Shakespeare

Third year- Second semester

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

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Today we will work on act II of ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’. In act I, there was the story of Theseus, Hippolyta. And we have the story of Hermia who loves [Lysander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysander_(Shakespeare)) and the story of Helena who loves Demetrius.Also, we have another storyof workers (working men/ mechanicals/ craftsmen) who prepare a play.

In act II, we learn about another story. We have so many stories in this play. This play is full of stories and you can call them **subplots**. Is not it strange? Usually in any Shakespearian play, there is one main plot and one subplot and they met at the end; they intermingle. But this play is different. As ‘Hamlet’ is the modernist of Shakespeare’s tragedies. ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’ is the modernist of Shakespeare’s comedies. He wrote many comedies, but this is the modernist. What do I mean by the modernist? I mean by the modernist **the most non-traditional one/** the most experimental. It has different points and there is a technique for that and I will tell you about it later. This is experimental technique. It is confusion. It has many characters and different stories.

**ACT II**

**SCENE I: A wood near Athens.**

The setting here is the forest. The setting in act I was Athens. So, there are two realms: the realistic realm of Athens and the fantastic realm of the forest. There is a forest near Athens and you know that in reality, there is no forest near Athens. In act II, they say that there is a forest near Athens like a mile away from Athens. It is a forest of a fantasy. So, we move from realism to fantasy. Act I = realism/ act II= fantasy and imagination. Act II opens with a fairy. How big is the fairy? زي عقلة الاصبع. The character is a fairy. How can William Shakespeare or any director bring a fairy on stage? When ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’ is performed, they use children to do the role of the fairies.

In the forest a fairy talks to PUCK. He is a mischievous spirit. He is like a fairy, but he is mischievous, like a naughty child. He does things that annoy people, but we cannot say that he is evil. A fairy talks to PUCK in scene one and she tells him ‘are you PUCK the mischievous spirit?’. So, he says yes, it is me. And PUCK tells her that he is the clown of the King Oberon. King Oberon is the king of the Fairies and he marries Queen Titania. So, we have the character of the fairy; Puck and we have King Oberon and Queen [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania).

**Puck** is an agent of mischief. Puck tells the fairy ‘yes, I am the mischievous spirit Puck’. And he tells her that he is the one who frighten the village girls. He is the one who misleads the night wanderers. And he is the one who laughs at people in troubles. The fairy talks to Puck about very important things happening in the forest. She says that there is a quarrel between King Oberon and Queen [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania). She says that Queen Titania took an Indian boy and made him her page or attendant. King Oberon is very jealous and he wants to make that boy for himself to make his servant. This is the reason of the fight. Because of this quarrel between the king and the queen, very bad things happen in the forest. The fairy expresses her worry because there is disorder in the forest. The weather has been upset. There are flood and fire in the forest. The Crops have failed. What kind of **theme** is this? **Order versus disorder**. So, according to the Great Chain of being, what happens in the macrocosm عالم الانسان transfers to the macrocosm عالم الطبيعة، عالم الكون . So, because of the quarrel between King Oberon and Queen [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania), the weather is upset and there are flood and fire and the crops have failed. This is the theme of order and disorder.

If you have a question: are there medieval features in the play? You say that the theme of order and disorder is one of the themes of the play.

King Oberon and Queen [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) enter. They come on the stage and they continue fighting together. [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) teases him and she tells him that she knows that he used to love [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) . Now she will marry Duke [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus). And he teases her also and tells her that he knows that she used to love [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and now he is marrying [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta). The stories are interrelated. There is the story of Oberon and [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) and this story is interrelated with the other one (the story of [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta)). They know characters from the other story (the story of [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta)). They are interacting together. And of course there is interaction between those two people. The subplots are intermingled.

[Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) tells Oberon that he should stop begging/ asking her for her boy. Titania knows that disorder is happening in the forest because of their quarrel together. She tells him that plague spreads in the country and kills many people because of their fight over that boy. She says also that the fairies do not dance anymore in circles. Fairs are cheerful and they dance in circles on the music of the whistling wind. So, they no more dance. She tells him also that summer gets the ice of winter and the winter gets the buds of summer. So, [Titania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titania) talks again about the theme of order and disorder.

What is this kind of technique? It is **non-traditional technique**.

Shakespeare employs the **Baroque technique** in ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’. The technique became popular in the 16th century up to the 18th century in Europe. A literary work encompasses various plots each with definite beginning and ending.

This technique appears in the 16th century in Europe (France, Italy and England). I told you before that any literary technique has its origin in painting. The movements always occur in painting and then it moves to literature, architecture and music.

If you check the internet and you write the **Baroque technique** in painting, you will find pictures or paintings of several people standing. And they are telling you something from the way they look, from the way they dress, from the way they stand or sit. You feel that there are stories beyond every character or beyond every two characters. You feel relationship between one character and another or you feel they are separated, but you feel stories. When you see the picture, you read it. And there must be something grotesque/ weird.

If we go to literature, how do we find about this technique in literature? You find too many character and too many stories. It is confusing for the audience and for the readers. You can call them plots or subplots or stories. According to this technique, the stories are either separate or interrelated and the actions move in circles.

(move in circles)= It means that there is beginning and ending to the story. [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) loves [Hippolyta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippolyta) and at the end they will marry. Hermia loves [Lysander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysander_(Shakespeare)) and at the end they will marry. Helena loves [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) and they will marry at the end. The craftsmen are preparing a play and they will perform the play. Oberon and Titania are quarreling and maybe they will reconcile at the end. So, the action moves in circles and these circles are either separate or interrelated.

So, Shakespeare employs the **Baroque technique** in ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’. The technique became popular in the 16th century up to the 18th century in Europe. A literary work encompasses various plots each with definite beginning and ending. The events of every story move in a circle. The circles either intersect or remain separate from one another. Writers or artists who employ this technique often involve the grotesquery in their work.

What is the grotesquery in ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’? Bottom changes into a donkey. In literature, this changing is called **metamorphoses**. Are metamorphoses real or not real? For the western critics who are not Muslims do not believe that metamorphoses can happen in real life. So, they say that it is not real. It is part of imagination.

Grotesquery in the play here happens and occurs in the accident of Bottom when he metamorphoses into a donkey. Another thing is **magic**. King Oberon practices magic. And we consider this Grotesquery. King Oberon; the king of the fairies, will employ or practice magic. How does he practice magic? Oberon orders Puck to go and bring for him a **magic flower** called the **pansy** زهرة الثالوث. In reality it is not a magical flower, but in the play they say that it is a magical one. In the play, they say that one of Cupid’s arrows by mistake fell on this flower, so it makes this flower magical. Oberon explains to Puck why he wants this flower. King Oberon tells Puck that f you take this flower and squeeze, the juice of this flower it if it falls on the eyelids of somebody sleeping when that person wakes up and opens his eyes, he fall in love with the first living thing that comes across him by the power of magic.

First living thing= human or non-human.

Puck leaves to fetch the magic flower and then King Oberon soliloquizes. Before reading the play, we expect that William Shakespeare keeps **the classical (traditional) structure of a comedy:** (The play consists of five acts, there are exposition, climax and denouement, and there is a mistaken identity, there is element of disguise, coincidence, letters, happy ending, songs, and dances).

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This is a soliloquy. King Oberon soliloquizes.

OBERON: Having once this juice,

I’ll watch Titania when she is asleep,

And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.

I will wait until Titania sleeps and then I will put the liquor/ magic juice of the pansy on her eyelids.

The next thing then she waking looks upon,

Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,

On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,

She shall pursue it with the soul of love:

And ere I take this charm from off her sight,

As I can take it with another herb,

I’ll make her render up her page to me.

But who comes here? I am invisible;

And I will overhear their conference.

[*Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him*.]

DEMETRIUS: I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?

[Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) tells Helena, I do not love you. You bother men.

The one I’ll slay, the other slayeth me.

The one I want to kill is [Lysander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysander_(Shakespeare)) و هيرميا مموتاني بحبها

Thou told’st me they were stolen unto this wood;

أنت قولتي انهم أتوا من الغابة دي؟

And here am I, and wode within this wood,

Because I cannot meet my Hermia.

Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

I do not find Hermia, go away from me, I do not want you.

HELENA: You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;

But yet you draw not iron, for my heart

Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,

And I shall have no power to follow you.

You are attracting. If you want me to let me go, do not attract me.

DEMETRIUS: Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?

Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth

Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?

in plainest truth= .زي بالعربي الفصيح

Helena shows no dignity at all.

HELENA: And even for that do I love you the more.

I love you more

I am your spaniel; Spaniel= a kind of dogs.

I am your dog.

and, Demetrius,

The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:

Even if you beat me, I will stay with you.

Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,

Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,

Unworthy as I am, to follow you.

Consider me your dog and let me only to follow you. I do not want more than this.

She is degrading herself. She is humiliating herself.

DEMETRIUS: Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;

ما تطلعي الكره يلي جوايه

For I am sick when I do look on thee.

أشعر بالغثيان لما بشوف وجهك

HELENA: And I am sick when I look not on you.

أشعر بالغثيان لو ما شفتك

DEMETRIUS: You do impeach your modesty too much,

You are degrading yourself.

To leave the city and commit yourself

Into the hands of one that loves you not;

To trust the opportunity of night

And the ill counsel of a desert place

With the rich worth of your virginity.

You left the secure place and you followed a young man at night and the place is isolated; there are no people around. You are threatening your virginity. [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) threatens her if she keeps following him during the night, he can deflower her/ he can ruin her virginity.

HELENA: Your virtue is my privilege: for that

She is sure that he is virtuous and he is not going to do such thing.

It is not night when I do see your face,

She says I am not scared of the night because your face is bright and I feel that I am safe with you.

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?

You think that I feel that I am alone with you?!! No, I feel that you are the whole world for me. I think that there are many people around and I am secure and safe.

DEMETRIUS: I’ll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,

And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

He tells her that he will escape from her and leaves her to the mercy of wild animals.

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;

This is **a classical allusion**. She compares herself to Daphne and she compares him to Apollo. Apollo is the sun god and Daphne is his beloved. So, she says the situation is reversed. Apollo flies and Daphne is chasing him. As if Helena and [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) are lovers.

The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind

Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,

When cowardice pursues and valor flies.

بتقول الدنيا تقلبت؟!!!!! الفريسة بتجري وراء النمر

DEMETRIUS: I will not stay thy questions; let me go:

Or, if thou follow me, do not believe

But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

I will mischief you in the wood. He is threatening her again to deflower her.

HELENA: Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,

You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!

Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:

Fie, Demetrius! = go to hell.

She says to his by doing so as you do set a scandal on all my sex.

We cannot fight for love, as men may do;

We should be wood and were not made to woo.

[*Exit DEMETRIUS*.]

الستات ما تحاربش عشان أحد يحبها، الرجال يلي تعمل كدا

**Wood=**begging somebody for marrying. التوسل من أجل الزواج

Is she serious? No. From the soliloquy we will know that she is not serious.

I’ll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,

To die upon the hand I love so well.

I will follow you and if you kill me, I will be happy because my lover will be my killer. So, she was not serious when she told him go to hell, I will not keep following you. Then she follows him into the forest.

King Oberon is listening to them. He is unseen by them.

There is a **technique** here. A woman is chasing a man. It is a reversed situation. This technique is called a gendermandering technique.

There is something you have studies it. It is Courtly love tradition. Courtly love tradition is a tradition that goes back to the Middle-Ages. In southern France, this tradition appears. According to that tradition, a knight chases a married woman. A knight falls in love with a married woman in the court and he keeps begging her to accept his love, but she is always rejecting his love at the beginning and keeps him away. He writes love poetry to her and he humiliates and degrades himself. He stays under her balcony crying and begging and doing everything to show that he has no dignity even she swears/ even she scolds and chides him. He is just happy to hear her voice. So, he keeps on begging and following her until she accepts his life. And later he discovers that she betrays him with another man. This is the courtly love tradition.

In this play, we see the opposite. So, the situation is reversed. And this is the technique of **gendermandering**.

Shakespeare employs the technique of **gendermandering** in ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream’. It is affiliated with the courtly love tradition, but it highlights a gender role reversed. It is a non-traditional technique (experimental/modern technique).

Helena takes the role of the courtly love who is supposed to be a man. She is chasing [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) in the forest, and [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) plays the role of the lady who rejects and chides/ scolds. So, the last story is reversed.

Oberon overhears all what happened. He says something.

This is a **soliloquy**.

OBERON: Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this

grove,

Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Oberon is sympathizing with Helena.

Here he has something in his mind.

[*Re-enter PUCK*.]

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK: Ay, there it is.

Oberon will tell Puck now to give him the juice and then he gives Puck back some of the magic juice and asks him to go find an Athenian man and an Athenian woman in the forest. How does Puck know them? By their clothes. He tells him go to the forest. You will find an Athenian man and an Athenian woman and the man is mean to the woman loves him. So, when he is asleep and the woman is close to him, stroke the magic juice on his eyelids, so that when he opens his eyes, he finds her and he falls in love with her.

What is Oberon doing here? Oberon is the king of the fairies. So, **he is a figure of order** in the play. Let us compare what happens in act I.

**In act I**, the Duke [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) is a figure of order (in Athena). **In act II,** the figure of order (in the forest) in the forest is King Oberon; the king of the fairies.

**How does** [**Theseus**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) **keep order?** **By the Athenian law**. He judges Hermia by the Athenian law and she says that she should obey her father because she is owned by her father.

**How does Oberon keep order in the forest?** **By practicing magic**. He exercises magical powers.

**Act I, scene ii:**

It opens with a song. The fairies are singing Queen Titania to sleep and they dance for her in circles. Then she falls asleep and then the fairies leave. Lysander and Hermia enter on the stage. Lysander says that they got lost in the forest. So, Hermia says that they have to take some rest and sleep. Lysander wants to sleep beside her, but Hermia refuses. She tells him that she wants to be virtuous and remain virgin until she gets married. So, she refuses to allow him to sleep beside her and she asked him to go sleep far away a little bit. And this is what happens.

Puck enters. He has the magic juice with him. He is looking for the Athenian guy. He found Lysander. He mistakes [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) for Lysander. His target is [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature), but he found Lysander and he mistakes [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) for Lysander and he put the magic juice on the eyes of Lysander and then he leaves. Lysander is still asleep and Hermia is still asleep. Some people enter the stage. [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) and Helena came running because Demetrius is escaping from Helena and Helena tries to catch him. He tells her please, let me alone, let me go. And then he escapes from her and he is not seen on the stage. He went off stage. Helena stays and she is tired and she laments her fate because she loses him in the forest and she does not see him anymore. She is sad and she is very envious of Hermia. She kept on lamenting her fate for not being as beautiful as Hermia. And she is talking like this and suddenly her eye caught Lysander. She went to Lysander. She thought that he might not be asleep; he might be dead. So, she tells him, ‘lord lord, are you okay? What bring you here Lysander?’ And she is talking to him. Lysander opens his eyes and he sees Helena. Immediately, he falls in love with Helena and he expresses how he was a fool to love Hermia and leave her. He tells her that she is very beautiful and Hermia is nothing in comparison with her. He tells her that Hermia is a **brunette**. He has dark skin. And he tells her that you are blond (she has white complexion and a sandy yellow hair, like Queen Elizabeth I) and you are more beautiful. I cannot imagine why I went to love Hermia. Hermia is nothing in comparison with you. What is the reaction of Helena? Helena does not believe him. She has **inferiority complex**. She believes she is ugly and nobody loves her. In the Middle East, they consider that blond girls are very beautiful. This concept is there in the Middle East, but in England because the queen was blond, so at that time they use to say that the blond girls are more beautiful. This is a culture.

So, Helena does not believe Lysander when he tells her that she is more beautiful than Hermia and she thinks that he is **mocking** her/ making fun of her because she has an inferiority complex. So, Helena leaves Lysander and she escapes from him into the forest. He says a **soliloquy**. He says that he has to follow her because I have to guard her, otherwise a wild animal might threaten her. He cares about her very much. So, he follows her.

At the end of the act, we find Hermia waking up screaming because she has a bad dream. She wakes up and says: where is Lysander? She does not find Lysander; he is gone. And she is left by herself alone. And she talks about her dream. She dreamed that a serpent has eaten her heart away. So, she wakes up and she screams and she goes to Lysander. What is this technique? Whenever you find a dream, you know that it is **symbolic**. It is the **technique of symbolism**. So, there is a symbol beyond this dream.

**What is the significance of the serpent?** The serpent lives in the forest. So, it talks about Hermia situation in the forest. And why **the serpent eats the heart in specific?** Because the heart stands for her love to Lysander. So, it means that in the forest Hermia is going to lose Lysander. This is the meaning of the symbol. And this technique is called symbolism.

Now if you go to the question:

**what are the modern techniques of the non-traditional element in the play?**

**1-You talk about defamiliarization and Victor Shklovsky.**

**2-You talk about violating the unity of time.**

**3- Using the Baroque technique** **(using many subplots).**

**4-Metatheatrical technique.**

**5- gendermandering.**

**6-Symbolism.**

**What are the themes in the play that we studies so far?**

1-The theme of order and disorder.

2-Gap between generations.

**What are the medieval features in the play so far?**

1-we talk about the theme of order and disorder and we talk about the Great Chain of Being.

We talk about [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) and how we implement the Athenian law and who he is the figure of order. And also, we say how Oberon is a figure of order in the forest.

And we say that what happens in the microcosm is transferred to macrocosm.

2-The courtly love tradition.

When you discuss the courtly love tradition, you say that it is reversed. And there is gendermandering. And you say that at the end of act II, Lysander is chasing Helen and she rejects him. This is a courtly love tradition. Who is the courtly lover? Lysander. He keeps on telling Helena sweet words, using flowery language and begging her to accept him as a lover and she is rejecting him.