

# Hamlet: Close Reading

DeShawn McLeod, Act 3, Scene 1; Lines 57-69

Here, Hamlet contemplates suicide and weighs his options.

To be, or not to be? That is the question—

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them?

Interestingly enough, Hamlet still has a logical mindset about suicide. He talks about whether it is better to go through life and have bad fortune and try to form a smile during the hard times or don't tarry in life's conflict, when there's an easy way out; suicide.

He says, all dying is, is just sleeping. That's it.

And by saying all dying is, is just sleeping, he says it keeps one away from all the bad things that happen in reality.

To die, to sleep—  
No more—and by a sleep to say we end  
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to—'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished!

Basically he's saying that dying and staying away from reality is what he wants, since consummation means the finalization of something.

He's saying here that when one is dead, they sleep, and they may dream whilst dead.

But, then Hamlet says, that there's a catch, even if you're dead, that doesn't guarantee the dreams will be swell after you've left reality.

To die, to sleep.

To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub,

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause.