation of damaged objects (in the Kleinian sense) on which the life of the mind relies, analogous to the creative relation between poet and muse on which the life of the play or poem depends.

Shakespeare's final exploration of the poet's dependence on objects is of course *The Tempest*. This abstract, musical, magical play is all about turbulence, including the hidden turbulence of the dramatist himself who, instead of finding his daughter-spirit, recognises he has to relinquish it or her: 'I lost a daughter… In this last tempest.' Miranda is his no longer, the creative spirit must have freedom. Not since Shylock have we been so impressed by a feeling that we are looking at Shakespeare's self-portrait, warts and all. He is uncompromising in his demotion of his magician-self, practised in his craft but when left to his own devices, wordy and tedious. He has one redeeming feature, his love of Miranda and Ariel, but on his return to Milan (everyday life) he still has personal work to do, to integrate the ugly, hated Caliban into his pantheon: 'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.' He acknowledges – but reluctantly – the sensuous psychic roots of his capacity to *hear* music, to receive the vision brought by Ariel.

Countless critics have tried to persuade us that *The Tempest* is not Shakespeare's farewell to his art after all, but that view just doesn't hold seawater. He tells us otherwise, and this time, his words mean exactly what they say. Uniquely in an epilogue, Prospero maintains his play-reality as, waiting for his ship-body to cast off, he speaks to the audience:

> Gentle breath of yours my sails must fill
> Or else my project fails.

In this condensation of levels of reality back into the literal, he hands his project over to us. The Idea exists, not just in a play. Thank God not for Shakespeare but for his dreams.