Shakespeare

Third year- Second semester

**A Midsummer Night's Dream**

The 9th lecture: د.منى حشيش

**ACT III**

Today we will start Act III. Let me start by ask you a question. We have taken the background for “Hamlet” and for “A midsummer Night’s dream”. This is a tragedy and this is a comedy but there are some common points between them, for example, they have same background, same page, same writer, and maybe similar style in the sense that “Hamlet” is the most modern of Shakespearean tragedies and “A midsummer Night’s Dream” is the most modern of Shakespearean comedies. So, there are modern elements here and modern elements there which is not typical Shakespearean. There is also one common point between both plays which is the idea of renaissance humanism. What is renaissance humanism? It is a trend that appears in the 16th century. The renaissance humanism has tolerated the different cultures of background, like classicalism, medieval cultures and the new spirit of the 16th century. We consider Shakespeare a renaissance humanist. We consider the philosophers renaissance humanists because they do not totally reject the past but they add to it. So, in the 16th century there was no total rejection of the past. By the past I mean classical features and medieval features. So, in the 16th century, they people do not reject totally their past, for example, William Shakespeare. We consider Shakespeare a renaissance humanist because he has been tolerating the other cultures and he reflects the English society that classical and medieval features in their literature and way of living also. In the 16th century, people used to go dueling and I gave you the example of **Ben Johnson**. He went dueling with an actor and he killed him and he went to prison. But because he is an important man in society, he was sentenced few period and then he came out of jail. In the 16th century, several people used to believe in the effect of stars on man. For example, in 2009 there was a character. He had the talent of dancing because he was born under certain star. So, this is medieval feature. Also, there is a theory of humor in “Hamlet” and in “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” but we have not seen it yet. We saw the effect of the theory of humor in “Hamlet”. It was very clear in “Hamlet”. The people used to say that he is melancholic. Also, the theme of order and disorder goes back to the Middle-Ages. We have seen this in our play “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” because King [Theseus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theseus) is the figure of order in Athens, whereas King Oberon is the figure of order in the forest. In “Hamlet”, the ghost is considered the figure of disorder because he kept on urging Hamlet to take revenge. He does not make it clear whether it is private revenge or public vengeance. Hamlet is confused because he lives in the Middle-Ages and he thinks like people in the Middle-Ages, like Aristotle. He has a deductive way of thinking. So, he takes the ghost’s words for granted and he took a decision to commit private revenge. He became scourge when he killed Polonius by mistake and he goes through a title of murder. The most writing element in renaissance humanism is that the renaissance humanists tolerate all the other cultures. They did not reject the past. For example, the philosopher Desiderius Erasmus was catholic. He did not reject Christianity as whole, but he rejected only the idea of predestination and he said that man has free will. The issue of free will and fate is solved in Islam. Muslim philosophers say that man has free will of his own to do certain things, but God has the supreme power to control our fate at the end and this is for our good. We do not understand that God does things for our own good; our mind is limited. All human being have free will of their own, however; sometimes God interferes with his fate to help the human beings even when we have disasters. After we bear the disaster patiently, God rewards us with something unexpected from us. In Christianity, it is not set clearly maybe because people change in their religion, so that they do not understand. That is why several Christians lose fate and they become atheists.

**ACT III**

**SCENE I: The wood. TITANIA lying asleep.**

Titania sleeps on her flowery bed at the backstage. At the backstage, she has a bedroom (it has no curtains to open at the beginning of every act or to fall down as the end of the act). But Titania’s home has a little curtain on it/ small room with a little curtain. She sleeps on her flowery bed. And then in front of her the craftsmen started to rehearse and they will rehearse their play. Their play is called “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)”. Bottom starts to discus certain problems in the play. He thinks of the women audience. He says if the women audience sees Pyramus killing himself with the sword, it will be very hard for them and they might faint. So, he suggests that they make a prologue to the play and in the prologue Bottom goes and he introduces himself and say {I am Bottom the weaver. I am playing Pyramus. Pyramus is not a real character. Pyramus kills himself but this is not a real murder, do not be scared}. So, he suggests saying this in the prologue. And then Snug the joiner will play the lion. So, if he comes with the mask of the lion, the female audience again will be scared. So, Bottom says okay, in the prologue we can say that Snug the joiner will play the lion. It is not real lion, do not be scared. And then he says that half of Snug’s face should be shown to the audience from the mask, so that they can see his mouth and chin and they feel that he is a human being and that he is a fake lion; not a real lion. So, this is good for the women audience. Is this something trivial? No. this is what the classical prologue is about. [Quince](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Quince) himself says that will write it in verse. And this is true; it is not in blank verse. Classical drama is totally written in blank verse, however, the **prologue is written in poetry**. How do we that it is poetry? Poetry has rhyming scheme. The difference between poetry and blank verse is that the poetry has a rhyming scheme. So, lines are rhyming together and they are found in the prologue, but in the blank verse the lines are rhythmical only (five feet, unstressed sound followed by stressed one). So, what Bottom has said is really true. This is a classical prologue. **The prologue is said by the actor not the character. The actor says the prologue and his name is known**. So, Bottom says I will say I am Bottom the weaver. He mentions his name. **The prologue is a message from the actor to the audience preparing them to watch the play.** So, he is guiding them to view the play from a certain angle or to consider some important matters while viewing the play. So, what Bottom is saying is realistic theatrical affair. They are preparing for a classical prologue for the play. What do we call this technical? It is **metatheatrical technique**. So, we say that Shakespeare has employed **metatheatrical technique** in this part for two things. 1-“[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” is a play-within-a play.

2-because the characters are discussing theatrical affairs.

Bottom misuses the words, however, he is wise. He makes sense when he talks. What he says about the prologue is really making sense. He is not stupid. Bottom says that there must be a wall with a chink. Bottom thinks how they make the hole. So, he says that a man might wear cast. Is this a traditional technique? No, it is a modern technique. We call this **dadism**. It is something called “Dada”. It appeared early in the 20th century. The dadist manifesto was early in the 20th century in France and Italy. They announce that beginning of a movement. William Shakespeare was ahead of his time. He experiments dadism without knowing that it is dadism. All the movements are coined in the modern age. However, Shakespeare has been experimented with this modern technique in the 16th century. So, **this idea of making a man wear a cast is a dadist technique**. There are different features of dadism. We will not take them. We only know when a man is wearing a shape and he stays with that shape from the beginning of the play until the end, so we call this dadism.

[The craftsmen who make the play of “[Pyramus and Thisbe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyramus_and_Thisbe" \o "Pyramus and Thisbe)” choose to employ experimentation rather than fully depend on realism. This play-within-a play reflects what Shakespeare does in his play “A midsummer Night’s dream”. Though the play embodies some realistic elements, Shakespeare uses nonrealistic techniques like sympolism (we saw it in Hermia’s dream when she dreamed that the serpent was eating her heart) and expressionism.]

After that [**Quince**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Quince) asks them to rehearse the play. So, all the characters start to rehearse the play. Bottom is playing Pyramus and Flute is playing Thisbe. Bottom starts talking as Pyramus. Puck enters and he sees the actors starting to rehearse the play. He does not like to see coarse countrymen rehearsing a play in front of the flowery bed of the Queen Titania. She is the queen of the forest, so how come coarse countrymen go in front of the queen. She is sleeping, they will be noisy to her and they will wake her up. So, he does not like to see them in front of the bedroom of the queen and rehearsing the play. So, Puck despises/scorns them; the mischievous spirit. He decides to annoy them. So, Bottom starts to rehearse his play and he says to Thisbe “Thisby, the flowers of odious savors sweet”. He is courting Thisbe. He tells her the flowers of odious savors sweet. He mistakes **odorous** with odious. Instead of saying odorous, he says odious. Odious means hateful/ disgusting. He is misusing words. So, this is an example of his **malapropism**. Of course this is a comedy, so there must be comic elements. Pyramus (Bottom) hears some noise, so, he goes to see that noise and then he will come back to Thisbe. Puck at that time starts to imitate Bottom’s words. He starts to say things irrational to the characters, maybe something not in the play. When Bottom returns, he has a head of an ass on him. So, everybody got scared.

SNOUT: O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on

thee?

They are surprised. They are scared. They are afraid because they know it is not a part of the play to have a donkey head (an ass on Bottom). It is not in the play. So, they are scared to death to see Bottom in that way.

Bottom is making fun of Snout.

BOTTOM: What do you see? you see an ass head of your

own, do you?

He is making fun of Snout. He believes that Snout wants to make fun of him. Bottom does not realize what is on his head. He is unconscious. He does not know that he has an ass head on him. Puck did it for him and he does not realize.

[*Re-enter QUINCE*.]

QUINCE: Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated

[*Exit*.]

The actors fly away from Bottom. So, they escape from him. They are scared.

BOTTOM: I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of

me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from

this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down

here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

[*Sings*.]

And he starts singing irrational song. His voice is not sweet at all. And then Titania starts to wake up.

TITANIA: [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my

flowery bed?

So, she sees him as an angel.

BOTTOM: [*Sings*.]

The finch, the sparrow and the lark,

The plain-song cuckoo gray,

Whose note full many a man doth mark,

And dares not answer nay;—

He sings a very bad song.

TITANIA: I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:

Mine ear is much enamour’d of thy note;

So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;

And thy fair virtue’s force perforce doth move me

On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

Please sing more. My ears like your song. And my eyes like your beautiful shape.

BOTTOM: Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason

for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love

keep little company together now-a-days

He is very reasonable. This is realistic. Reason and love keep little company. I gave you an advice. If you fall in love, see your lover through the eye of the others because love is blind. Bottom wants to say that love is blind. What the other people tell you about the lover will be right. Reason and love keep little company. So, he is speaking the truth.

TITANIA: Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.مش كفاية جميل كمان عندك حكمة

So, she loves him more.

BOTTOM: Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get

out of this wood,

He starts to get scared of Titania. She came up to him in the forest. She is talking to him. So, he realizes that there is something wrong and he wants to escape from the forest. What is her reply?

TITANIA: Out of this wood do not desire to go:

Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.

You will not go out of the forest. Whether you like it or not you will stay.

I am a spirit of no common rate; أنا روح بس لي مكانة كبيرة

She wants to say that she is queen.

The summer still doth tend upon my state;

And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;

I’ll give thee fairies to attend on thee,

And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,

And sing while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep;

And I will purge thy mortal grossness so

That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.

Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Grossness=البدانة

The human body is heavy but the spirit is very light. When the person dies, he feels that he is very light. Sleep is like death. When you sleep if your soul goes out, it is very light and it flies but when it goes down, it goes gown quickly and you feel the heaviness of your body. (That thou shalt like an airy spirit go) they are going to wash him from the grossness of his human body to become as like as a spirit. She is preparing him for her bed. Then she calls the fairies. Their names are Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed. And then she asks them to tie up his tongue. What do we call this? Technically, we call this **Metamorphosis التحول**. In literature, it is not realistic but from Islamic point of view God tells us that he has metamorphosed bad humans into قردة و خنازير. Metamorphosis happens in reality. As Muslims we believe in this. But in literature, we say that it is anti-realistic element or nonrealistic element.

[Technically, metamorphosis is part of the expressionistic technique. It is also an element of grotesquery. Puck charms (bewitches) Bottom and causes him to metamorphose into an ass. This sounds startling and uncanny to the craftsmen, but it is funny to the audience. Bottom’s metamorphosis transfers the craftsmen from their realistic realm to the imaginative dreamlike realm. ]

Expressionism التعبيرية is a movement that appeared early in the 20th century. Shakespeare was ahead of his time. He used it in the 16th century before it has been coined.

(It is also an element of grotesquery.) When something is grotesque, this means it is scaring and humorous.

[Expressionistic drama tackles a miserable plot and it is often satirical of society and people. A character in an expressionistic play like Bottom is divested and reduced to a flat shadowy character who says strange and comic things. This abstract character stays in an abstract place. For example, Bottom experienced an absurd dreamlike meaningless unrealistic like when the fairies force him to stay in Titania’s bedroom. It can be said that Shakespeare adopts theriomorphic characterization to satirize Bottom.]

Theriomorphic= when the writer represents the human being as an animal.

[Bottom represents the craftsmen in the 16th century England. They are poor and helpless. They work hard as machines and suffer in silence. They do not rebel against the totalitarian forces in society. Puck himself calls them “mechanicals” as if they are not human. Titania herself has been oppressive. She forces Bottom to go to her bed and tells the fairies to tie up his tongue to keep silent. He has free will; he is submissive to her.]

This is the end of scene one.

**SCENE II: Another part of the wood.**

Scene ii: it is another part in the forest.

When you have a character who is oppressed and there is a totalitarian forcing oppressing him, expressionistic shows up in symbol. So, having an ass head on Bottom is one way of satirizing the character who submits to totalitarian forces. this is a modern technique/ experimental; nonrealistic one.

In this scene, Puck meets King Oberon and he tells him that everything is alright. He tells his about the craftsmen and how he metamorphoses Bottom and when Titania woke up, she found Bottom in her face, so she fell in love with an ass. Oberon is satisfied because he wants to take the Indian boy. Puck says that Bottom has become a monster. When they are talking, [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) and Helenaenter. When Puck sees [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature), he finds it strange that there are two people in Athenian clothes. So, he tells Oberon that he has found another man in Athenian clothes and he put the magic juice on his eyelids and this is not the one. Here Oberon realizes that Puck has made a mistake. He has sent Puck to put the magic juice on Demetrius’s eyelids and Puck made a mistake and he bewitches [Lysander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysander_(Shakespeare)). So, here Puck has become a **figure of disorder**. He is the theme of disorder in the play because he makes confusion. Oberon as a figure of order wants to correct the false lover Demetrius and make him exchange love with Helena. Hermia keeps on following Demetrius and shouting at his face and accusing him of killing her lover [Lysander](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysander_(Shakespeare)). She tells him Lysander was sleeping here close to me, he is not here now and you must have slain him. [Demetrius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetrius#In_literature) denies and says, although I did not slain him, I still hate him because he is my rival. And then Hermia leaves him and go away out of his face. Demetrius is very tired, so he decides to sleep. He sleeps on stage. Oberon wants put the magic juice on his eyelids. He orders Puck to hurry and fetch Helena for him because he wants Demetrius when he opens his eyes, he sees Helena in his face. So, Oberon goes and he put the magic juice on Demetrius’s eyelids and Puck quickly got Helena. But when he got Helena, she is followed by Lysander. So, Helena is shouting at Lysander who is following her and she does not believe him at all. She is sure he loves Hermia and she believes that he is mocking her. When he tells her that he loves her, he is mocking her. And then because there are noisy, Demetrius opens his eyes and he sees Helena in front of him. He starts telling her flowery words.

Demetrius is courting Helena.

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!

The reaction of Helena:

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

To set against me for your merriment:

You have conspired against me.

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?

She does not believe Demetrius. She is talking to him and Lysander. Now both men are following her. Both are courting her at the same time. she does not like that.

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

You would not use a gentle lady so;

What you are doing is unmanly.

To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,

When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.

She is sure they hate her and love Hermia. She has an inferiority complex. She feels herself inferior to Hermia. She thinks that Hermia is beautiful, whereas she is ugly. She believes that no man will be attracted to her.

You both are rivals, and love Hermia;

She is sure they love Hermia because Hermia is beautiful.

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!

**Derision=** mockery.

Helena believes that they come to scorn and mock her.

none of noble sort

Would so offend a virgin, and extort

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

All of you are playing a dirty game on me.

What tradition is this? This is a courtly love tradition. There are two courtly lovers for Helena. They are Lysander and Demetrius. And she rejects them. So, according to the courtly love tradition, the courtly lover courts the lady but the lady rejects him. So, Helena does not care about being showered with flowery words and she thinks that both men are scorning and mocking her.

Puck is very much amused to see them fighting because he is a mischievous spirit. He is interested in that.

Lysander tells Helena that he loves her and he does not love Hermia. And Demetrius assures her that Lysander is a liar and he loves Hermia. And he tells Helena that he loves her more. So, Helena still she does not love any of them. Hermia comes and she is jealous of Helena. So, Helena again tells Hermia that she joins then in the conspiracy. They are all playing a game on her; Lysander, Demetrius and Hermia are playing a game on Helena. That is what she thinks. Helena reminds Hermia of their childhood friendship and she tells her that they used to be very close together like two cherries in one stem. So, she should consider this all friendship and should not do this to her. On the other hand, Hermia believes that Helena is scorning and mocking her. So, there is misunderstanding between the two girls; Helena and Hermia. Both think that the other mocks and scorns her. **This misunderstanding is a traditional technique**. It is a traditional technique which is common to all comedies.

Lysander is assuring Helena that he loves her and Demetrius is doing the same thing. So, the two men decide to look for a place off stage to fight together/ to fight for Helena’s love. And the winner in the fight will win Helena. They do not say dueling. I imagine that they will fight with the hands. Hermia clings to Demetrius. She tries to hold him back. She wants him to stay with her and not to go fight for Helena. So, he pushes her away and he curses her. He calls her ‘Ethiopian’, ‘serpent’, ‘Tartar’, ‘loathed medicine’ and ‘hated potion’. This is a **verbal fight.** We neverfind a fight that is more humorous than violence. This is a surrealism technique.

[Shakespeare employs the Surrealistic technique to incarnate Hermia’s verbal fight with Lysander and Helena. Surrealism is an anti-realistic technique that was coined at the beginning of the 20th century. It’s used in drama to make an oppressed character fight for her freedom against a totalitarian force. The fight is like a nightmare in the play. **André Breton** (he is a surrealistic leader who announced the manifesto of surrealism at the beginning of the 20th century) says that violence should be confined to the language only and this is what happens in the play. However, the other surrealist leader **Antonin Artaud** believes that violence be shown in both; language and action. It is worth mentioning that the surrealistic fight is humorous, not painful. Hermia feels she is oppressed by Lysender for forsaking her and by Helena for betraying her and stealing her lover. Lysander tells Hermia that he really hates her but he will not harm her.]

Hermia now has an inferiority complex. She knows that she is short and thinks that Lysander and Demetrius love Helena because she is tall. She says, “So dwarfish and low”. Hermia gets very jealous and she threatens to scratch Helena with her nails. Helena gets very scared and she wants to leave the forest. So, Demetrius tells her that he will protect her and he wants her to stay with them in the forest. They fight again and the two men go off stage. They go to find a place to fight. Helena is very scared from Hermia. She tells her that she has tall legs, so she will run faster than her and she will escape from her. Hermia followed her, so the lovers are off stage now.

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

**This is a very important quotation**.

Robin= Puck

Oberon orders Puck to make the lovers go astray. He wants Puck to make the lovers lose their way in the forest.

As one come not within another’s way.

Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,

So, he orders him to imitate the voice of Demetrius to Lysander to take him far from him and to go to Demetrius and imitate the voice of Lysander and take him to the other side. So, he wants the lovers to go astray, not to meet one another.

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

Oberon says that he wants all the lovers to be very tired and they all fall asleep.

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.

Oberon gives Puck herb and asks him to crash it. He asks Puck to put a magic juice of another herb on Lysander’s eye to take off the charm which he has put before.

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.

When they all wake up, they will think that all these were a dream/ a midsummer night’s dream and they will go back to Athens and they will remain friends forever.

League= friendship.

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.

Oberon says now I will go to Titania and take the Indian boy. And then I take off the charm.

This quotation is related to the theme of order and disorder. Oberon is a figure of order. He wants to restore order and peace to this forest. He wants to correct the mistake which Puck had made.

So, Lysander will return to Hermia and Demetrius now loves Helena.

At the end of this act, all of them are still asleep.

Jack shall have Jill;

Nought shall go ill;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[*Exit*.]

Shakespeare ends his act with a proverb. بخيت لبخيتة

The proverb is part of a traditional technique.

So, **the modern elements that we have taken so far are**:

**1-Defamiliarization**

**2-violating the unity of time**

**3-the Baroque technique**

**4-Metatheatrical technique**

**5-Gendermandering**

**6-Sympolism**

**7-Expressionism**

**8-Surrealism**

**9-Dadism**