Faerie dreams and sovereign nightmares: psychic evolution in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *La vida es sueño*.

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William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s *La vida es sueño* intersect in their use of dreams as a vehicle for characters’ evolution. In both works, multiple plots are influenced and sometimes controlled by the outside supernatural forces of destiny, in Calderón, and the faerie world, in Shakespeare. Using Carl Gustav Jung’s lecture *Psychology and Literature*, I will demonstrate that both plays manifest tendencies of the visionary mode of artistic creation. These plays masterfully incorporate ambiguity in their conflation and confusion of reality and dream. Despite the geographical distance and difference in genre separating these works, each demonstrates a different side of Jung’s visionary art in its exploration of the primordial realm of psychic and moral experience.

While the outcome of psychic metamorphosis through dream is strikingly different in the two plays, in reality both speak to the same points: the versatility of the visionary mode and the power of external influence on individual, internal psychic and emotional processes. Although the reigning powers in these plays are distinct, in both they shape each character’s life path. *La vida es sueño*, one of the most highly esteemed and often studied works of the Spanish Golden Age, and Shakespeare’s beloved comedy *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, with their shared exploration of psychic evolution through dreams and the tenuousness of human perception and experience of reality, testify to a shared artistic heritage and the universal psychological realities that unite Spain’s Golden Age literature and Shakespeare’s oeuvre.