



Shakespeare I
Notes for Midsummer Night's Dream
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Analysis of Midsummer Night's Dream

A Midsummer Night's Dream (a wedding-centred play) is one of Shakespeare's early comedies, written on the occasion of a wedding.

“Midsummer” is the most fruitful season for nature, nature being in its most fertile and prolific time. The idea of regeneration is associated with the title of the play, the flourishing of nature.

Midsummer is a play about man's dilemma between society and nature.

Characters

- Mythological Characters: Theseus (Duke of Athens) and Hippolyta (Queen of the Amazons)
- Young Lovers from Athens: Hermia-Lysander and Helena-Demetrius (source of comic plot, love story and tragic potential).
- Trade-Guild Actors: Bottom and his friends from Medieval England (Farcical element). In religious festivals, trade-guilds would perform short plays. In *Midsummer*, they decide to perform *The Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*. They don't know the difference between tragedy and comedy, they are uneducated, ordinary people speaking in prose not poetry.
- Supernatural Characters: Titania & Oberon (Queen and King of the Fairies), Puck and friends (represent nature, resolving the problem)
- Egeus: Father of Hermia, stands for tragic potential.

Movement in Space

Athens Society: cruel, has no tolerance, despotic, harsh, male-dominated, politic, requires self-control and restrictions. Reality Space Problem	Woods Nature: tolerance, no self-control, freedom, more democratic; no restrictions, impolite, abusive, not like how they behave in society Dream Space Solution
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In many of his plays, nature is superior in quality to society. Society is man-made and full of shortcomings and faults but nature which is part of the general order of the earth –of beings in general- is almost perfect. Because there is a cycle in nature, it never dies (immortality). Thus, nature will heal your wounds. The problem begins in the city and is resolved in society.

Dreams- Superego, ego, id

In this play gives a pre-Freudian explanation of the function of dreams and the operation of the super-ego, ego and id, which make up out psyche.

1. Id (animal-like/primitive/instinctive aspect of man, belongs to unconscious life)
2. Ego (or I) (What is between the two, mediates between the unrealistic id and the external world)
3. Superego (above I) incorporates the values/ morals of society which is learned from parents/society (Godly aspect of man/control aspect of man/judges everything)