Shakespeare

Third year- Second semester

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

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Act IV + Act V

Today we will finish the whole play. After reading the whole play, I discovered that the gap between generations is not the main theme; it is a minor theme. The theme of lover is found everywhere, but here we can say that there is a theme of love because it is illustrated in a wide range by William Shakespeare. So, **there is a theme of love** here. Also, we have **the theme of order versus disorder**.

In the theme of love, we find that William Shakespeare illustrated four kinds of relationship in the play:

**1-Love at first sight.**

a-this is applied to Demetrius when he first saw Helena.

b-and it is applied to Lysander and Helena.

C-Also, it is applied to [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) and Bottom.

When you talk about this kind of relationship, you have to mention Cupid and you have to talk about the magic flower; the pansy, and how by mistake, one of Cupid’s arrows fell on it.

**2-Love at one side.**

a-(Helena and Demetrius). Helena was chasing Demetrius and he does not love her.

B-(Demetrius and Hermia). Demetrius loves Hermia and Hermia is keeping him at a distance.

Of course, you have to talk about Courtly love tradition. And you talk about gendermandering.

**3-requited love.**

It is between Lysander and Hermia. It is a mutual love.

**4-love by force/ false love.**

It is under the effect of magic.

a-We have Lysander’s love to Helena. By the force of magic in the forest, he loves her. It is not a real love. It is a false love.

b-when Demetrius love Helena.

C-when [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) loves Bottom.

This is your assignment.

Let me talk about renaissance humanism. We took renaissance Humanism in “Hamlet”. And we can take it here. This is the background of the age. What is the meaning of renaissance humanism? **Renaissance humanism** is a tendency appeared in the 16th century to embrace all various cultural ideas, like the classical way of writing, the medieval features, and the new spirit of the age in the 16th century.

What do you have to talk about in classicism? Do you consider Shakespeare a humanist? Yes.

How do you apply this in the play?

**When you discus renaissance humanism, you have to mention three points:**

**1-Classicism in the play**.

(You will see classical structure, five acts, effect of Aristotle, showing deductive way of thinking.)

**2-** When you discus **medieval ideas**, you talk about:

- the theme of order and disorder.

-courtly love tradition.

**3-**And we will talk about **the new spirit of the age of the 16th century.** What is the new spirit of the 16th century? Who initiated the new spirit of the age? **The philosophers**. Who are the philosophers?

**-Sir Francis Bacon** who promotes the inductive way of thinking.

- **Desiderius Erasmus**

**- Niccolò Machiavelli**

Notice:

Last time we finished act III. I just told you something wrong when I said Bottom suggests to mention in the prologue. It should be he suggests to mention in the play. Every character should introduce himself before start saying his role.

Now we will take act IV and act V.

**Act IV, Scene i**

We find Bottom enjoying himself with [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania). Titania forces him to go to her bed. He enjoys himself and he asks the fairies to scratch his head because you know a donkey has hair on the face. The fairies have funny names. They are Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed. So, Bottom calls Cobweb **monsieur**; it is a French title instead of saying master for the sake of defamiliarization. This is one of the modern elements. So, Bottom gives a French title to Cobweb and Mustarseed for the sake of defamiliarization. He does mention the English word master or mister.

What is **defamiliarization**?

**De**= كسر – **familiarization**= something familiar. So, it is breaking what is familiar. The Russian Victor Shklovsky came up with the term defamiliarization

When Titania and Bottom fall asleep, King [Oberon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oberon_(Fairy_King)) informs Puck that he has already taken the Indian boy from Titania. King Oberon tells Puck that he went to Titania and he taunted her for loving an ass and sleeping with an ass. And she was ashamed of herself and she begged him to forgive her because it is very shameful. So, he asks her to take the Indian boy and she submits to his will; she gives the Indian boy away. So, now Oberon wants to restore order in the forest. He wants to remove the charm from Titania because he has already taken the Indian boy.

He tells Puck to go and transform Bottom to his human shape; to take off his donkey head. Then he says he will go to Titania to put a magic juice on her eye, so that when she wakes up, she is recovered from the charm. (Of course I am talking about the theme of order and disorder. He is a figure of order, he is restoring order to the forest, he is in charge of the forest, and he is the king of the forest). Oberon says when Titania and the ass wake up, they will thing that what has happened to them is just the fierce vexation of a dream).

So, **is it a dream or a nightmare?** **Nightmare for whom and a dream for whom?**

Notice: this idea of a dream can be a question in the exam.

Oberon expects that it is going to be a nightmare for Titania and Bottom.

The play starts in the morning, then they go to forest at night, and now we are in the morning. Then the wedding of [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) is going to be at night. So, this is violating the unity of time.

Titania wakes up in the morning. She is in love with Oberon. She recovers. She turns mild; she is back to normal. She loves her husband; King Oberon, again. Oberon tells her that the following night is going to be the weeding of the Duke [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta). He said also that there will be two more couples have got married. They are Lysander and Hermia and Demetrius and Helena.

[Egeus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egeus) complains to the Duke Theseus. You remember that the last act ends with all the lovers sleeping. So, when Egeus comes with the Duke Theseus in the forest, they found the lovers asleep. So, Egeus complains that his daughter did not ask him and she leaves with those people to the forest. So, Theseus finds an excuse for her. He (the duke) tells Egeus that his daughter is celebrating the May Day. So, he is calming his down.

The lovers start to wake up. Lysander confesses briefly to the duke that he has eloped with Hermia into the forest to escape the law of Athens. He loves her and he wants to marry her and there was no solution for him. Of course, Egeus is very angry and he wants his daughter to marry Demetrius. When Demetrius wakes up, he tells Egeus that he has changed. He loves now Helena and he wants to marry her. Egeus is shocked because he cannot force his daughter to marry somebody who does not like her. Demetrius says something. He says that he has changed to love Helena by **some mysterious power**. He does not understand how in one moment change from loving and adoring Hermia into loving Helena. He does not understand what has happened to him. And he says that he will love her. He does not look for an explanation. He just finds himself being controlled this power and his hear goes back to his first love Helena, so he says he will marry her.

**This shows the influence of Aristotle in the play on characterization** (it is a classical element): Demetrius has adopted a deductive way of thinking. Demetrius submits to his fate. He feels some unseen power changes his emotion. So, he takes it for granted and does not resist it.

Duke Theseus is a figure of order in Athens. He tells Egeus that he is not going to fulfill his wish by marrying Demetrius to his daughter because Demetrius has changed. Duke Theseus here is **fair**. He is figure of order. He agrees to marry Demetrius to Helena and Lysander to Hermia. So, order is reformed. **The Athenian law is not applied here**. He wants to apply the law at the beginning of the play. You have to explain how fair he is. **At the beginning of the play, the law of Athens is applied on Hermia**. She has to obey her father and accept the husband he has chosen for her. **Now in act IV, the law of Athens is not applied on Hermia because Demetrius has changed and he does not want to marry her.** So, she is free to choose whoever she wants.

The young lovers talk together and they tell one another about the dream that they have. They discover that they share the same dream. **For them, is it a nightmare or a dream?** They were chasing one another; they were fighting, and swearing (talking very badly to one another). **It was a nightmare for them**.

Then Bottom wakes up. He finds himself in his human shape; he is no more an ass. So, he thought of the dream he got and he said that **it was a wonderful dream**. **Bottom is the only one who enjoyed the dream** **because he enjoyed sex with Titana.** This is the reason. So, for him it was not a nightmare. **For Titania, it was a nightmare that she slept with a donkey. For the lovers it was a nightmare. For Bottom it was a wonderful dream.** Because he enjoyed the dream very much, he decides to write it in a ballad. So, he says it in a ballad and mentions it in his play “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)”.

**Scene ii:**

Bottom goes to his companions in Athens. They are very happy to see Bottom. Bottom is a type character like all the characters in the comedy. In the comedy, all the characters are types.

Type characters= flat characters/ they do not develop/ they show not psychological realism/ they are superficially portrayed.

However, Bottom shows some individuality. He is always leading the group with [Quince](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Quince). [Quince](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Quince) is the actual leader of the group, but Bottom is wise and intellectual. Although he is funny because of his malapropism, he is wise and intelligent. He always suggests things for the group. He is the one who suggests that when the character starts to say his role, to say I am Bottom the weaver….., so he is the one who suggests this technique. We will see that the characters will keep on laughing at them when they perform the play; however, technically it is a modern play. Bottom has been experimenting with modern elements although the play looks very funny.

So, Bottom starts to work with the group to make the play ready for the performance. His friends told him that there will be two more marriages on the same day in the wedding celebration of [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta). They mean Hermia and Lysander and Demetrius and Helena. So, Bottom gives them advice. He always gives suggestion and advice. He tells them that they should fix good strings to tie up false beard on their faces. **This is theatrical affair**. Shakespeare is experimenting now with metatheater because Bottom is discussing theatrical affair. Also, he tells them that they should not eat onions or garlic to keep sweet breath while acting. This is theatrical affair as well.

**Act V**

Act V opens with [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) discussing the strange idea that all the lovers share the same dream. So, they say it sounds strange. Let us see how [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) interprets this and from his interpretation, we will analyze his character. He says that this is just imagination. He claims that the lovers have been imagining things and he does not refer their claim to magic or a supernatural power.

**This is the effect of Sir Francis Bacon on characterization**. Theseus is influenced by of Sir Francis Bacon’s inductive way of thinking. He thinks in a rational way; he adopts a scientific approach. He is looking for evidences. He avoids the idols of the cave (fantasies) and market (rumors). He thinks the lovers’ words might be imagination or rumors. He questions their claim in inductive way by suspecting what they say. He does not believe in that.

The lovers enter and there were several plays to be performed. But Duke Theseus has chosen the one of the craftsmen; “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)”. Theseus keeps on mocking the play and he say it is **tragical mirth**. **What can a play be a tragical mirth?**

They are doing a comedy. And the events of the play are very tragical. [Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe) are neighbors. Quince will say this in the prologue. **The prologue: is a classical device**. **It is said by actor. Usually it is written in poetry. It is a message from the actor to the audience. It does not tackle the plot**. Quince says the prologue and he starts to talk about the plot. By saying the message to the audience, he says that they perform the play, they do not want to scare the audience, they do not want to offend them, and they want just to show them their skill. They will show tragedy. The do not plan to scare the audience or offend them. After that, he starts to talk about the plot which is not a typical classical prologue. The first part is a typical classical prologue, but the second part is not a typical classical prologue. If you go to see him saying the prologue, you will find that Quince is saying the whole plot to the audience. He says the play will start with the neighbors [Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe) loving one another. There is a wall between their houses and they talk through a chink in the wall. After that, they will go and meet in a graveyard. It is very funny. Thisbe goes first and she saw a lion. She is scared and her sleeveless coat (mantle) fell from her. The lion comes and it tears it into two pieces. So, Pyramus comes and he saw the coat and he thinks that the lion has eaten Thisbe. He is very sad. He stabs himself and dies. Then Thisbe returns and finds him dead, so she kills herself and she dies as well. So, he says the whole plot to the audience.

There is something in classical drama called **argument**. It is before the prologue. For example, Ben Johnson’s “*[Volpone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volpone" \o "Volpone)*,” starts in an argument. In this argument he says the summary of the play because the play is very complicated. So, his play starts with an argument. In this argument, he says summary of the whole play. But in our play “A midsummer night’s dream”, this is only prologue, not an argument. So, Quince should not have mentioned the plot. When he says the plot, he says it in a funny way; he mispunctuates. He is talking in a childish way and he has wrong stops. We call this technique in drama a cubis technique. This is a proof that William Shakespeare has been ahead of his time. Cubism started in the beginning of the 20th century, but Shakespeare was experimenting in the 16th century.

So, Quince does not stop in the right place in every sentence. He has wrong stops. He mispunctuates; he makes wrong stops while saying the prologue. So, the meaning is confused.

We talked before about the modern elements in the play. **Cubism is a modern element**.

Quince in the prologue starts saying the whole plot. Then [Snout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Snout)comes and he introduces himself as a wall (wearing the shape of the wall is **dadist technique**). And then he makes the chink with his figures. This is experimentation. They come up with something new. So, he uses his fingers to make the chink. [Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe) meet at moonlight. So, a character comes and he says that he is moonlight and he is holding a lantern. This shows that it is a poor technique because they can just say that it is moonlight in the speech/ in the poetry. There is no need to make a character coming and holding a lantern. **It is one defect in the play technically**.

The play starts and Pyramus says flowery words to Thisbe. He compares himself to Limander. He means Leander. This is **a classical allusion**. Whenever we read Shakespeare’s plays as modern readers, we find it difficult because it is full of classical allusion. The modern readers do not know all the stories of the gods and goddesses in Greek and Roman mythology. But the Elizabethan reader and audience knew them because **there was a revival of a classical literature in the renaissance**.

Leander is a Greek lover who has drowned while swimming across the sea between Europe and Asia to meet his beloved “Hero”. Flute as Thisbe compares himself to Helena. He means Hero”.

The classical allusion in “A midsummer night’s dream” is part of [intertextuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality). [intertextuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality) is a nontraditional technique (**modern technique**) through which the writer depends on other text to explain his text.

Modern readers do not understand the meaning of “A midsummer night’s dream” until they go back to Greek and Roman mythology to learn about the stories of the gods and goddesses.

The 16th century audiences were acquainted with such classical stories because there was a revival of classicism in the 16th century. **Who coined the term** [**intertextuality**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality)? **Julia Kristeva.** She is a feminist writer, she is contemporary and she is very famous.

The poststructuralist Julia Kristeva coined the term [intertextuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality).

My opinion is that she took this idea of [**intertextuality**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality)from Cubism. Before Julia Kristeva, the cubists have used it and called it **collage**. An intertext can be allusion (reference), vignette, parody, adaptation, letter or document, for example, the “Pamela” novel for Richardson. It is about a virtuous lady who has flown temptation/ from her master who wants to sleep with her. Another writer makes a parody of the play. He brought Joseph Andrews who is her sister in that play and he was immoral. So, this is a parody of the play. This parody is [**intertextuality**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality)**.**

The function of intertextuality is to make the main text look incomplete and ambiguous. This stimulates the audience to think and search for meaning.

Ambiguity is praise not blame in modern drama. Shakespeare is ahead of his time and he is experimenting with modern elements.

[Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) watches the play. Hippolyta and all the four lovers and Theseus are all making fun of the actors, giving lots of satirical comments. [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) says this is the silliest stuff that ever I heard. Then Snug enters and he says I am Snug and I play the lion. And Hippolyta, Theseus, Demetrius and Lysander keep on saying satirical comments. Whenever they watch them acting, they keep on laughing and mocking them. **Do not** think that this play-within-a play is something trivial. You can have a full question on this play-within-a play. In the references, you will find that they say it is a trivial play and the people are laughing at it, but I say another opinion. It is an experimental play. Although the characters are simple and they did not study theater, they are talented enough to experiment with modern techniques in this play. The 16th century audience did not understand experimentation. They are used to traditional classical plays, so they do not understand the characters are showing them. They are introducing them to a kind of modern play. They do not understand that the play is a melodrama. Melodrama is a tragedy that includes tragic events however the tragic events are never taken seriously. Murder is not taken seriously. For example, Christopher Marlowe’s “[The Jew of Malta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Jew_of_Malta)” is a melodrama. When the Jew died at the end, he gets up and he curses the killer and then he dies again. So, here there is a tragedy, but it does not end sadly. We know that it is not real. The characters make sure that the audiences do not scare.

In the prologue in our play, Quince says that they do not come to offend the audience. They just come to show the audience their skills. Every actor before is saying his role. He makes sure to let the audience know that he is an actor not a real character. By all means they show them that murder is not serious. The audiences do not cry at the end when they see [Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe) die. They laugh. They are not scared.

After Pyramus dies at the end, he wakes up immediately and he asks them if they like to hear the epilogue or they have a dance. So, Theseus begs him not to say the epilogue because he is bored of his play. He does not more anymore epilogue. He says okay, let us go dancing. They make a country dances. Everybody dances and after that everybody goes to bed.

Puck enters. He sweeps the floor with a broom. Then King Oberon and Queen Titania enter. They dance with the fairies in the place to bless the couples who are getting married. At the end Puck says the epilogue of the play “A midsummer night’s dream”. He talks like an actor to the audience. He says that they have come not to offend the audience. He hopes that they like the play. And their goal from this whole play is just to provide them with a dream to think about. It means that William Shakespeare has written “A midsummer night’s dream” to just to make the audience or the readers enjoy the dream in the play. This means that the dream is very important. **The dream is the most important thing in the play**.

I forgot to tell you another example of the [**intertextuality**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality)in the play: The play “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” depends on Shakespeare’s other play “Romeo and Juliet”. It is written by William Shakespeare in the same year in which he wrote “A midsummer night’s dream”. “Romeo and Juliet” is a tragedy. Juliet takes a drug. She is asleep and she pretends to be dead. Romeo arrives and finds her asleep. He thought that she has died and he goes to her in the graveyard. She was sleeping as if she is dead. He comes and finds her like this. So, he killed himself. She wakes up after few minutes and she found him dead. So, she kills herself. The couples in “A midsummer night’s dream” do not know Romeo and Juliet. They do not know that “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” reflects another play for William Shakespeare called “Romeo and Juliet”. So, we say that **the play “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” depends on another text of Wlliam Shakespeare which is called “Romeo and Juliet”**. They have the same tragedy.

**-What about the language of the play?**

Shakespeare in his plays used to mix blank verse with prose. Usually he uses blank verse when the characters discuss serious matters. And when common people are talking like the craftsmen, they talk in prose. (When I give you a quotation in the exam, you have to focus on the quotation. You say this quotation is written in blank verse and then you say generally speaking, William Shakespeare in his plays used to mix blank verse with prose.)

-What is **the significance of the dream**?

The dream is the most important thing in the play. Puck in the epilogue says that the characters make this play only to provide the audience with that dream to think about. It means that the goal of William Shakespeare is to give the audience that dream.

Was there a dream really? No. Are the fairies real in the play? Yes.

William Shakespeare shows the audience that the fairies do exist. All the people believe that the fairies are do not exist; they are just imagination. Shakespeare tells us in this play that there are fairies living with us and sometimes they charm us. Cupid has his own workings on our love stories. The effect of Cupid is there on our love stories. Shakespeare shows us that in our physical world there are supernatural figures like the fairies, angels, jinn, and devils. So, there are supernatural figures living with us in our physical world. This is what Shakespeare makes it clear in the play. What is the significance of the dream? Where is the dream? King Oberon makes the lovers and Titania think that what they have gone through is a dream. So, he makes them imagine that their experince in the forest was a dream. But it was not a dream actually. **What is the significance of this?**

One interpretation: One of the students in the other section said that the characters’ forest experience can be considered a journey of quest. It is a journey into the unconsciousness. The characters were unconscious. They do not know what they want. They would behave spontaneously. They act in a vulgar way. They were fighting, swearing, and chasing one another by force. So, they show loose morals; they are not governed by reason. And when the characters come to consciousness, they all consider what they have gone through is a nightmare except Bottom. Bottom is the only one who enjoyed what he has gone through. So, this is one of the interpretations.

-Another interpretation: another student said that Shakespeare appeals to the idea of dream to solve certain complicated issue. He wants to teach us that sometimes when there is a complicated problem, it can be solved through imagination not reason. For example, when Demetrius rejects or jilts Helena and he goes to Hermia and follows her and Hermia does not live him; she loves another one, it is a very complicated problem. This problem cannot be solved by reason. So, Oberon uses magic; he puts the magic juice on his eyes. He has corrected him; he makes him go back to his first love Helena. So, this is a lesson to us sometimes. Complicated problem are solved through imagination. Shakespeare also wants to tell us that the scientific approach to life does not work all the time. There are people who are like Sir Francis Bacon, Alexander Pope in the 18th century, they believe in reason as a fact in their lives. They do not accept imagination. Shakespeare wants to tell us that in our physical world there are imaginative things/ unseen powers. [**Immanuel Kant** in](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant) the 18th century talks about the power of the spirit in our lives. He talks about spirituality. He says that one can transcend his physical shape or physical reality and go beyond it to a spiritual world. So, Shakespeare wants to say that the world is a mixture of reason and imagination. This is my point of view. Let us say that reason and imagination are two faces of reality.

Are the other supernatural elements? If you check the internet, you will find that some people claim that they see Virgin Merry.