**ALTERED STATES AND LITERATURE 2024**

CUSO Doctoral Workshop

**‘Half sleep, half waking’ : Hypnagogia in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream***

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**Abstract**

As liminal state between sleep and waking, hypnagogia epitomizes an idiosyncratic state of consciousness during which hallucinations or quasi-hallucinations are commonly experienced. This paper considers William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, an early comedy in which several characters are portrayed puzzled by this intermediate state of consciousness. I will argue that hypnagogia infuses the personae’s rhetoric and participates in the general atmosphere of the play, thus allowing the playwright to reflect on thematic issues such as the blurring of lines between fiction and reality as much as on meta-theatricality.