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Sleep, Watch, and Extended Cognition In Spenserian Epic and Shakespearean Drama

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Propositions

1. When examining sleep in early modern literature and drama, attention should also be given to the corresponding state of watching.
2. Porosity and permeability are shared features both of early modern ideas about the boundary between the mind, body, and world and cognitive theories of extended mind.
3. Extended mind is an approach from the cognitive sciences which offers a method for literary scholars to locate, access and interpret apparently inaccessible sleepers in the works of Spenser and Shakespeare.
4. Sleepers can be cognitively located and examined in the wider environment in which they rest.
5. Sleepers can form an extended cognitive system via which they outsource their ability to watch during sleep.
6. Sterelny writes that a vulnerability of extended mind is “non-exclusive use of epistemic artefacts” and the potential for “epistemic sabotage.” An additional concern is that the practice of extended mind may not apply as strongly to specific groups or contexts.
7. The sleep-watch extension exposes the structures of royal power and reveals the multiple locations of sovereignty.
8. Supernatural power transforms sleep and renegotiates the role of cognitively extended watchers, revealing that cognitive couplings are responsive to their wider context.
9. A covid lockdown is a good opportunity to finish a thesis on sleep, but is not necessarily a good opportunity to enjoy extra sleep.
10. The propositions that (a) ‘Macbeth doth murder sleep’ and (b) That this thesis murders sleep; do not require the conclusion that (c) This thesis was written by Macbeth
11. A thesis on Spenser partially supervised by an Australian and an Irishman does not necessarily require a post-colonial analysis.