Shakespeare

Third year- Second semester

**“A Midsummer Night's Dream”**

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**The last lecture**

**Quotations:**

1-Towards the end of  *Act I, scene i:*

Helena says,

Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;

And therefore is wing’d Cupid painted blind:

Nor hath Love’s mind of any judgement taste;

Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:

And therefore is Love said to be a child,

Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.

As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,

So the boy Love is perjured every where:

For ere Demetrius look’d on Hermia’s eyne,

He hail’d down oaths that he was only mine;

2-Towards the end of *Act II, scene i,* Helena says,

HELENA: Your virtue is my privilege: for that

It is not night when I do see your face,

Therefore I think I am not in the night;

Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,

For you in my respect are all the world:

Then how can it be said I am alone,

When all the world is here to look on me?

HELENA: The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

Run when you will, the story shall be changed:

Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;

The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind

Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,

When cowardice pursues and valor flies.

3- Act III, scene ii:

Helen is rejecting Demetrius after being charmed and he was chasing her. She rejects him and she thinks that he is laughing at her/ making fun of her. It is a courtly love tradition because she is rejecting him. According to the courtly love tradition, the woman has to keep the man away from her.

DEMETRIUS: [*Awaking*] O Helena, goddess, nymph,

perfect, divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show

Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!

That pure congealed white, high Taurus snow,

Fann’d with the eastern wind, turns to a crow

When thou hold’st up thy hand: O, let me kiss

This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!

4- Act III, scene ii:

HELENA: O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent

To set against me for your merriment:

If you we re civil and knew courtesy,

You would not do me thus much injury.

Can you not hate me, as I know you do,

But you must join in souls to mock me too?

If you were men, as men you are in show,

You would not use a gentle lady so;

To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,

When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.

You both are rivals, and love Hermia;

And now both rivals, to mock Helena:

A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,

To conjure tears up in a poor maid’s eyes

With your derision! none of noble sort

Would so offend a virgin, and extort

A poor soul’s patience, all to make you sport.

5-Act III, scene ii:

Oberon here is talking as a figure of order. So, here the theme of order versus disorder is obvious in this quotation.

OBERON: Thou see’st these lovers seek a place to fight:

Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;

The starry welkin cover thou anon

With drooping fog as black as Acheron,

And lead these testy rivals so astray

As one come not within another’s way.

Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,

Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;

And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;

And from each other look thou lead them thus,

Till o’er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep

With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:

Then crush this herb into Lysander’s eye;

Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,

To take from thence all error with his might,

And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.

When they next wake, all this derision

Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,

And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,

With league whose date till death shall never end.

Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,

I’ll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;

And then I will her charmed eye release

From monster’s view, and all things shall be peace.

**Notice:**

-When you write your answer in the quotation, you have to tell me first whether it is written in prose or in blank verse. If it is in **blank verse**, you should write what blank verse means. You say it is a kind of verse which consists of five feet. Every foot consists of an unstressed syllable and ends with a stressed one. And you say that the lines are rhythmical, but they have no rhyme scheme.

-And if you find **metaphors**, you should discuss them. For example, you say the character compares so and so to so and so. And then you say, of course William Shakespeare’s language highly metaphorical. He is admired by people all over the world for his language, not themes.

-If you find **classical allusion**, you explain it the story beyond it and you have to tell me that allusion is part of [intertextuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality). And you explain what [intertextuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality) is.

-**characterization:** you have to discuss the characterization, not all the characters in the play, but only the characters mentioned in the quotation. Characterization is how the writer portrays his characters. He is usually influenced by certain philosophers. You will see Niccolò Machiavelli, Desiderius Erasmus, Sir Francis Bacon, and Aristotle.

- **At the end**, you make conclusion and you see the effect of the quotation on what follows; why this quotation is important.

**The important questions**:

**1-The play as a parody of serious love.**

A parody is another play that represents a criticism of another play in a funny way. The craftsmen’s play is a parody of “Romeo and Juliet”. “Romeo and Juliet” is a tragedy about a serious love story. When you see it, you cry and sympathize with the tragic heroes. Young people (Romeo and Juliet) suffer from the parents. Their parents reject their marriage. So, they get a secret marriage. They get married and they still suffer. They want to separate them. At the end, Juliet drugs herself and when Romeo comes and finds her, he thinks that she died, so he kills himself. Then she wakes up and she finds him dead, so she kills herself. And they become victims of their parents and their tradition.

You have to say parody is an imitation of another text but in a funny way. You have to talk about love. You have to say that love is a major theme in the play and you have to say that there are several love stories; they are subplots. William Shakespeare employed Baroque technique to present them as circles. In the first subplot, Hermia loves Lysander against the will of her father and her father wants to marry her to Demetrius. In the second subplot, Helena loves Demetrius and chases him because he is her first love and then he changes to Hermia when his eyes first see her. And you continue talking about the rest subplots.

You can say that all the love stories are funny, but the love story of Duke [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) is not funny. It is the only serious love story in the play. But the other love stories: you see lovers chasing one another and begging one another for love and you see how Helena tells Demetrius to consider her his dog. Even the kind of swearing they use is funny. Even the fight is humorous rather than offending/rather than disgusting. The dadist technique is meant to disgust.

The love stories go in circles and sometimes the circles **intersect**. Queen Titania teases Oberon and tells him that he used to love [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) and now she will marry [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus). So, he tells her that he knows about her love to [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus). So, we see people from the fairy land love people from Athens. Thus, the love stories intersect. Also, the fairy queen; Titania, falls in love with Bottom the human from Athens. And Oberon; the King of the fairies, interferes to correct Demetrius to make him back to his first love; Helena.

What does Shakespeare make us laugh at the lovers? First in most of his plays, he always criticizes the courtly love tradition and shows the courtly lovers as stupid, foolish, and funny. The courtly lovers show no dignity; they humiliate themselves. In most of his plays, he satirizes the medieval courtly love tradition. This is one reason. There is another reason. He believes that love is blind and he always refers to Cupid; the god of love. And you should mention the story of Cupid. Cupid is a mischievous boy who is painted as a blind boy or a boy with a bandage over his eyes. Lovers do not need their eyes because they love through their mind. Their eyes deceive them; they make them unable to see the defects of their lovers. So, they look funny. So, you should talk about Cupid.

And then you should say that **Shakespeare uses four modern technical devices to parodies the love stories in the play**:

- **Gendermandering:** it is gender role reversal. For example, Helena takes the role of the man and chases Demetrius. Demetrius rejects her love. It looks funny. The audience loves at her. She begs him to consider her like his dog.

**-Expressionism:** Puck metamorphoses Bottom into an ass and Titania falls in love with him. Shakespeare means to reduce Bottom into an animal. He means to satirize him. He satirizes him because Bottom represents the poor craftsmen in England who are oppressed and they do nor revolt against Queen Elizabeth. They do not fight for their rights. There is a political hint in this part.

- **Surrealism:** we talk about the verbal fight between the lovers. We say there are verbal fights between the lovers. And we should mention Hermia who clings in the arm of Demetrius and he pushes her away and he tells her that she is Ethiopian Ethiopian’, ‘serpent’, ‘Tartar’, ‘loathed medicine’ and ‘hated potion’. He is swearing words do not offend as much as they make people laugh.

-**[intertextuality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intertextuality" \o "Intertextuality):** Shakespeare gives intertextuality as one of the tools to **parodies** serious love. We said that allusion is part of intertextuality and we will say that parody is also part of intertextuality. We say that the craftsmen’s play “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” is a parody of Shakespeare’s play “Romeo and Juliet”. By the way, “Romeo and Juliet” is written by William Shakespeare in the same year in which he wrote “A midsummer night’s dream”.

At last, we say that Shakespeare accumulates different kinds of love relationships in his play:

- **Love at first sight.** (There is courtly love and non-courtly love). Demetrius when he first saw Helena, Lysander and Helena and [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) and Bottom.

It reflects the workings of Cupid. Cupid shoots his invisible arrows into the hearts of the lovers and they fall in love immediately with the first person they see. This kind of love makes the eyes of the lovers charmed; they do not see the defects of the lovers. It is a foolish kind of love.

**- Love at one side (unrequited love).**

It is unexchangeable love. It is from one side. Helena loves Demetrius at the beginning and he does not love her. Demetrius loves Hermia and she does not love him. And you should talk about the courtly love tradition (a man is chasing a woman and the woman is rejecting him).

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

Lysander loves Helena under the power of magic and Demetrius loves Helena under the power of magic. In the case of Lysander and Helena, their love relationship fails at the end, but Demetrius and Helena relationships continues because Oberon thinks that he has corrected Demetrius/ he has cured him by magic. Demetrius takes it as a fate and he accepts Helena his first love and he does not object. Titania lobe Bottom as an ass and forces him to her bed and asks her fairies to tie up his tongue. It fails because Oberon has releases the charm from Titania’s eyes and she changes her mind and she considers her experience as a nightmare, but Bottom considers it as a wonderful dream.

**- requited love.**

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

**2-The craftsmen are a source of mockery/ derision**. (Do you agree or disagree?).

A student: Although they are poor and they have nothing to offer to the duke and the duchess, they decide to make a play to entertain them on their weeding day. So, their efforts should be appreciated.

It is **argumentative question**. You have to show **the two different points of view** to be objective.

**Support:**

In the last lecture, we said [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) , [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta), Demetrius and Lysander are all saying satirical comments on the play and they are mocking the craftsmen. And Shakespeare satirizes them when he gives them allegorical names. He is laughing at them. He gives them funny names. **So, William Shakespeare mocks the craftsmen when he gives them allegorical names**:

Quince is a name of a tree. Bottom the weaver meansthe knot at the end of the thread. Snug the joiner is a tight fitting. Flute is bellows-mender. The Snout means the nose of a kettle. Starveling is derived from starving because the tailor is expected to be thin.

William Shakespeare makes the audience laugh at Bottom’s malapropism/ his misusing the words. As Pyramus, Bottom calls Thisbe odious instead of odorous. So, he is misusing the words and he is making the people laugh at him. He also makes Quince mispunctuates the prologue and have a wrong stops while reading it. So, he confuses the meaning. So, he makes the audience laugh at Quince as well.

So, Shakespeare believes that the play is a source of mockery. The characters themselves in the play laugh at the play. [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) herself says after watching the play “This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard”. And Duke Thisbe begs Bottom at the end not to say the epilogue and he tells him enough please. He finds it very boring, so he begs him not to say the epilogue at the end. Demetrius and Lysander are all the time saying satirical comments on the actors. Thisbe and the others believe that it is inappropriate for the craftsmen to perform a tragedy about unfortunate lovers who meet their fate on the wedding occasion. All the characters believe that the craftsmen present poor art; they are not skilled, uneducated and stupid. Puck himself tells Oberon that the craftsmen are mechanicals as if they are not human, just machine. He does not like them to rehearse their play in front of the cradle of the fairy queen in the forest and he metamorphoses Bottom into an ass to laugh at them.

**Attack:**

The play is a source of respect and pride. Modern critics believe that the play is a source of respect and pride. Although the craftsmen are poor, they exert their efforts to present something as a gift to the duke and the duchess on their wedding day. Their effort should be appreciated, not laughed at. The craftsmen show good will, worthy art and good skills. The craftsmen employ modern techniques which are not understood by the 16th century audience. The play “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” is highly experimental, but it is not understood by the 16th century audience who are used to traditional drama. The craftsmen experiment with modern techniques like dadism, metatheatre, cubism. Bottom acts as if he is a good director. He knows about theatrical affairs. He is wise. You remember when he tells Titania that love and reason do not keep company. So, Bottom is wise although he is funny because of his malapropism. He is wise and reasonable when he tells Titania that love and reason do not keep company. He refers to the fact that love is blind. **The role of Bottom:** he tells Snout to have a cast about him and to say that he play the wall. This is a dadist technique. Technically, Bottom’s transformation into an ass is part of the Expressionistic technique. He has been reduced by Puck into an animal. Shakespeare means to satirize Bottom because Bottom represents all the other craftsmen and in England they are poor and they do not object or revolt against Queen Elizabeth to ask for their human rights. Bottom uses French titles calling the fairies **monsieur** Cobweb and **monsieur** Mustardseed for the sake of defamiliarization. He breaks the boredom of common speech.

Bottom seems to be a good director. He understands theatrical affairs. He asks the actors to fix good strings to their false beards. He tells them not to eat garlic or onions to keep sweet breath. Bottom is a type character. He is a flat character. It is a comedy, so it is not a round character, however, he shows some individual traits. He suggests that every character before acting, introducing himself to the audience in order not to scare them when they first see them playing their roles. This is a modern technique. Bottom breaks the fourth wall between the actors on the stage and the audience and he violates Aristotle’s claim of dramatic illusion. So, Bottom breaks the fourth wall and he makes the characters introduce themselves as actors. Also, Quince’s childish way of saying the prologue is a cubist technique. He means to say it in a cubist way/ childish. Quince’s childish way of saying the prologue, mispunctuation; wrong stops in the sentence, and confuse meaning reveal the modern cubist technique. Quince aims at stimulating the readers to make them think of interpretation.

The modern critics reveal that “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” is a parody of Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet”. And this is part of intertextuality. And intertextuality is a modern technical device (you should explain them).

**3-What are the medieval features in the play?**

-the courtly love tradition

-the theme of order and disorder

-allegorical names

-the belief in magic.

-When you talk about **theme of order and disorder**, you should mention the two figures of order; Duke [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) in Athens and King Oberon in the forest. You should mention that the play starts with disorder. Hermia disobeys her father and breaks the law of Athens. And at the end Duke Theseus restore order when Demetrius changes his mind and he does not want to marry Hermia. The law of Athens is not applied to Hermia. So, he makes Hermia marries Lysander because he is fair. At the beginning, Lysander says that he is equal to Demetrius; they came from the same social class.

Because of the quarrel between King Oberon and Titania, the weather has been upset and there is flood, fire, the crops have failed, summer gets the ice of winter and winter get the buds of summer. These was disorder at the beginning and then he restore disorder by the power of magic (you should mention the events). And he has corrected Demetrius.

**-The courtly love tradition:** Demetrius loves Hermia and Demetrius loves Helena and Lysander loves Helena. And you say that courtly love tradition goes back to the Middle Ages in southern France and you mention the story and you say that Shakespeare makes the people laugh at the courtly lovers because the courtly lover humiliates himself and showers his beloved flowery language.

**-the belief in magic:** people in the Middle Ages used to believe in magic and the power of magic. There witches in the Middle Ages. So, the idea of power of magic is still accepted in the 16th century.

**- allegorical names:** Shakespeare satirizes the craftsmen by giving them allegorical names. And you say allegory goes back to the Middle Ages. It was found in the morality plays.

**4-What are the classical elements in the play?**

The play has a structure. It starts with an exposition and the events develop until they reach the climax (it is your point of view to say where the climax is) and then the play ends in the denouement. And you say there are five acts, classical allusions (you say allusion is part of intertextuality and you explain), mistaken identity, misunderstanding, songs, dances, happy ending.

**5-What are the modern elements in the play?**

**1-Defamiliarization** (you give examples)

**2-violating the unity of time and violating the unity of action.** (the unity of place is kept)

**3-the Baroque technique**

**4-Metatheatrical technique: -**the play-within- a play. “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” is a play-within- a play/ within the bigger play (A Midsummer Night’s Dream”

-the characters discuss theatrical affairs. Bottom discusses theatrical affairs and he sounds like a director.

**5-Gendermandering**

**6-Sympolism**

We have one example of symbolism. It is Hermia’s dream; the dream that she got in the forest. This shows us what will happen later when she dreams that a serpent has eaten her heart. (Some people say that the allegorical names are symbolic names and in this case we consider allegory as a part of intertextuality).

**7-Expressionism**

I mean the metamorphosis of Bottom.

**8-Surrealism**

I mean the verbal fight

**9-Dadism**

**10-Cupism**

**11- intertextuality**

So, Shakespeare is ahead of his time. And this play is the most modern of his comedies. It has many modern elements.

**6-What are the themes?**

We have **minor themes** and **major themes**.

**Minor themes:** 1-**gap between generations**.

2-**realisim versus imagination**.

(The realistic world is the world of Athens and the imaginative one is the realm of the forest.). And you talk if the dream is imaginative or not. I told you before that it was not a real dream.

**Main themes:**

-Order versus disorder.

-The theme of love. We say that the play can be seen as a parody of serious laugh. He makes us lovers and there are different kinds of love.

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

Puck in the epilogue tells us that the characters just come to present a dream to the audience to make them enjoy the dream. So, we realize that Shakespeare has written the play to make us just enjoy the dream. This means that the dream is important. And we said in last lecture what the significance is.

Good Luck