

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM PROJECT

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The relevance of Mimetic Theory
to the department of English literature in high school
by way of Shakespeare's *A MIDSUMMERNIGHT'S DREAM*

*This Shakespeare-project is inspired by 'A theatre of Envy' of René Girard.
The idea is to use keywords to enlighten mimetic theory, while close-reading the comedy.
First the keywords are explained in class, preferably illustrated by daily life experiences of
the pupils themselves. From this discussion the lecturer moves to a similar situation
represented in *A Midsummernight's Dream (MND)*.*

*A chronological approach of the play is recommended in order to enhance knowledge of
Shakespeare's literary and dramatic qualities (aspects to be inserted by the lecturer).*

In this special curriculum, each lesson in English literature offers at wish

- 1) one or two keywords,*
- 2) their daily context discussed in class, and*
- 3) illustrations from the play, analysing the dialogue and relevant scenes on DVD.*

*Information in the balloons is intended for the teacher to use, to be clarified in relation to
next keywords or following Acts as well.*

*Note: please follow either the BBC production indicated below or the recent production
screened in the Globe. Both pay tribute to the original text. The version by Michael Hoffman,
however, will only be useful for comparison and problems of adaptation.*

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*1981 *A Midsummernight's Dream* by Jonathan Miller (starring Robert Lindsay and Helen
Mirren). The Shakespeare Collection of the BBC.*

*1999: *A Midsummernight's Dream* by Michael Hoffman (starring Kevin Kline and Michelle
Pfeiffer). Adapted feature for cinema. Crucial lines of mimetic action have disappeared.*

*2013: Globe on screen, *A Midsummernight's Dream* by Dominic Dromgoole with Michelle
Terry (Titania/Hippolyta), John Light (Oberon/Theseus), Matthew Tennyson
(Puck/Philostrate) and Pearce Quigley (Bottom).*

TRADITION

For centuries Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (MND) was appreciated mainly for its fairy-like qualities, and regarded as a merry mixture of three pointless subplots. The four main characters, young people in love, were generally not held responsible for their deeds, as they seemed manipulated by magic. It was Puck who steered their erotic adventures, by means of the juice of magical flowers, which his superior Oberon summons him to use.

However, René Girard analyses in *A Theatre of Envy* that thematic and dramatic unity does exist in the play, very convincingly and masterly accomplished. In his eyes the comedy is a refined work of art and it's seemingly rhetorical language full of meaning, coming to meet the Elizabethan preference for the oxymoron as an expression of ambiguity.

Such ambiguity – according to Girard – can be understood as expressions of mimetic desire: the desire each subject develops unconsciously, looking at the behaviour or possessions of a model. The result is that this mediator is admired (as model) and intensely hated (impeding the subject's desires) at the same time. Consequently much violence is to be noted in MND's dialogue and metaphors, used by four young lovers who seem to cling to cliché's. For a long time the imagery in the play, either divination or blood and destruction, was felt as overdone; but now we discern how the devastating nature of mimetic desire is implied, and highlighted during the utter confusion in the forest, when Lysander and Demetrius don't want anything more than having the other killed.

Hidden force.

In MND mimetic desire is the engineering force, regulating and dislocating human relations. Desire for the rival's identity appears to be the source of social integration and disintegration; behind the veil of playful fun lingers conflict and scapegoating. Mimetic desire is a hidden force and simultaneously - if we want to see it - this is strangely and vividly portrayed. For instance when Hermia, who has entrusted Lysander her reputation and life, is utterly deserted, prey to sexual abuse or wild animals. Why? Lysander suffers from a sudden love for Helena, which is only comprehensible for us as some product of magic. However, as soon as we see *mimetic desire* at work, our bewilderment disappears.

To be honest, our romantic souls could never acknowledge that mimesis is the driving force of passion. Gladly we accept the juice of flowers, or the crude intervention of gods, as an explanation and Shakespeare leaves the choice to us. We can look properly, noticing that Lysander and Demetrius are in love with the same girl, almost at the same time. In addition their rhetorical inspiration is similar, and has the same purpose when the object of love is dramatically changed (with the exception of Helena being tall and blond, and Hermia a finely chiselled brunette).

Prehistory.

If we look properly, piercing the fairy-like atmosphere, the play seems realistic and coherent. Let's continue to analyse the many incidents in function of a *mimetic* logic. Demetrius follows Lysander's example; does he imitate Lysander perhaps because this friend has won Hermia's affection, which used to be his? Being defeated by Lysander, this former friend becomes his model and rival. Lysander mediates Demetrius' passion first for Hermia and later on, in the nightly wood, for Helena. We, as the audience, are in the position to observe how Demetrius' desire is only being enflamed as long as Lysander is his model...

What happened in the past between the youngsters, before the play began, we call prehistory: incidents mentioned by the dramatist in short sentences without much impact. Why they are

mentioned at all? Perhaps they are meant to enlighten our knowledge in one way or another, to direct our attention to some pattern of changes between the four protagonists, *before* they are cheated and enchanted by Puck. Why Hermia snatched Demetrius from her close friend Helena, and after this conquest won Lysander as well? Given the prehistory it's impossible to blame Puck's and Oberon's magic. Is there true love to be found in the couples, which we are accustomed to idealise, or isn't there? Why would successful Hermia, after casually winning Demetrius, suddenly prefer Lysander... because D. is sullen and L. is new, exotic, to be conquered?

And for whatever reason would Demetrius, being faithfully loved by Helena, now declare his love for Hermia? Simply *because* she preferred Lysander, which is for him too much to bear? Demetrius seems fascinated by the woman who scorns him, in the same way Helena dotes on him. So far prehistory... But in the wood, when Lysander is smitten with love for Helena, this is evidently the result of Puck's mistake. Or isn't it? Might we consider that Helena, in love with Demetrius, is desirable while she simply doesn't care?

Triangular.

What we see in this comedy is the stability of frustrated love, set against the changeability of successful love. The play offers a kaleidoscopic rhythm of combinations, in order to establish how the model (the mediator) is the main figure in this triangular system of desire. Witnessing how the model turns into an obstacle for the subject, we discern a growing reciprocity: rivals becoming doubles of each other, intensifying the interaction to a point of crisis and violence. Still, this is a comedy. Mimetic interaction offers entertainment: not individual qualities or characteristics play their part, but the whirlpool of artificial passion.

Of course Shakespeare was inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphosen* in MND, but he used its theme of changing forms for a sublime parody, portraying a society of 'individuals' who are completely dependent on each other. The dramatist paints a human desire to be original and authentic, while imitating someone else. The more you desire to be different, the more you become undistinguishable.

In short, MND is a new type of comedy almost on the verge of tragedy. The play mocks desire and unmask our most intimate lies. Let's face it: the happiness of the youngsters is not threatened by patriarchal Egeus and Theseus, paper tigers in the story frame, but doomed by themselves. So we can choose: uphold our habit of old and romantic views (true love impeded by society or bad luck) or enjoy the ambiguity of the social satire. In Shakespeare's own time there must have been colleagues and educated people preferring the implications beneath the melodious storyline. As Girard tries to tell us, in the centuries to follow this enjoyment was lost from sight.

TRIANGULAR

A triangular scheme illustrates how we all desire via others. An individual (A=subject) will unconsciously search for recognition (O=object), which is mediated by the behaviour or status of model (B). This status could be symbolized by a car, a beautiful house, a rich husband, political power, or being abundantly admired and loved.

We call this mediation mimesis; since the birth of mankind it is used in daily life to find our way and develop our skills. But there is a less positive side to this medal when the model we imitate suddenly becomes an obstacle. For instance: dear friends turn into enemies, because in imitating each other they find their desire blocked. Or an intelligent pupil fears to be isolated from the group (O) and rejects his teacher. He might even start bashing him in order to get recognition from the group. Do you know some examples?

SCENE 1. Athens, the palace of THESEUS.

(Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants)

THESEUS

Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man revenue.

HIPPOLYTA

Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

THESEUS

Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp.
(Exit PHILOSTRATE)

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph and with revelling.

Met opmerkingen [11]: Indication of violence, in contrast to the word 'love'. The peculiar relationship will echo the conflict between Oberon and Titania, who are often played by the same actors as the duke and his future wife

(Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and DEMETRIUS)

EGEUS

Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!

THESEUS

Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?

EGEUS

Full of vexation come I, with complaint
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
 Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
 This man hath my consent to marry her.
 Stand forth, Lysander: and my gracious duke,
 This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child;
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
 With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
 And stolen the impression of her fantasy
 With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
 Knacks, trifles, nose-gays, sweetmeats, messengers
 Of strong prevailment in unhardened youth:
 With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
 Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
 To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
 Be it so she; will not here before your grace
 Consent to marry with Demetrius,
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
 As she is mine, I may dispose of her;
 Which shall be either to this gentleman
 Or to her death, according to our law
 Immediately provided in that case.

Met opmerkingen [12]: Egeus has the same patriarchal attitude to women as his superior Theseus. He is accustomed to the Athenian laws following which Hermia should imitate his choice, she even should *desire* his preference. But she refuses. The father's honour seems to be at stake, and he is willing to sacrifice his daughter's happiness for it.

In MND external mediation is used to arrange a conventional frame of 'true love'. In the opening of the play we witness the power of Theseus (and his follower Egeus, Hermia's father). As is the convention in comedy, this patriarchal frame shows how young people exchange external mediation for internal mediation, in search of autonomy they move from generational hierarchy into the jungle of peers...

In MND Hermia is obliged to marry Demetrius (her father's choice); if she refuses lifelong imprisonment in a convent or even death will be her destiny. But in fact Shakespeare uses Hermia's demanding father and the authority of the duke only to get the action going. And this action will be: young lovers escaping to the woods where Puck will mistakenly enchant them.

THESEUS

What say you, Hermia? be advised fair maid:
 To you your father should be as a god;

One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
 To whom you are but as a form in wax
 By him imprinted and within his power
 To leave the figure or disfigure it.
 Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

HERMIA

So is Lysander.

THESEUS

In himself he is;
 But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
 The other must be held the worthier.

HERMIA

I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

THESEUS

Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

HERMIA

I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
 I know not by what power I am made bold,
 Nor how it may concern my modesty,
 In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
 But I beseech your grace that I may know
 The worst that may befall me in this case,
 If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

THESEUS

Either to die the death or to abjure
 For ever the society of men.
 Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
 Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
 Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
 You can endure the livery of a nun,
 For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
 To live a barren sister all your life,
 Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
 Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
 To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
 But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
 Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
 Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.

Discussion in class:

What's happening here, do you know examples in our time?

Met opmerkingen [13]: How to become an autonomous individual when – as we all are – you are modelled by your parent's seal?

Met opmerkingen [14]: The claim of autonomous individuality....

Later we can see, ironically, that Egeus did 'look but with her eyes', following her choice when she took Demetrius away from Helena

Met opmerkingen [15]: The sacrificial system as explained in our first session

HERMIA

So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
 Ere I will my virgin patent up
 Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
 My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

THESEUS

Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon--
 The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
 For everlasting bond of fellowship--
 Upon that day either prepare to die
 For disobedience to your father's will,
 Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
 Or on Diana's altar to protest
 For aye austerity and single life.

SUMMARY

1. *External mediation*
2. *Desire*
3. *Sacrifice*

In our triangular scheme we might refer to honour killing. Out of fear to lose authority in the eyes of others (object of recognition = O), a father (subject = A) decides to sacrifice his daughter. His honour is at stake and he seeks the approval of his superior mediating this authority (the model = B). The girl will be sent to the homelands and forced to marry a nephew, or she is killed.

In mimetic theory we call this the mechanism of the scapegoat, which sustains the sacrificial system. In order to restore authority and find recognition, a person generally conforms to the unanimous law within the community. This happens unconsciously and can result in polarity, even in accusing someone. Often this person is considered to be the cause of some disorder (compare Oedipus). The death of this 'perpetrator' (the scapegoat) functions in society as a solution to the crisis. For this reason you'll find such 'solutions' in many plays, resolutions which are often reminders of real incidents in the distant past. In comedies this occurs 'comically' on a relatively small scale.

DEMETRIUS

Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
 Thy crazed title to my certain right.

LYSANDER

You have her father's love, Demetrius;
 Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

EGEUS

Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
 And what is mine my love shall render him.

And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

LYSANDER

I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

Internal mediation.

Here is an indication of internal mediation in the prehistory. Before the play started Demetrius first wooed Helena, who is still completely enamoured with him. But suddenly he turned to Lysander's object of desire. Why?

THESEUS

I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up--
Which by no means we may extenuate--
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

EGEUS

With duty and desire we follow you.

(Exeunt all but LYSANDER and HERMIA)

LYSANDER How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Met opmerkingen [16]: Shakespeare stresses the equality of the two rivals

Met opmerkingen [17]: The invention of this word is Shakespeare's and appeared for the very first time in this play.

Met opmerkingen [18]: We can imagine how Hippolyta felt during the power game of Theseus and Egeus towards Hermia.

HERMIA

Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.

LYSANDER

Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,--

Met opmerkingen [I9]: Literary and romantic examples of 'true love'. Mistaking their individuality for 'autonomous' love the lovers desire to choose their own models.

HERMIA

O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

Met opmerkingen [I10]: The misery which young lovers in literary examples have to endure.

LYSANDER

Or else misgraffed in respect of years,--

HERMIA

O spite! too old to be engaged to young.

Met opmerkingen [I11]: Idem

LYSANDER

Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,--

Met opmerkingen [I12]: In Elizabethan times the word 'friends' was generally used for 'relations:' it could refer to 'parents' or 'peers'. However, experts have always decided in favour of parental tyranny, in contrast to the internal mediation between peers which sometimes is much worse...

Discussion in class:

Why do you think directors and critics always prefer the interpretation of 'friends' in this line as 'parents'? Is there still a need to sustain the romantic notion of true love in our cultural tradition?

When you accept the mimetic bottom line, you can enjoy Shakespeare's dramatic irony. For Hermia rejects external mediation in favour of her autonomous desire for Lysander.... But internal mediation – to choose love by another's eyes between peers - is much worse!

Example: A is not interested anymore in O.

When B becomes infatuated with O, suddenly A comes running back.

How do we become individual people? Do we have an autonomous desire, as we would like to have, to distinguish ourselves from other individuals? And how do we manage to do that? Perhaps by choosing models? If so, we embrace and imitate unconsciously the desire of people we admire and respect (mimetic desire).

We wish to be individuals, but at the same time we want to belong. As individuals, we need to be included and receive recognition. And when we are in danger of losing that recognition, we often start emphasising what we are not.

HERMIA

O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.

As we have seen, this is exactly what she has done by following her 'own' desire for Lysander.

LYSANDER

Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
 War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
 Making it momentary as a sound,
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
 That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
 And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
 So quick bright things come to confusion.

Met opmerkingen [113]: All those ill-starred lovers we know of, seeking individuality in their romantic story, function as our models of 'true love.'

HERMIA

If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
 It stands as an edict in destiny:
 Then let us teach our trial patience,
 Because it is a customary cross,
 As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
 Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Met opmerkingen [114]: Finding (the illusion of) autonomy in true love.

False obstacles.

When still unable to choose for herself, Hermia was 'imprinted' by her father, and now that she can choose, she must desire what he desires for her. A daughter is not supposed merely to obey her father; she must fall in love with the man selected by him. The word 'imprinted' is significant, since Hermia's father also complained that Lysander 'stole the impression of her fantasy'. Egeus thinks Lysander is a usurper of his own role, and a crafty manipulator of her imagination, an unlawful mediator of her desire. Culture doesn't mean the absence of mimetic desire, but its channelling in a direction determined by a higher authority.

If young people do not choose the model provided, they will follow group codes and fashion in their social milieu, imitating friends and acquaintances – Demetrius yesterday, Lysander today, someone else tomorrow. Hermia rejects the tyranny of external mediation in favour of what she regards as no tyranny at all, her own autonomous and spontaneous choice. On the road to self-sufficient bliss, she sees no obstacle except for father figures. In reality she is dominated by what most people nowadays would call 'peer pressure'. Had Hermia lived in our time, she would certainly have talked about 'doing her own thing'. In reality, she is always doing the thing of someone else. Whether or not she obeys her father, she is always choosing by another's eyes.

*We - editors, critics and audience – automatically close ranks with 'autonomous true love' which is a romantic view: authentic love of the young against impediments (like *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *R&J* and countless literary models going back from Moliere to Plautus and Terentius, and to the Greek comedy of Menander).*

*In comedies the narrative of suspense seems to be parental tyranny versus freedom of choice. But is it, here in *MND*? Deliberately the author places Theseus and Egeus as 'scarecrows' at the entrance of the play, implying that the only obstacles in the path of the lovers are in fact the lovers themselves, as mimetic rivals. The action of the play portrays father and duke as paper tigers. As a consequence, *MND* represents a unique type of comedy that makes fun of desire itself.*

LYSANDER

A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
 I have a widow aunt, a dowager
 Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
 And she respects me as her only son.
 There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
 And to that place the sharp Athenian law
 Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
 Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
 And in the wood, a league without the town,
 Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
 To do observance to a morn of May,
 There will I stay for thee.

HERMIA

My good Lysander!
 I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
 By his best arrow with the golden head,
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
 And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
 When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
 By all the vows that ever men have broke,
 In number more than ever women spoke,
 In that same place thou hast appointed me,
 To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

LYSANDER

Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

(Enter HELENA)

HERMIA

God speed fair Helena! whither away?

HELENA

Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
 Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
 Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
 Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
 Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
 My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
 My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
 The rest I'd give to be to you translated.
 O, teach me how you look, and with what art
 You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.

Met opmerkingen [I15]: Dido as Hermia's literary model

Met opmerkingen [I16]: The fairness of Hermia seems to be the standard. For that reason desired by Helena, in order to get recognition from Demetrius (internal mediation).

Met opmerkingen [I17]: Lode-stars, sweet air, etc... all expressions point to divination of the model

Met opmerkingen [I18]: Helena wants to be Hermia, in order to get Demetrius's attention. She desires to become her model.

Met opmerkingen [I19]: If only I could do the same, success will follow.

HERMIA

I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Met opmerkingen [120]: Hermia is the model, enamoured with herself, teaching the rules of the game: the more indifferent, the more desirable.

HELENA

O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

Met opmerkingen [121]: But Helena doesn't seem to grasp how it works....

HERMIA

I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Met opmerkingen [122]: A girl playing hard to get. See 21.

HELENA

O that my prayers could such affection move!

HERMIA

The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Met opmerkingen [123]: Hermia teaches Helena, who still does not grasp the rules of the play

HELENA

The more I love, the more he hateth me.

HERMIA

His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

HELENA

None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

Met opmerkingen [124]: Helena needs that same beauty, not her own.

We observe how Shakespeare's dual strategy functions: either we follow the romantic aesthetical tradition of true love against impediment (storyline), or we appreciate the real cause of the hilarious confusion in the play: 'freedom of choice' perverted by internal mediation.

Following this line of action, how do you consider the BBC director's decision to make Helena less pretty than Hermia? Shouldn't both girls be equally fair, as is explicitly mentioned in the text?

HERMIA

Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;

Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

Met opmerkingen [125]: Hermia, proud to be the model, illustrates the authenticity of her situation by unfolding the secret of their flight. Thereby offering an instrument to Helena which can be used against her. So the dramatic plot continues.

Met opmerkingen [126]: Without realising she calls the safety of external mediation 'a paradise'; when things are clear and one has not yet moved to hell, the jungle of the playground.

Met opmerkingen [127]: Hermia's significant and unconscious use of the word 'hell', twice now, refers to internal mediation

LYSANDER

Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:

To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold

Her silver visage in the watery glass,

Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,

A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,

Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

HERMIA

And in the wood, where often you and I
 Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
 Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
 There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
 And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
 To seek new friends and stranger companies.
 Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
 And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
 Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
 From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

LYSANDER

I will, my Hermia.

(Exit HERMIA)

Helena, adieu:

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you!

(Exit)

HELENA

How happy some o'er other some can be!
 Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
 But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
 He will not know what all but he do know:
 And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
 So I, admiring of his qualities:
 Things base and vile, folding no quantity,
 Love can transpose to form and dignity:
 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;
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
 So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
 Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
 Pursue her; and for this intelligence
 If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
 To have his sight thither and back again.

(Exit)

Met opmerkingen [128]: Before they became rivals, there was love between the two girls.

Met opmerkingen [129]: In Act III the prehistory of their friendship will be beautifully described as twin cherries on one stem (III, ii, 208-214)

Met opmerkingen [130]: Through Athens their fairness is equal. In the same way the qualities of the boys were mentioned as equal. Shakespeare emphasises that they are similar, even indistinguishable, one of the themes of the play.

Met opmerkingen [131]: The word 'doting' reappears significantly; compare note 7

Met opmerkingen [132]: Helena's exalting of Demetrius caused a glow in Hermia's eyes, which made him fall in love with the latter

Met opmerkingen [133]: Mimetic desire works intuitively (unconsciously), and is blind.

Met opmerkingen [134]: Remarkably she chooses to tell this news to her object of desire Demetrius, not Egeus or Theseus who in fact are only paper tigers. The author emphasizes the mimetic struggle.

SUMMARY

4. *The illusion of autonomy*
5. *Literary and film models*
6. *Mimetic rivalry*

This is what happened in the prehistory: Demetrius with such heat doted on Helena, that Hermia became jealous. She arranged to get Demetrius's attention and succeeded. Helena, defeated as a rival, was not interesting for her any more.

Courted by Demetrius, Hermia became suddenly attractive to Lysander. She found him much more interesting than the devoted Demetrius. In short: Hermia stole the lover of her best friend and then lost interest in him. She has won the mimetic contest admirably.

Only, it now brings big trouble with Theseus and Egeus. Simultaneously we have the pattern of mimetic desire played out for us. It springs from one to another and you are not able control it. Unless you apply the tricks of 'coquetry' (as Girard showed in his first study Desire and deceit in the novel). Hermia spontaneously – unconsciously - seems to know how it works, Helena is the one who is excluded. And nothing can be done about it. Right?

When people are having a row or a big conflict, most of the time we don't know who started it. Generally we feel that the problem comes from the other side. 'They were the first to...!'

In many cases there is a prequel which is not mentioned, even forgotten. Let's call this the 'prehistory'. Shakespeare tells us something, implicitly, and almost casually we discover that Hermia had first chosen Demetrius because of Helena. Later she rejected Demetrius in favour of Lysander, who seems more desirable because he is not the choice of her father.

Behold: when mimetic desire is thwarted, it intensifies. When it succeeds (as in the case of Hermia's conquest of Demetrius) it withers away.

These two aspects of mimetical rivalry are comically exploited by Shakespeare in Two Gentlemen of Verona and some years later on all levels of MND, as we shall observe:

- *The Athenian court*
- *The four lovers*
- *The mechanicals as amateur-players*
- *The world of the fairies*

7. *Metaphysical desire*

Endlessly we try to be noticed, in order to receive recognition and status. Exactly what we are looking for is not easy to describe, but it has to do with the overwhelming desire to gain importance in the eyes of others. We seem to need those eyes in order to exist. So whenever there's a chance we challenge our models, striving to surpass them, to be admired even more.

SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house.

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE

Is all our company here?

Met opmerkingen [I35]: Evidently the one who is in charge

BOTTOM

You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the script.

Met opmerkingen [I36]: But Quince is challenged by Bottom

QUINCE

Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

BOTTOM

First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.

Met opmerkingen [I37]: Again, there seems to be some rivalry concerning authority. Bottom tries to surpass director Quince

QUINCE

Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

BOTTOM

A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Met opmerkingen [I38]: Bottom overtakes Quince, making himself more important

QUINCE

Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

BOTTOM

Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Met opmerkingen [I39]: Bottom takes the floor. He seems a bit enslaved to getting attention

QUINCE

You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

BOTTOM

What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Met opmerkingen [I40]: Bottom trying to overcome the gap created by Quince who wants to have his assignment done

QUINCE

A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

BOTTOM

That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some

Met opmerkingen [I41]: Mimetic rivalry mounts.

measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players.
This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Met opmerkingen [I42]: The hero Hercules

Met opmerkingen [I43]: Phoebus Apollo

QUINCE

Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

FLUTE

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

FLUTE

What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

QUINCE

It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

FLUTE

Nay, faith, let me not play a woman; I have a beard coming.

QUINCE

That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Met opmerkingen [I44]: Quince trying to regain leadership

Met opmerkingen [I45]: Theatre convention in Shakespeare's time: the boy-actor who gets the female role, sometimes considered less important.

Met opmerkingen [I46]: Flute tries to get away with it

Met opmerkingen [I47]: The effort fails

BOTTOM

An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice. 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah, Pyramus, lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

Met opmerkingen [I48]: He sees a new opportunity to be admired

Met opmerkingen [I49]: Take note of this word 'monstrous' which seems rather strange but contributes to the theme of the play, as we will see later.

QUINCE

No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

BOTTOM

Well, proceed.

Met opmerkingen [I50]: Quince has won, for the moment

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, the tailor.

STARVELING

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.
Tom Snout, the tinker.

SNOUT

Here, Peter Quince.

QUINCE

You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father:
Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I
hope, here is a play fitted.

SNUG

Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it
be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

QUINCE

You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

BOTTOM

Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will
do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar,
that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again,
let him roar again.'

Wishing to transform is fundamental in theatre. Not only the development or transformation of some protagonist is implied, on stage you can also enlarge your identity by impersonating someone or something: metamorphosis. In mimetic interaction the word 'translated' has very special meaning. You 'become' your rival.

We heard Bottom say 'monstrous' when he tried to imitate lovely Thisbe's voice. Perhaps he used this word because he wasn't so lovely himself. But there's another matter too: the quick changing of forms results in a certain shapelessness of different parts, like lions with a human head or a humans speaking like nightingales just after roaring terribly. Later on we will even witness a human with the head of an ass, and a goddess sleeping with this mortal being. Like the lovers, Bottom wants to impersonate everything, all kind of opposite creatures, and Moon and Wall as well!

Opposite elements combined make monsters (for instance animal/human or human/god). In MND we have many monsters, in language or character. They seem to contribute to the atmosphere of estrangement, creating a new myth: living beings resulting from characters who are driven by mimetic desire. According Aristoteles mimesis means mimicry or depiction which is basically the trade of art. Do people simply love theatre because they love imitation, or is there some unconscious implication?

Met opmerkingen [I51]: Note Shakespeare's dramaturgy: the list of amateur players provides the audience with information about the characters

Met opmerkingen [I52]: The actor is allowed to improvise on the lion's part and this leads to Bottom.....

Met opmerkingen [I53]: His dreams of desire

In MND Shakespeare has the obvious intention to use amateur-characters for the play in the play. In real life they are craftsmen, ordinary people who choose to perform at their duke's wedding. They could have chosen a tableaux vivant or draped flowers to please him, but they seem especially fond of impersonating and this is their chance, their moment of glory. Why impersonating is such a pleasant pastime? Aristoteles ignored the question but Shakespeare does respond generously to it, here in MND: evidently this pleasure coincides with the desire to be(come) the model. Let's call it metaphysical desire. The life of others is much more interesting than our own, most of the time.

Compare the four young lovers with Bottom and his friends: they all like to become something more prestigious. The theatrical thirst of the craftsmen has the same origin as exulting in romance for the lovers. Doesn't Eros strive to be admired? Eventually this desire will have its climax, which is the play in the play in Act V.

QUINCE

An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

ALL

That would hang us, every mother's son.

BOTTOM

I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

QUINCE

You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

BOTTOM

Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

QUINCE

Why, what you will.

BOTTOM

I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Met opmerkingen [I54]: Very irritated, Quince now has the opportunity to fight back

Met opmerkingen [I55]: An effort to make peace

Met opmerkingen [I56]: New visions of fame

QUINCE

Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Met opmerkingen [157]: Nuanced by the director, who is in authority again

BOTTOM

We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Met opmerkingen [158]: Bottom evidently knows best. He will have his 5 minutes of fame (and seems to be rather theatrical in daily life too)

QUINCE

At the duke's oak we meet.

BOTTOM

Enough; hold or cut bow-strings.

Met opmerkingen [159]: Bottom needs to have the last word, surpassing the director

Exeunt

SUMMARY

Not only the subplot of the mechanicals rehearsing, all levels in Act I have a similar theme: distribution of roles, slowly building a crisis of identity. Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander become distracted and have their doubts about themselves (just like the mechanicals). They desperately try to be unique as a means to acquire status, admiration. The four lovers are completely equal in youth, beauty and rank. As a result, the question of being authentic creates more and more confusion. This leads to comical undifferentiation, observed by the audience. The more these lovers try to be unique, the more they appear to be the same. Indistinguishable...

This happens to the mechanicals too. Like Helena and her friends, the craftsmen want to be translated to some prestigious models. Their desire for mimesis has the same ontological goal. Getting status, fame; and by this, recognition.

Moreover, people might love the theatre so much because theatre is visible imitation. In fact impersonation is translation, the desire to be (for a time) the model of your choosing.

Helena regards Hermia as her model when she says: 'The rest I'd give to be to you translated. O, teach me how to look, and with what art'.... So Helena wants to be Hermia, she wants to be 'translated' to Hermia. This is metaphysical desire, the ontological desire we all share.

8. Double bind

A major theme in the verse is the similarity of the four lovers. And a central word in the dialogue all over the play is 'indistinguishable', which is the inevitable outcome of similarity (especially when it's not recognized).

We can observe that all situations in the play pivot around comical doubling. A double bind is a relationship in which I want to be imitated (I want to be the model: focus of admiration), but at the same time I don't want to be imitated (because I strive to be unique).

The remarkable word 'translated' not only points to the spirit of rivalry, it also connects the ontological desire of the four lovers with mythical monsters, the metamorphoses of the midsummer night...

ACT II

SCENE I. A wood near Athens.

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK

PUCK

How now, **spirit!** whither wander you?

Fairy

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

PUCK

The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come **not** within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling;
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But, they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

Fairy

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd **Robin Goodfellow**: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;

Met opmerkingen [I60]: The first sentence locates the scene in the supernatural, the fourth level in the play, invisible for the duke, the Athenians and the mechanicals

Met opmerkingen [I61]: In this supernatural world rivalry seems to exist as well

Met opmerkingen [I62]: The object of rivalry

Met opmerkingen [I63]: The quarrel we are going to witness

Met opmerkingen [I64]: For our information

And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

The scapegoat, cause and solution.

Puck as Robin Goodfellow is an mythical figure in England, someone who embodies all sorts of metamorphoses. He surpasses Bottom in imitating living or lifeless creatures. However, Puck is also a classic ingredient of mimetic interaction. In administering the magical flower juice he makes a mistake, and a terrible row between the four lovers is the result. Later on he is responsible for repair and reconciliation; not only because he finally pours the cure in the right eyes, he also – more importantly – exhausts Lysander en Demetrius in chasing and killing each other. He does so by taking the place of the target.

The solution of a comedy does demand a (hidden) victim, and Puck gloriously takes on this role: first he is the cause of the problems (destabilising everything amounting to an escalation of reciprocity in which all difference disappears), secondly he leads the violence away by offering himself. Shakespeare found a solution which keeps the sacrificial mechanism of drama intact, without killing. A solution on the verge of tragedy, because the destructive 'magical' effects in MND in originate from mimetical desire in humans.

PUCK

Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Met opmerkingen [165]: Puck explaining his own essence, exactly what he will do at the crisis of the four lovers

Fairy

And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Met opmerkingen [166]: Again, the suggestion of problems ahead

Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his train; from the other, TITANIA, with hers

OBERON

Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Met opmerkingen [167]: To see Oberon and Titania as the doubles of Theseus and Hippolyta will enhance the idea that the conduct of leaders influences humankind

TITANIA

What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

OBERON

Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

TITANIA

Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of **Corin** sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest Steppe of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing **Amazon**,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

OBERON

How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know **thy** love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he **ravished**?
And make him with fair **Aeglis** break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

TITANIA

These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
Have every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents;
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are indistinguishable;
The human mortals want their winter here;

Met opmerkingen [I68]: Oberon in love like the shepherd in Nicholas Breton's pastoral of Corin and his nymph Phyllida

Met opmerkingen [I69]: Oberon's adultery with Hippolyta

Met opmerkingen [I70]: Mimetic love around, painted in Titania's adultery with Theseus

Met opmerkingen [I71]: Theseus raped Perigenia, as he did to other women: Aeglis, Ariadne and Antiopa

Met opmerkingen [I72]: Titania's compelling description of the consequences of their conflict: the human order completely upside down, nature becoming

Met opmerkingen [I73]: A most adequate image of swelling waters in mimetic rivalry, resulting in erased borders

Met opmerkingen [I74]: Sign of the mimetic crisis, which we will also discern in the human lovers in the wood

No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
 Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound:
 And thorough this distemperature we see
 The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
 Far in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
 The childing autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
 By their increase, now knows not which is which:
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension;
 We are their parents and original.

Titania describes at length a disorder in nature that consists of the same undifferentiation as the one occurring among human beings. The rivers feel so self-important that they become so swollen with pride, that they lose whatever real autonomy they normally enjoy. In their eagerness to outshine each other, they all go out of their beds simultaneously, in perfect mimetic unison, and disappear into the vast 'evil mixture' of their poisonous togetherness. They turn into a single lake, thus destroying the spate identities that they sought to magnify. Furthermore, around villages the violent storm erases the marks and patterns inscribed upon the land by English culture itself.

As we can see, undifferentiation is more than an abstract idea in MND. It triumphs at all levels, from the structure of the plot down to smallest incident, down to mere images that seem purely decorative at first. As soon as the order of things weakens, mediation becomes internal and mimetic rivalry begins to spin, accelerating cultural disintegration (Envy, 173).

OBERON

Do you amend it then; it lies in you:
 Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
 I do but beg a little changeling boy,
 To be my henchman.

TITANIA

Set your heart at rest:
 The fairy land buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a votaress of my order:
 And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
 Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
 When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
 Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—
 Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
 To fetch me trifles, and return again,

Met opmerkingen [175]: The undifferentiation of mimetic crisis: differences disappearing, chaos approaching

Met opmerkingen [176]: Compare this speech by Titania with Ulysses' reproach to Agamemnon and the Greek heroes before the walls of Troy (in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*)

Met opmerkingen [177]: As we all do, Oberon seems to think it was the other who started the row. But he is the one who wants to have the boy, the object of rivalry

Met opmerkingen [178]: Here is the inciting force of the conflict on the level of the fairies, the boy entrusted to Titania

As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
 And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
 And for her sake I will not part with him.

Shakespeare shows how the mimetic rivalry is directed to the little page whom both the king and the queen want to add to their own personal following, for the sole reason that the other wants him too. The disputed child never says a word but keeps bouncing back and forth like a tennis ball between Oberon and Titania. The emphasis lies not on the desired object but on the reciprocity of rivalry.

OBERON

How long within this wood intend you **stay**?

Met opmerkingen [179]: Oberon is already plotting revenge

TITANIA

Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
 If you will patiently dance in our round
 And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
 If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

OBERON

Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

TITANIA

Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
 We shall chide downright, if I longer stay. *Exit TITANIA with her train*

SUMMARY

9. Reciprocity

10. In conflict the object fades

At all four levels of the action, there is conflict resulting from mimetic desire: on the human scale Theseus and Hippolyta in a doubtful union (1), the main story of the four lovers as doubles (2), and amateur-player Bottom challenging the authority of the Quince (3). On the supernatural scale (4) we hear about the conflict of adultery - even more funny when Oberon is played by the Theseus-actor and Titania by the Hippolyta-actress - and now we witness Oberon's jealousy of Titania because of her possession of the Indian child. We will see that their rivalry about the lovely child has the nature of reciprocity and that this boy, the object which invoked the fight, slowly fades from sight. We are safe to conclude that the ontological desire for the model has more importance than the object (which is only the means to reach the model).

OBERON

Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
 Till I **torment** thee for this injury.
 My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest
 Since once I sat upon a promontory,

Met opmerkingen [180]: Oberon, feeling defeated, chooses punishment as a course of action, acquiring the object at the same time

And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

PUCK

I remember.

OBERON

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair **vestal** throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In **maiden** meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it **love-in-idleness**.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids laid
Will make or man or woman madly **dote**
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK

I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In **forty** minutes.

Exit

OBERON

Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
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.

Met opmerkingen [I81]: The famous hint to a theatre incident in Shakespeare's youth, while Queen Elizabeth was present

Met opmerkingen [I82]: The wellknown chastity of Elizabeth I

Met opmerkingen [I83]: In many plays Shakespeare uses venom as an instrument of the action (for instance in *Romeo & Julia*) but also it's antidote, medicine being the other side of the coin

Met opmerkingen [I84]: For the third time we hear the newly invented word for this play, used twice in Act I

Met opmerkingen [I85]: In 1580 Francis Drake returned from encircling the earth as the captain of an English ship. So in Shakespeare's time originated the first planetary vision, and the author is proof of it. Compare our feelings in 1968 when astronauts sent the first footage from the moon, showing the Earth in space

Met opmerkingen [I86]: The object of mimetic desire shapes Oberon's action

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA, following him

DEMETRIUS

I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

Met opmerkingen [187]: The conflict between the Athenian youths is mounting. It's either slaying or being slain. There's no sense of self any more

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.

Met opmerkingen [188]: The more Helena is rejected, the more she wants him.
Someone who is ignored develops a similar passionate urge

Demetrius as a hard-hearted amamant.

Shakespeare often uses such an oxymoron (creating a loving tension between opposites). In the comedy MND this is certainly not for aesthetic reasons alone. An oxymoron gives voice to ambiguity, often the model which is desirable and hateful at the same time. We are part of a triangle in which we turn from subject to model to object. This triangle is interindividual, like a complicated estafette or dance. The oxymoron in MND is a verbal vehicle of its theme: our drive to be the model, by constantly changing desire and imitation. The working of tragedy is to be found in MND's warlike and destructive metaphors while its characters, who in their longing to be original and admired approach disaster, only escape dreadful consequences by being locked in a comedy.

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?

HELENA

And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on 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.
What worser place can I beg in your love,--
And yet a place of high respect with me,--
Than to be used as you use your dog?

Met opmerkingen [189]: Not being revered, she lowers herself poignantly, there seems no equilibrium possible (auto-agression)

Met opmerkingen [190]: When mimetic desire is thwarted, it intensifies...

Met opmerkingen [191]: Pascal: qui fait l'ange fait la bête.

Met opmerkingen [192]: Metaphor of auto-agression but also symbolising the theme of indifferntiation: gods mimetically driven like humans, humans mixing with animals

*Helena regards herself as a dog, a spaniel, and later on an ugly bear. She devalues herself in the context of divinization of the model (Hermia) and the object (Demetrius). In this intense mimetic relation the subject exalts the position of the model and, as a result, devaluates herself. Although we see the lovers as rather similar agents, each lover feels **either inferior or superior**. In the eyes of Hermia, Helena, Demetrius and Lysander the differences between them seem enormous; but the audience will conclude that they are exactly the same... The more the four lovers deny their double bind (mimetic reciprocity), the more they bring it about. The solution of this crisis will be either auto-agression or hetero-agression.*

DEMETRIUS

Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

When something is offered regularly, its importance seems to decline. Once desired, now it's repudiated. Captured by Hermia, Demetrius reverts to hetero-agression towards the stalking Helena (who suffers from auto-agression). Here we observe the twofold result of mimetic desire (see excursion after Act II).

HELENA

And I am sick when I look not on you.

DEMETRIUS

You do impeach your modesty too much,
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.

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?

DEMETRIUS

I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

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 valour flies.

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.

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:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be wood and were not made to woo.

Exit DEMETRIUS

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well.

Exit

OBERON

Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

PUCK

Ay, there it is.

OBERON

I pray thee, give it me.
I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Met opmerkingen [193]: Auto-agression

Met opmerkingen [194]: Oberon seems to identify with
Helena's sorrow

PUCK

Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

Enter TITANIA, with her train

TITANIA

Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
 Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
 Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
 Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
 To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
 The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
 At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
 Then to your offices and let me rest.

The Fairies sing

You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
 Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
 Come not near our fairy queen.
 Philomel, with melody
 Sing in our sweet lullaby;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:
 Never harm,
 Nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh;
 So, good night, with lullaby.
 Weaving spiders, come not here;
 Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
 Beetles black, approach not near;
 Worm nor snail, do no offence.
 Philomel, with melody, & c.

Fairy

Hence, away! now all is well:
 One aloof stand sentinel.

Exeunt Fairies. TITANIA sleeps.

Enter OBERON and squeezes the flower on TITANIA's eyelids

Met opmerkingen [195]: Apart from the sexual puns and ambiguities, it's evident that rivalry exists in the world of the elves, as in the following picture

OBERON

What thou seest when thou dost wake,
 Do it for thy true-love take,
 Love and languish for his sake:
 Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
 Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
 In thy eye that shall appear
 When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
 Wake when some vile thing is near.

Exit. Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA

LYSANDER

Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
 And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
 We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
 And tarry for the comfort of the day.

HERMIA

Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
 For I upon this bank will rest my head.

LYSANDER

One turf shall serve as pillow for us both;
 One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.

HERMIA

Nay, good Lysander; for my sake, my dear,
 Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

LYSANDER

O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence!
 Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
 I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit
 So that but one heart we can make of it;
 Two bosoms interchained with an oath;
 So then two bosoms and a single troth.
 Then by your side no bed-room me deny;
 For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

HERMIA

Lysander riddles very prettily:
 Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
 If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
 But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
 Lie further off; in human modesty,
 Such separation as may well be said
 Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
 So far be distant; and, good night, sweet friend:
 Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end!

Met opmerkingen [196]: Compare Oberon's violence with Theseus' grip on Hippolyta

LYSANDER

Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I;
 And then end life when I end loyalty!
 Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!

HERMIA

With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!

They sleep

Enter PUCK

PUCK

Through the forest have I gone.
 But Athenian found I none,
 On whose eyes I might approve
 This flower's force in stirring love.
 Night and silence.--Who is here?
 Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
 This is he, my master said,
 Despised the Athenian maid;
 And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
 On the dank and dirty ground.
 Pretty soul! she durst not lie
 Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
 Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
 All the power this charm doth owe.
 When thou wakest, let love forbid
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
 So awake when I am gone;
 For I must now to Oberon.

Exit

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running

HELENA

Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

DEMETRIUS

I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

HELENA

O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

DEMETRIUS

Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go.

Exit

Met opmerkingen [197]: Puck's venom or love-potion as a artificial as mimetic desire is unconscious. From the prehistory we know that mimetic desire is paramount

HELENA

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
 The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
 Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
 For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
 How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
 If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
 No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
 For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
 Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
 Do, as a monster fly my presence thus.
 What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
 Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
 But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
 Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
 Lysander if you live, good sir, awake.

Met opmerkingen [I98]: Self-debasement as a kind of auto-aggression

Met opmerkingen [I99]: The word 'monster' prefigures the developments around Bottom and Titania; monster generally signifies a mixture of human and beast

Met opmerkingen [I100]: Helena chides her mirror, which she thinks is not to be trusted

LYSANDER

[Awaking] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
 Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
 That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
 Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
 Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

Met opmerkingen [I101]: Suddenly love-smitten with Helena means immediate hostility to the rival as well

HELENA

Do not say so, Lysander; say not so
 What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
 Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

LYSANDER

Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
 The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
 Not Hermia but Helena I love:
 Who will not change a raven for a dove?
 The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
 And reason says you are the worthier maid.
 Things growing are not ripe until their season
 So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
 And touching now the point of human skill,
 Reason becomes the marshal to my will
 And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
 Love's stories written in love's richest book.

Met opmerkingen [I102]: When we search for an explanation for this swinging around - apart from the magical sap - could it be that Lysander falls in love again because he is sure of Hermia's love, but Helen evidently is NOT interested in him?

Met opmerkingen [I103]: Shakespeare's humor about mimetic desire

HELENA

Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
 When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
 Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,
 That I did never, no, nor never can,
 Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,

But you must flout my insufficiency?
 Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
 In such disdainful manner me to woo.
 But fare you well: perforce I must confess
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
 O, that a lady, of one man refused.
 Should of another therefore be abused!

Exit

LYSANDER

She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
 And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
 For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
 The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
 Or as tie heresies that men do leave
 Are hated most of those they did deceive,
 So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
 Of all be hated, but the most of me!
 And, all my powers, address your love and might
 To honour Helen and to be her knight!

Exit

HERMIA

[*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
 To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
 Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
 Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
 Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
 And you sat smiling at his cruel pray.
 Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
 What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
 Alack, where are you speak, an if you hear;
 Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
 No? then I well perceive you all not nigh
 Either death or you I'll find immediately.

Exit

Met opmerkingen [I104]: From one pole to another in pursuit of autonomous identity

SUMMARY

11. Auto-agression and hetero-agression (see excursion next page)**12. Undifferentiation**

We observe how the movement accelerates and all constancy in relationship is lost. When the two boys discard Hermia and focus on Helena, the polarity doesn't change but only the roles. The result is complete crisis, a certain undifferentiation. The four lovers perpetually seek singularity of identity, but through mimetic means, and their reward is conflicting uniformity. Whatever uniqueness they possessed to start with quickly dissolves, and their personalities disintegrate more and more. At the climax of the night, all four will be looking in vain for their former selves, for instance when Hermia asks in III,ii,273 'Am I not Hermia; are not thou Lysander?'

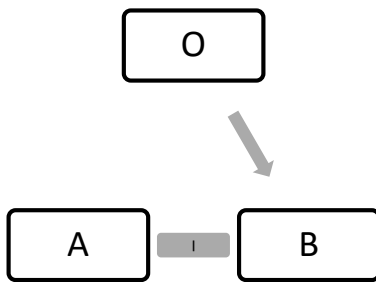
In the meantime we begin to perceive that Puck (alias Robin Goodfellow) is the essence and the instrument of mimetic desire. His disorder, mistaking Oberon's command, at first hand seems artificial but symbolises the whimsicalness of mediated love. From the play's prehistory we have seen that the changes in loyalty are not new; desire operates capriciously, like contagion, and leads to a situation of bewilderment, while categories change and overflow each other, resulting in the complete disorder, which we call mimetic crisis. This will happen in the middle of Act III.

EXCURSION

Types of scapegoating (based on Erik Buys: When love turns to hate)

We have investigated how, in mimetic relations, the subject tries to combat the self-contempt that necessarily accompanies the overvaluation of the mediator. Helena reveres her mediator but also hates her as a rival, and vainly tries to regain the upper hand in a relationship that has become completely unbalanced. The more divine Hermia and Demetrius seem to Helena, the more beastly she herself feels. The animal images are a privileged means of expressing the self-abasement that mimetic desire generates. Instead of rising to the near-divinity that they perceive in their models, the subjects of desire sink to the level of animality. In MND this relationship of extreme inferiority and transcendental superiority keeps changing, reversals becoming more and more rapid as the night moves towards its climax.

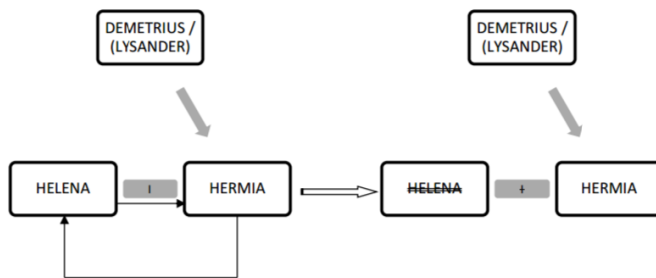
In our triangular scheme we apply different strategies of coping with such crisis.



- 1) Subject (A) wants to be the model (B) , following the desires or behaviour of this example
- 2) A compares him/herself with B (sign: |)
- 3) B seems to have something which A doesn't have, for instance admiration or love by O (sign: arrow)
- 4) A strives to be B, since he/she wants to be acknowledged or loved by O
- 5) Because A cannot become or surpass B, he/she feels frustrated
- 6) This frustration or jealousy is impossible to bear. A tries to erase the gap between him/her and model B: crisis
- 7) One solution for A to evade this terrible feeling is devaluating him/herself (auto-agression)
- 8) Another way is destroying B (hetero-agression)

AUTO-AGGRESSION OF HELENA

SCAPEGOAT MECHANISM – TYPE 1 (SMT1): AUTO-AGGRESSION



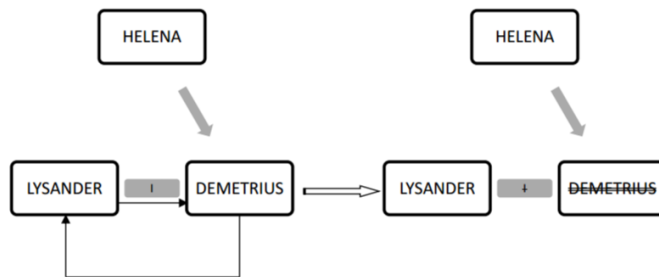
- 1) Helena compares herself with Hermia (sign: I)
- 2) Hermia has something which Helena doesn't have, the admiration or love by Demetrius (sign: thick arrow)
- 3) Helena strives to be Hermia since she needs to have this admiration or love by Demetrius (thin arrow below)
- 4) Because Helena cannot surpass Hermia, she feels more and more frustrated
- 5) This frustration or jealousy is impossible to bear. She tries to erase the gap between her and Hermia: crisis
- 6) One solution for Helena to evade this terrible feeling is **devaluating or destroying** herself (auto-aggression)

In Act II, i:

**I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on 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.
What worser place can I beg in your love,--
And yet a place of high respect with me,--
Than to be used as you use your dog?**

HETERO-AGRESSION OF LYSANDER in Act II

SCAPEGOAT MECHANISM – TYPE 2 (SMT2): HETERO-AGGRESSION



LYSANDER

[Awaking] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.

Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,

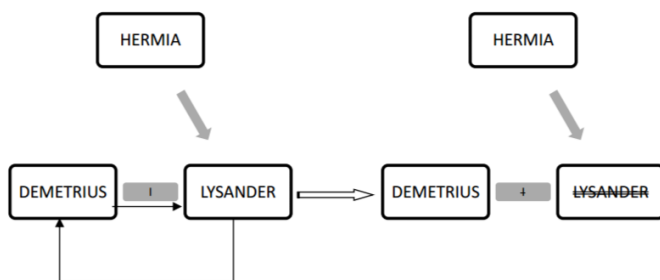
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

THE HETERO-AGGRESSION OF DEMETRIUS in Act II

SCAPEGOAT MECHANISM – TYPE 2 (SMT2): HETERO-AGGRESSION



DEMETRIUS

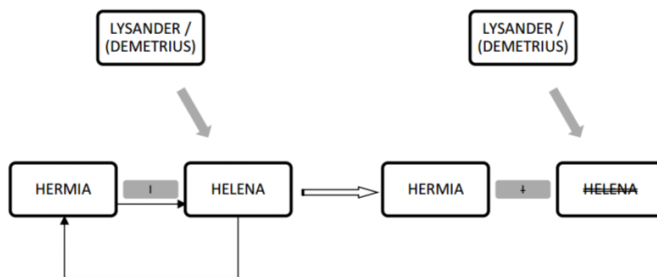
I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.

Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?

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

THE HETERO-AGGRESSION OF HERMIA in Act III, when both boys prefer Helena:

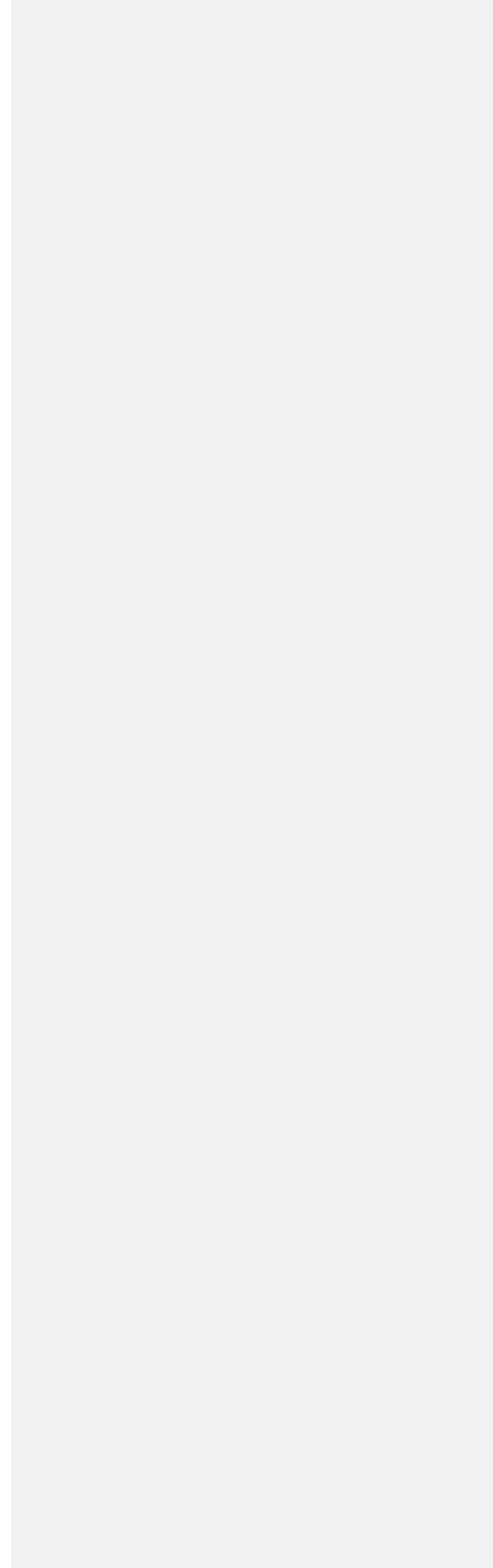
SCAPEGOAT MECHANISM – TYPE 2 (SMT2): HETERO-AGGRESSION



HERMIA

**Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
 Now I perceive that she hath made compare
 Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
 And with her personage, her tall personage,
 Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
 And are you grown so high in his esteem;
 Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
 How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
 How low am I? I am not yet so low
 But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.**

**WE WILL OBSERVE
HOW VERBAL HETERO-AGRESSION BECOMES FYSICAL
IN ACT III**



ACT III**SCENE I. The wood. TITANIA lying asleep.**

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOT TOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

BOTTOM

Are we all met?

Met opmerkingen [I105]: Notice how Bottom tries to acquire the director's authority

QUINCE

Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

BOTTOM

Peter Quince,--

QUINCE

What sayest thou, **bully** Bottom?

Met opmerkingen [I106]: Quince did notice

BOTTOM

There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

SNOUT

By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

STARVELING

I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

BOTTOM

Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that **Pyramus** is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Met opmerkingen [I107]: Bottom speaks about himself as Pyramus first, and only then as Bottom. Evidently Pyramus' identity is much more attractive, which thematically refers to the crisis in identity of the lovers

QUINCE

Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

BOTTOM

No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

SNOUT

Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

STARVELING

I fear it, I promise you.

BOTTOM

Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in--God shield us!--a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to 't.

SNOUT

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

BOTTOM

Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck: and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,--'Ladies,'--or 'Fair-ladies--I would wish You,'--or 'I would request you,'--or 'I would entreat you,--not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are;' and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

Contagion.

Bottoms desire to imitate is distributed over the craftsmen, a movement just as contagious as the pursuits of the lovers, and with the same disturbing effects. In this contagion Shakespeare establishes the common ground. In traditional philosophy, however, mimesis and eros are strictly severed because Plato did never connect the two. In this work of art we see both mimetic movements united in the plot of the lovers, the fairies and the craftsmen.

QUINCE

Well it shall be so. But there is two hard things; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

SNOUT

Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

BOTTOM

A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

QUINCE

Yes, it doth shine that night.

Met opmerkingen [1108]: In order to create spectacular effect this monster must be built out of contrary parts. Bottom and his friends become ecstatic by kaleidoscopic turns, theatrical incarnations and imitations of each other, amounting to boiling monstrosity. They cross the same border as the four young lovers. Perhaps you might say the world of the fairies is summoned, both by the pursuits of the lovers and the theatrical ambitions of the mechanicals...

BOTTOM

Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

QUINCE

Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

SNOUT

You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom?

BOTTOM

Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

QUINCE

If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake: and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK behind

PUCK

What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

QUINCE

Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

BOTTOM

Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet -

QUINCE

Odours, odours!

BOTTOM

.... odours savours sweet:
 So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
 But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
 And by and by I will to thee appear.

Exit

PUCK

A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.

Exit

FLUTE

Must I speak now?

QUINCE

Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes
 but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

FLUTE

Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
 Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
 Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,
 As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
 I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at **Ninny's** tomb.

QUINCE

'Ninus' tomb,' man: why, you must not speak that
 yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your
 part at once, cues and all Pyramus enter: your cue
 is past; it is, 'never tire.'

FLUTE

O,--As true as truest horse, that yet would
 never tire.

Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM with an ass's head

BOTTOM

If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

QUINCE

O **monstrous!** O strange! we are haunted. Pray,
 masters! fly, masters! Help!

Exeunt QUINCE, SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

Met opmerkingen [I109]: King Ninus' tomb, also called Nimrod

Met opmerkingen [I110]: The word 'monstrous' is adequate because Bottom is now a combination of antagonistic parts, from human and beastly origin

PUCK

I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
 Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
 Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
 A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
 And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
 Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Exit

BOTTOM

Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to
 make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT

SNOUT

O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

BOTTOM

What do you see? you see an **asshead** of your own, do
 you?

Exit SNOUT

Re-enter QUINCE

QUINCE

Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art
translated.

Exit

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

The ousel cock so black of hue,
 With orange-tawny bill,
 The throstle with his note so true,
 The wren with little quill,--

TITANIA

[Awaking] What **angel** wakes me from my flowery bed?

Met opmerkingen [I111]: Dramatic irony: the speaker isn't aware, but we see the truth.

Met opmerkingen [I112]: Translated seems a keyword: everyone wants to be someone else (starting with Helena in Act I because of Demetrius' unfaithful love). Now Puck has arranged Bottom's translation smoothly

Met opmerkingen [I113]: Oberon's plot to humiliate his wife, will be fulfilled

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;--
 for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish
 a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry
 'cuckoo' never so?

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.

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; the
 more the pity that some honest neighbours will not
 make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

TITANIA

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

BOTTOM

Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out
 of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

TITANIA

Out of this wood do not desire to go:
 Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
 I am a spirit of no common rate;
 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!

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, and MUSTARDSEED

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

COBWEB

And I.

Met opmerkingen [I114]: As in the former cases of altered love, artifice has succeeded, like a whim. It has the qualities of a sweet dream; or a nightmare.

MOTH

And I.

MUSTARDSEED

And I.

ALL

Where shall we go?

TITANIA

Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from Painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

PEASEBLOSSOM

Hail, mortal!

COBWEB

Hail!

MOTH

Hail!

MUSTARDSEED

Hail!

BOTTOM

I cry your worship's mercy, heartily: I beseech your
worship's name.

COBWEB

Cobweb.

BOTTOM

I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master
Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with
you. Your name, honest gentleman?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Peaseblossom.

BOTTOM

I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

MUSTARDSEED

Mustardseed.

BOTTOM

Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred had made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

TITANIA

Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue bring him silently.

Exeunt

SCENE II. Another part of the wood.

Enter OBERON

OBERON

I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

We now approach the turning point in the drama (see next excursion), coinciding with the blend of human, beastly and godlike elements; and with the heightening crisis of identity in the lovers. In addition, this turning point in dramatic terms is also the zenith of mimetic crisis, because all difference will disappear in an 'indistinguishable' turmoil.

Met opmerkingen [I115]: The negative meaning of 'doting' intensifies

PUCK

My mistress with a monster is in love.
 Near to her close and consecrated bower,
 While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
 A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
 That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
 Were met together to rehearse a play
 Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
 The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
 Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
 Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake
 When I did him at this advantage take,
 An ass's nolle I fixed on his head:
 Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
 And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
 As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
 Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
 Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
 Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
 So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
 And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
 He murder cries and help from Athens calls.
 Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears
 thus strong,
 Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
 For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
 Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all
 things catch.
 I led them on in this distracted fear,
 And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
 When in that moment, so it came to pass,
 Titania waked and straightway loved an ass.

OBERON

This falls out better than I could devise.
 But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
 With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

PUCK

I took him sleeping,--that is finish'd too,--
 And the Athenian woman by his side:
 That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS

OBERON

Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

PUCK

This is the woman, but not this the man.

Met opmerkingen [I116]: The nuance of magic in daily ambitions, in due course losing a sense of self

Met opmerkingen [I117]: Dramatic irony: we know it isn't finished, on the contrary

DEMETRIUS

O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

HERMIA

Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse,
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored and that the moon
May through the centre creep and so displease
Her brother's noontide with Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.

DEMETRIUS

So should the murder'd look, and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

HERMIA

What's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?

DEMETRIUS

I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

HERMIA

Out, dog! out, cur! thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

DEMETRIUS

You spend your passion on a misprised mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Met opmerkingen [I118]: She thinks the rivalry has already resulted in death

HERMIA

I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

DEMETRIUS

And if I could, what should I **get** therefore?

HERMIA

A privilege never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

Exit

DEMETRIUS

There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe:
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

Lies down and sleeps

OBERON

What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.

PUCK

Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

OBERON

About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

PUCK

I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

Exit

OBERON

Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,

Met opmerkingen [119]: Demetrius remains in love with Hermia because she rejected him, just like Helena keeps chasing Demetrius because he has rejected her. As we have seen, frustrated desire has much more constancy than fulfilled love

Sink in apple of his eye.
 When his love he doth espy,
 Let her shine as gloriously
 As the Venus of the sky.
 When thou wakest, if she be by,
 Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK

PUCK

Captain of our fairy band,
 Helena is here at hand;
 And the youth, mistook by me,
 Pleading for a lover's fee.
 Shall we their fond pageant see?
 Lord, what fools these mortals be!

OBERON

Stand aside: the noise they make
 Will cause Demetrius to awake.

PUCK

Then will two at once woo one;
 That must needs be sport alone;
 And those things do best please me
 That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER and HELENA

LYSANDER

Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
 Scorn and derision never come in tears:
 Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
 In their nativity all truth appears.
 How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
 Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

HELENA

You do advance your cunning more and more.
 When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
 These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
 Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
 Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
 Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.

LYSANDER

I had no judgment when to her I swore.

HELENA

Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

Met opmerkingen [1120]: Oberon squeezing the flower above Demetrius' eyes. Mimetic desire can be directed by one who knows it's laws.

LYSANDER

Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

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!

Romantic vs mimetic explanation.

Only the magical sap seems to be the cause of Demetrius' volte-face to Helena. The audience may choose for the 'romantic' explanation of Puck's repairing activities, which was the preferred interpretation in the past centuries. It's a fact however, that Demetrius, accustomed to imitate Lysander's desire blindly, follows his model again.

Now the pattern pops up. 1) Demetrius and Lysander are never in love for a long time. 2) When they are in love, it's with the same girl. 3) When they speak they use the use same rhetoric, directed to both girls alike (their names have the same capital with a purpose, they only differ in stature and the colour of their hair). 4) Both boys are convinced of the spontaneous and sincere nature of their new love. 5) They try to surpass each other in a talking about this love.

HELENA

O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
 To set against me for your merriment:
 If you were 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.

LYSANDER

You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
 For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
 And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
 In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;

Met opmerkingen [I121]: The same divinization in the imagery, directed to another person. Meanwhile Demetrius magically imitates Lysander's appetite

Met opmerkingen [I122]: Again this significant image of internal mediation

Met opmerkingen [I123]: Lysander trying to be unique, hiding this effort behind a gesture of righteousness

And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.

HELENA

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

DEMETRIUS

Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

LYSANDER

Helen, it is not so.

DEMETRIUS

Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA

Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

LYSANDER

Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

HERMIA

What love could press Lysander from my side?

LYSANDER

Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all you fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

Polarity.

As observed earlier, the movement accelerates and all constancy in relationship is lost. When the two boys discard Hermia and focus on Helena, the polarity doesn't change, only the roles. The result is complete crisis, a certain undifferentiation. The four lovers perpetually seek singularity of passion through mimetic means, and their reward is conflicting uniformity. A

severely rejected young woman now is admired from all sides, while the former favourite is completely discarded. It's not their observation but ours that their personalities disintegrate more and more. At the crisis of this night, all four are looking in vain for their former selves, for instance when Hermia soon will complain: 'Am I not Hermia; are not thou Lysander?' In this confusion particular qualities disappear and violence increases.

HERMIA

You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

HELENA

Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
 Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
 To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
 Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
 Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
 To bait me with this foul derision?
 Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
 The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time
 For parting us,--O, is it all forgot?
 All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
 We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
 Have with our needles created both one flower,
 Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
 Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
 As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
 Had been incorporate. So we grow together,
 Like a double cherry, seeming parted,
 But yet an union in partition;
 Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
 So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
 Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
 Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
 And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
 It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
 Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
 Though I alone do feel the injury.

HERMIA

I am amazed at your passionate words.
 I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

HELENA

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
 To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
 And made your other love, Demetrius,
 Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
 To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
 Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this

Met opmerkingen [1124]: Here follows the beautiful description of their friendship, which had such value in the prehistory and - by the laws of mimetic love - has changed in bitter enmity (the theme of many Shakespeare plays from *Two Gentlemen of Verona* to *A Winter's Tale*)

Met opmerkingen [1125]: Their loving mimesis, functioning in double bind, not yet in competition

To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What thought I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unloved?
This you should pity rather than despise.

HERMIA

I understand not what you mean by this.

HELENA

Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

LYSANDER

Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life my soul, fair Helena!

HELENA

O excellent!

HERMIA

Sweet, do not scorn her so.

DEMETRIUS

If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

LYSANDER

Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

DEMETRIUS

I say I love thee more than he can do.

LYSANDER

If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

DEMETRIUS

Quick, come!

Met opmerkingen [1126]: Once rejected, love or ambition intensifies

Met opmerkingen [1127]: Mimetic reciprocity

HERMIA

Lysander, whereto tends all this?

LYSANDER

Away, you Ethiopel!

Met opmerkingen [I128]: Now Hermia is an unattractive gypsy in Lysander's eyes....

DEMETRIUS

No, no; he'll []

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

LYSANDER

Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

Met opmerkingen [I129]: In this scene of absolute bewilderment we see the four lovers from all sides

HERMIA

Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?
Sweet love,--

LYSANDER

Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!

Met opmerkingen [I130]: Scapegoat-qualities: outlandish, gypsy-like, outdated, brown skinned, ugly

HERMIA

Do you not jest?

HELENA

Yes, sooth; and so do you.

LYSANDER

Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

DEMETRIUS

I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.

LYSANDER

What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

HERMIA

What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left
me:
Why, then you left me--O, the gods forbid!--
In earnest, shall I say?

Met opmerkingen [I131]: The crisis of identity mentioned above

LYSANDER

Ay, by my life;
 And never did desire to see thee more.
 Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
 Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
 That I do hate thee and love Helena.

HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
 You thief of love! what, have you come by night
 And stolen my love's heart from him?

HELENA

Fine, i'faith!
 Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
 No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
 Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
 Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!

HERMIA

Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.
 Now I perceive that she hath made compare
 Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
 And with her personage, her tall personage,
 Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
 And are you grown so high in his esteem;
 Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
 How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
 How low am I? I am not yet so low
 But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

HELENA

I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
 Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
 I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
 I am a right maid for my cowardice:
 Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
 Because she is something lower than myself,
 That I can match her.

HERMIA

Lower! hark, again.

HELENA

Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
 I evermore did love you, Hermia,
 Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
 Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
 I told him of your stealth unto this wood.

Met opmerkingen [1132]: This word awakens Hermia's auto-aggression since she is now confronted with rejection by her friends

Met opmerkingen [1133]: The sense of self disappearing like snow, she clings to controversial extremity

Met opmerkingen [1134]: From puppet to dwarfish, but she does fight back, calling Helena a painted maypole and wanting to use her nails

Met opmerkingen [1135]: Also the mean side of Helena's appears

He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
 But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd me
 To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
 And now, so you will let me quiet go,
 To Athens will I bear my folly back
 And follow you no further: let me go:
 You see how simple and how fond I am.

HERMIA

Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?

HELENA

A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

HERMIA

What, with Lysander?

HELENA

With Demetrius.

LYSANDER

Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

DEMETRIUS

No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

HELENA

O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
 She was a vixen when she went to school;
 And though she be but little, she is fierce.

HERMIA

'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!
 Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
 Let me come to her.

LYSANDER

Get you gone, you dwarf;
 You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
 You bead, you acorn.

DEMETRIUS

You are too officious
 In her behalf that scorns your services.
 Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
 Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
 Never so little show of love to her,
 Thou shalt aby it.

LYSANDER

Met opmerkingen [I136]: The mimetic crisis and dramatic crisis is the same in this play. Everyone at war with everyone on all four levels

Met opmerkingen [I137]: In this complete crisis even insults are contagious

Now she holds me not;
 Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
 Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

DEMETRIUS

Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.

Exeunt LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS

HERMIA

You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
 Nay, go not back.

HELENA

I will not trust you, I,
 Nor longer stay in your curst company.
 Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
 My legs are longer though, to run away.

Exit

HERMIA

I am amazed, and know not what to say.

Exit

OBERON

This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
 Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

PUCK

Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
 Did not you tell me I should know the man
 By the Athenian garment be had on?
 And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
 That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
 And so far am I glad it so did sort
 As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

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.

Met opmerkingen [I138]: When he has won, he is willing to restore peace

PUCK

My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
 For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
 And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
 At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
 Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
 That in crossways and floods have burial,
 Already to their wormy beds are gone;
 For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
 They willfully themselves exile from light
 And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Met opmerkingen [I139]: We are certain to acknowledge death in Puck's universe, so his use as a scapegoat is limited

OBERON

But we are spirits of another sort:
 I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
 And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
 Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
 Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
 Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
 But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
 We may effect this business yet ere day.

Met opmerkingen [I140]: The author establishes again that they are spirits and will ever be

Exit

PUCK

Up and down, up and down,
 I will lead them up and down:
 I am fear'd in field and town:
 Goblin, lead them up and down.
 Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER

Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

PUCK

Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

LYSANDER

I will be with thee straight.

PUCK

Follow me, then,
To plainer ground.

Exit LYSANDER, as following the voice

Re-enter DEMETRIUS

DEMETRIUS

Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

PUCK

Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled
That draws a sword on thee.

DEMETRIUS

Yea, art thou there?

PUCK

Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

Exeunt

Re-enter LYSANDER

LYSANDER

He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me.

Lies down

Come, thou gentle day!
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite.

Sleeps

Re-enter PUCK and DEMETRIUS

PUCK

Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not?

DEMETRIUS

Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

PUCK

Come hither: I am here.

DEMETRIUS

Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.

Lies down and sleeps

Re-enter HELENA

HELENA

O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hour! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

Lies down and sleeps

PUCK

Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds make up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA

HERMIA

Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go;

My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
 Here will I rest me till the break of day.
 Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

Lies down and sleeps

PUCK

On the ground
 Sleep sound:
 I'll apply
 To your eye,
 Gentle lover, remedy.

Squeezing the juice on LYSANDER's eyes

When thou wakest,
 Thou takest
 True delight
 In the sight
 Of thy former lady's eye:
 And the country proverb known,
 That every man should take his own,
 In your waking shall be shown:
 Jack shall have Jill;
 Nought shall go ill;
 The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

Exit

SUMMARY

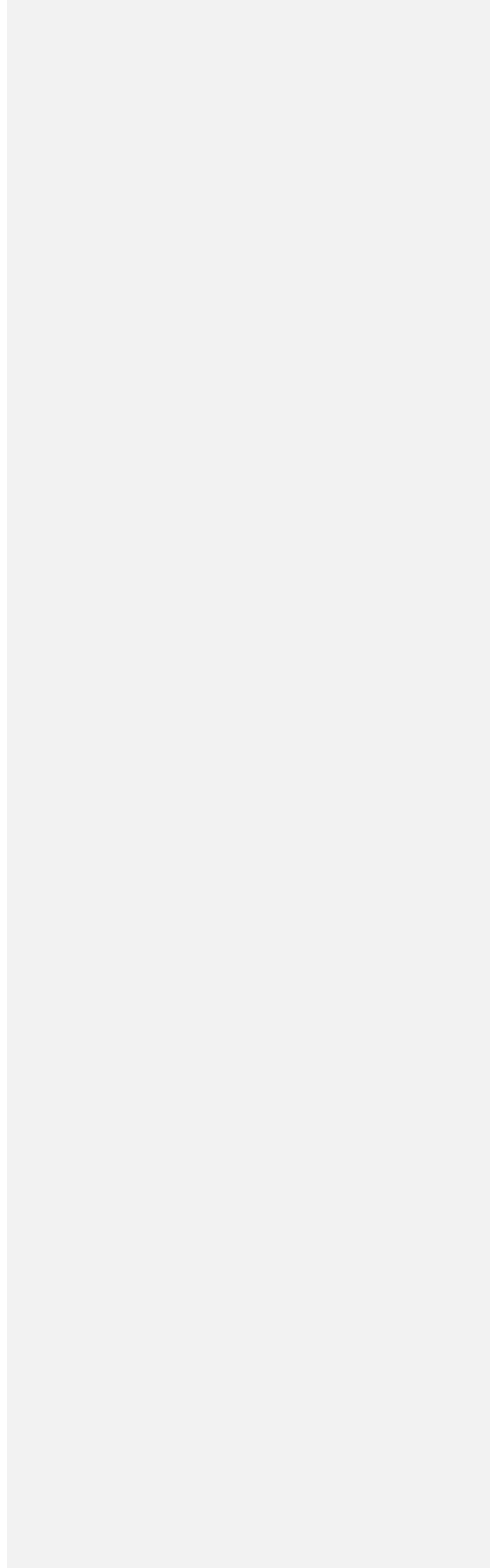
13. Crisis

14. Chaos

15. Catharsis

The violence and war of traditional rhetoric expresses the essentially conflicting and destructive nature of mimetic desire. The violence seems purely 'metaphorical' and the language of blood and destruction passes for a ridiculous exaggeration, a purely 'rhetorical effect' or sheer artificiality. But these violent metaphors become real at the height of the midsummer night, when Lysander and Demetrius draw their swords and truly attempt to slay one another, not figuratively anymore but actually.

Since the cause and solution of this turmoil seems to be Puck's service to Oberon, there is no real dramatic solution in this play. But there are possibilities for catharsis, which we will discuss in Act V. First the unnatural knot between humans and fairies must be severed.



ACT IV**SCENE I. The same.**

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA lying asleep.

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, and other Fairies attending; OBERON behind unseen

TITANIA

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

BOTTOM

Where's Peaseblossom?

PEASEBLOSSOM

Ready.

BOTTOM

Scratch my head Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

COBWEB

Ready.

BOTTOM

Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get you your
weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped
humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good
monsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret
yourself too much in the action, monsieur; and,
good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not;
I would be loath to have you overflown with a
honey-bag, signor. Where's Monsieur Mustardseed?

MUSTARDSEED

Ready.

BOTTOM

Give me your neaf, Monsieur Mustardseed. Pray you,
leave your courtesy, good monsieur.

MUSTARDSEED

What's your Will?

BOTTOM

Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb
to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur; for

methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I
am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me,
I must scratch.

TITANIA

What, wilt **thou** hear some music,
my sweet love?

Met opmerkingen [I141]: In Shakespeare's time 'thou' was used for close friends or lovers, while 'you' expressed more politeness

BOTTOM

I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have
the tongs and the bones.

TITANIA

Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

BOTTOM

Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good
dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle
of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

TITANIA

I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

BOTTOM

I had rather have a handful or two of dried **peas**.
But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I
have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Met opmerkingen [I142]: In the Hermetic tradition this detail refers to banal attitudes, just like the wish to sleep symbolizes little appreciation for the many experiences of life

TITANIA

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, begone, and be all ways away.

Exeunt fairies

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barked fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee!

They sleep

Enter PUCK

OBERON

[*Advancing*] Welcome, good Robin.
See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,

Seeking sweet favours from this hateful fool,
 I did upbraid her and fall out with her;
 For she his hairy temples then had rounded
 With a coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
 And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
 Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
 Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
 Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
 When I had at my pleasure taunted her
 And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
 I then did ask of her **her** changeling child;
 Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
 To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
 And now I have the boy, I will undo
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
 And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
 From off the head of this Athenian swain;
 That, he awaking when the other do,
 May all to Athens back again repair
 And think no more of this night's accidents
 But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
 But first I will release the fairy queen.
 (*to Titania*) Be as thou wast wont to be;
 See as thou wast wont to see:
 Dian's bud **o'er** Cupid's flower
 Hath such force and blessed power.
 Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

TITANIA

My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
 Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

OBERON

There lies **your** love.

TITANIA

How came **these** things to pass?
 O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

OBERON

Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
 Titania, music call; and strike more dead
 Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

TITANIA

Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!

Music, still

Met opmerkingen [I143]: Here Oberon describes his victory by using the trick of magic, for he now has the power to taunt lovesick Titania and get the changeling. On the level of the fairies the crisis is solved because Oberon has won, taming' Titania

Met opmerkingen [I144]: When we consider the magic of Cupid's flower as venom, Diana's bud is the antidote. Two sides of Oberon's intervention

Met opmerkingen [I145]: Complete victory for Oberon

Met opmerkingen [I146]: Complete humiliation for Titania

PUCK

Now, when thou wakest, with thine
own fool's eyes peep.

OBERON

Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

PUCK

Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

OBERON

Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

TITANIA

Come, my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.

Exeunt

Horns winded within

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train

THESEUS

Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

Exit an Attendant

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Met opmerkingen [1147]: Finally everything will be solved

HIPPOLYTA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
 When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
 With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
 Such gallant chiding: for, besides the groves,
 The skies, the fountains, every region near
 Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

Met opmerkingen [I148]: A signal that not all has been settled yet, on the human level

THESEUS

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
 So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
 Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
 Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
 Each under each. A cry more tuneable
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
 Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Met opmerkingen [I149]: Rivalry still lingering, first Hippolyta's heroic past and second Theseus' reaction of prowess (compare Facebook)

EGEUS

My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
 And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
 I wonder of their being here together.

THESEUS

No doubt they rose up early to observe
 The rite of May, and hearing our intent,
 Came here in grace our solemnity.
 But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
 That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

EGEUS

It is, my lord.

THESEUS

Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

Horns and shout within.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start up

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

LYSANDER

Pardon, my lord.

THESEUS

I pray you all, stand up.
 I know you two are rival enemies:
 How comes this gentle concord in the world,
 That hatred is so far from jealousy,
 To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

LYSANDER

My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
 Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,
 I cannot truly say how I came here;
 But, as I think,--for truly would I speak,
 And now do I bethink me, so it is,--
 I came with Hermia hither: our intent
 Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
 Without the peril of the Athenian law.

EGEUS

Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
 I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
 They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
 Thereby to have defeated you and me,
 You of your wife and me of my consent,
 Of my consent that she should be your wife.

DEMETRIUS

My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
 Of this their purpose hither to this wood;
 And I in fury hither follow'd them,
 Fair Helena in fancy following me.
 But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,--
 But by some power it is,--my love to Hermia,
 Melted as the snow, seems to me now
 As the remembrance of an idle gaud
 Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
 And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
 The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
 Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
 Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
 But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
 But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
 Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
 And will for evermore be true to it.

THESEUS

Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
 Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
 Egeus, I will overbear your will;
 For in the temple by and by with us
 These couples shall eternally be knit:

Met opmerkingen [1150]: Egeus seems to notice that Theseus doesn't have the same views any more, so he turns to Demetrius

Met opmerkingen [1151]: The magic has worked, the solution is near

And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

Exeunt THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train

DEMETRIUS

These things seem small and

Met opmerkingen [1152]: Again the word indistinguishable.
And small: they cannot understand its airy mechanism

HERMIA

Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

HELENA

So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

DEMETRIUS

Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

HERMIA

Yea; and my father.

HELENA

And Hippolyta.

LYSANDER

And he did bid us follow to the temple.

DEMETRIUS

Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him
And by the way let us recount our dreams.

Exeunt

BOTTOM

[*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will
answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho!
Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout,
the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen
hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare
vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to
say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go
about to expound this dream. Methought I was--there

Met opmerkingen [1153]: Also Bottom is healed immediately,
as he was rehearsing

is no man can tell what. Methought I was,--and
methought I had,--but man is but a patched fool, if
he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye
of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not
seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue
to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream
was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of
this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream,
because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the
latter end of a play, before the duke:
peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall
sing it at her death.

Exit

EXCURSION

The dramatic structure of A Midsummernightdream

We have passed the crisis in MND, the turning point which was the moment of total doubling, confusion and contagion. But how is the play built? In a normal dramatic structure there are three joints: inciting moment, crisis and climax.

1. Inciting moment

On the human level: *Hermia is the model. Everybody is in love with Hermia, including Helena, and Hermia herself. Now she is confronted with the patriarchal decisions of Egeus and Theseus. With Lysander she flees to the magical wood (in order to marry him far from Athens) but they tell Helena. In the night four lovers follow each other out of town into the fairyland. On the level of the craftsmen Bottom accepts to play Pyramus.*

On the superhuman level: *Oberon meets Titania. Being jealous of her object of desire, he takes action to get the changeling. The agent on the superhuman level is Oberon. He is more inclined to dawn and human sorrow than his companion Titania, who is a great spirit of the night revitalising nature. Oberon desires the changeling from India (either sexually or as a symbol of eastern wisdom) and uses Puck to divert Titania's attention.*

2. Crisis

On the human level: *tricked by Oberon's love-in-idleness Demetrius shifts from Hermia to Helena (imitating Lysander). Big reversal. Now Helena is the model. She is at the centre of the group, and everybody is obsessed with her, including Hermia.*

On the superhuman level: *tricked by Oberon, Titania falls in love with Bottom, the most short-sighted of the craftsmen transfigured into an ass by Puck. Follows the union of spirit and matter, feeding on peas. Even the greatest of all differences, the natural and the supernatural, temporarily vanishes. The monstrous in the Girardian sense.*

3. Climax

On the human level *Puck has done his duty well: though there are some dissonants in the hunting-scene where Theseus and Hippolyta meet the youngsters, we eventually have three pairs in proper love, the young ones acknowledging strange enchantments (IV, i, 127-198). Demetrius' love happens to be stable.*

On the superhuman level: *by Pucks repairing work (and because the object has faded) reconciliation is possible between Oberon and Titania, leading to harmony in nature again.*

So all problems are solved....

Then why is there a fifth Act?

Assignment (offering a copy of Act V)

- a. Why uses Shakespeare a framework of classical figures?
- b. Where is the sacrificial element needed to solve mimetic crisis?
- c. Please mention another comedy with this same sacrificial effect?

We continue with Act IV, scene ii: Bottom is his old self again.

SCENE II. Athens. QUINCE'S house.

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING

QUINCE

Have you sent to Bottom's house ? is he come home yet?

STARVELING

He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

FLUTE

If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

QUINCE

It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

FLUTE

No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

QUINCE

Yea and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

FLUTE

You must say 'paragon:' a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG

SNUG

Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

FLUTE

O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 'scaped sixpence a day: an the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged;

he would have deserved it: sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM

BOTTOM

Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

QUINCE

Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

BOTTOM

Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

QUINCE

Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

BOTTOM

Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pair his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away!

Exeunt

Catharsis in comedy.

Generally in comedies the catharsis will consist of a character ridiculed and humiliated at the end of the play (like Malvolio in Twelfth Night), providing a scapegoat and some sort of sacrifice, by which unanimity is created amongst all others. The love-story can be completed in marriage and everyone joins in a dance. In tragedy however, a major character appears to be guilty of terrible crimes and is punished for it, like the protagonist in Macbeth, or Claudius in Hamlet. We will observe in MND some layers of catharsis, instead of a living person.

ACT V

SCENE I. Athens. The palace of THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords and Attendants

HIPPOLYTA

'Tis strange my Theseus, that these
lovers speak of.

Met opmerkingen [I154]: Hippolyta has an inch for what has happened

THESEUS

More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

Met opmerkingen [I155]: But Theseus prefers the comfort of Reason. Unfortunately, he didn't learn enough

HIPPOLYTA

But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

Met opmerkingen [I156]: He doesn't have much respect either ...

Met opmerkingen [I157]: Transfigured, an important word in the theatre which is the medium of transformation

Met opmerkingen [I158]: A brave answer to the patriarchal reasoning of Theseus. We are invited to use our own experience to be moved, to be inspired. Compare Prospero's epilogue of *The Storm*

Collective vs individual.

Theseus' interpretation of the events doesn't satisfy Hippolyta and she draws her own conclusions. First she seems to grasp that myth is a collective rather than an individual phenomenon (in order fully to appreciate 'all their minds transfigured all together' we must realize that thematically this applies to the lovers and the craftsmen combined). 'So together' suggests the role of mutual imitation; aesthetic contagion. Furthermore, myth should not be confused with pure fiction as the product of individual imagination, a poetic inspiration that functions in complete isolation. Myth is not a subjective fabrication. In spite of its illogicality, inconsistencies and outright lies 'the story of the night... more witnesseth

that fancy's images'. This is a capital statement, irreconcilable with Theseus' fatuous scepticism. Hippolyta's five lines might be a little essay by Shakespeare himself on the nature of myth. The lady is convinced that, in spite of its effervescent genesis and fantastic content, myth is 'something of great constancy'. It has a stable structure, in other words, with all sorts of consequences that the purely subjective theory of Theseus cannot take into account. Evidently Shakespeare considered it necessary to contradict Theseus' opinion with these five lines by Hippolyta, but they are often cut from productions. We can conclude that Theseus embodies the superficial story; modest Hippolyta, however, enlightens here the deeper meaning.

THESEUS

Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

LYSANDER

More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

THESEUS

Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

PHILOSTRATE

Here, mighty Theseus.

THESEUS

Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

PHILOSTRATE

(Giving a paper) There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

THESEUS

[Reads] 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'
We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

Reads

Met opmerkingen [1159]: Supposing that he didn't make love to Hippolyta before

Met opmerkingen [1160]: Often Philostrate is played by the same actor who enacts Puck

Met opmerkingen [1161]: The first of a range of sad stories with evident sacrificial solutions, referring to scapegoating, the violence from which culture originated

'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'
That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

Reads

'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.'
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

In all stories above we hear rumblings of a violent resolution. Meanwhile Puck, the cause and saviour of our projected troubles, seems a scapegoat with limited possibilities because, as a spirit, he is already dead. In Act III, ii, 355-388 Oberon alludes to Acheron, a symbol of the nether world, defining sleep as death counterfeiting, creeping over the lovers with leaden legs and batty wings.

Instead, the three incidents (mythical, literary and historical) are proposed as entertainment, for no apparent purpose except that all of them culminate in victimization and death.

Why does Shakespeare mention these spectacles, to be dismissed before settling for a barely acceptable fourth? All three allude to something that vainly attempts to force its way into MND, something always rejected and expelled, because the collective death of a victim is 'not sorting with a nuptial ceremony'. Sacrifice cannot be at the centre of MND but is everywhere on the periphery, marginal, excluded; but unmistakably present. It will be present in Pyramus and Thisbe of course, though not in such horribly graphic form as the 'tipsy Bacchanals, tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'

Furthermore, in the three stories offered a poet happens to be the victim. In the first he is castrated, in the second he is lynched (like the poet Cinna in Julius Caesar), in the third he dies alone, a victim of universal indifference – no longer physically dismembered, his remains scattered all over the countryside, but abandoned by all.

The fourth story is very tragic and theatrical in the performance of the craftsmen: young love as a literary model enacted. Pyramus and Thisbe seemingly torn apart by parents, a wall and a humanlike lion as impediments, imitate each other tragically – but comically - into death.

THESEUS (*reads*)

'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

PHILOSTRATE

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,

Met opmerkingen [I162]: The death of Orpheus is sacrificial indeed

Met opmerkingen [I163]: A rather vague example of somebody/something sacrificed, after being utterly neglected

Met opmerkingen [I164]: It seems that Theseus has changed a little bit too

Met opmerkingen [I165]: The identification with 'our' mechanicals is heightened

Met opmerkingen [I166]: We are held in the same agreeable tension

Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

THESEUS

What are they that do play it?

PHILOSTRATE

Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

THESEUS

And we will hear it.

PHILOSTRATE

No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.

THESEUS

I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

Exit PHILOSTRATE

HIPPOLYTA

I love not to see wretchedness o'er charged
And duty in his service perishing.

THESEUS

Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

HIPPOLYTA

He says they can do nothing in this kind.

THESEUS

The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,

Met opmerkingen [I167]: Philostrate, the double of Puck, is blocking our desire to have a catharsis

Met opmerkingen [I168]: Again Hippolyta is the sensitive one

Met opmerkingen [I169]: Theseus poses as a dutiful leader or he has improved his abilities, showing real understanding

Throttle their practised accent in their fears
 And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
 Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
 Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;
 And in the modesty of fearful duty
 I read as much as from the rattling tongue
 Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
 In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE

PHILOSTRATE

So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.

THESEUS

Let him approach.

Flourish of trumpets

Enter QUINCE for the Prologue

Prologue

If we offend, it is with our good will.
 That you should think, we come not to offend,
 But with good will. To show our simple skill,
 That is the true beginning of our end.
 Consider then we come but in despite.
 We do not come as minding to contest you,
 Our true intent is. All for your delight
 We are not here. That you should here repent you,
 The actors are at hand and by their show
 You shall know all that you are like to know.

THESEUS

This fellow doth not stand upon points.

LYSANDER

He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows
 not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not
 enough to speak, but to speak true.

HIPPOLYTA

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child
 on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

THESEUS

His speech, was like a tangled chain; nothing
 impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Met opmerkingen [I170]: In this speech we detect something has happened to him, too

Met opmerkingen [I171]: Like in Hamlet the play in the play starts with a prologue (verbal or mimed), followed by the piece

Met opmerkingen [I172]: In comedy the sacrificial element is in ridiculing. Someone being dismissed or ridiculed by persons on stage; but possibly also presenting himself as awkward, being silently criticized or laughed at by us, the audience

Met opmerkingen [I173]: More or less subtle, like the upperclass English is fond to do

Met opmerkingen [I174]: Tongue in cheek mimesis of model Theseus

Met opmerkingen [I175]: More kind, but even so. In the meantime we, the audience, are mediated by these characters.

Met opmerkingen [I176]: What Theseus says of the mixed-up prologue of Quince is true of Bottom as well and is about to be true of the entire play within the play and of MND as a whole

Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion

Prologue

Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
 But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
 This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
 This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
 This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
 Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
 And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
 To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
 This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
 Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
 By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
 To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
 This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
 The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
 Did scare away, or rather did affright;
 And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
 Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
 Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
 And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
 Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
 He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
 And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
 His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
 Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
 At large discourse, while here they do remain.

Exeunt Prologue, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine

THESEUS

I wonder if the lion be to speak.

DEMETRIUS

No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall

In this same interlude it doth befall
 That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
 And such a wall, as I would have you think,
 That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
 Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
 Did whisper often very secretly.
 This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show
 That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

Met opmerkingen [I177]: Wall is the convenient impediment for young lovers, just like Theseus and Egeus as scarecrows in the beginning of MND, see page 10

Met opmerkingen [I178]: Next comes another impediment which causes Love to be True: Death by a Lion

Met opmerkingen [I179]: Normally a prologue doesn't take that long. These explanations comically prove both the enthusiasm of the mechanicals and their insecurity as amateurs

Met opmerkingen [I180]: By its fabric Wall exposes the nonsense of the lovers' problem

Met opmerkingen [I181]: The funny effect of the cranny, right and 'sinister' (left)

THESEUS

Would you desire **lime** and hair to speak better?

DEMETRIUS

It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard
discourse, my lord.

Enter Pyramus

THESEUS

Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Pyramus

O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

Wall holds up his fingers

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

THESEUS

The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyramus

No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me'
is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to
spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will
fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with **lime** and hair knit up in thee.

Pyramus

I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can **hear** my Thisby's face. Thisby!

Met opmerkingen [I182]: The inadequate construction emphasised again

Met opmerkingen [I183]: Handsome Pyramus and beautiful Thisbe are next-door neighbours with only a wall between them, the wall that their fathers built, of course, a not-quite-fatal impediment to their passionate ardour

Met opmerkingen [I184]: It seems that in Elizabethan England the hair of cows was used to facilitate the erection of walls, helping the wet lime hold together

Met opmerkingen [I185]: Comic dislocation of the senses

Thisbe

My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyramus

Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like **Limander**, am I trusty still.

Met opmerkingen [I186]: Presumably a mix of **Leander**, Hero's lover, and **Alexander** of Troy (Paris), the lover of fair Helen

Thisbe

And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyramus

Not **Shafalus** to Procrus was so true.

Met opmerkingen [I187]: Cephalus and Procris, a legendary pair of tragic lovers, a tale told by Ovid in *Metamorphoses*.

Thisbe

As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyramus

O kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

Thisbe

I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyramus

Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

Thisbe

'Tide life, 'tide death, I come **without** delay.

Met opmerkingen [I188]: When the lovers can meet at Ninny's tomb, there is not much for the poor wall to do. Gone are its dramatic possibilities

Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe

Wall

Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go.

Exit

The imposing monument, Wall, departs with great dignity. Just like Egeus and Theseus at the beginning of the play, after their deceptive show of authority. Romantic art systematically turns mimetic rivals into fake obstacles, such as this most inert partition, marvellously nimble at getting out of the way when no longer needed. The amazing wall should be added to the impediments listed in the duet of Lysander and Hermia in Act I.

THESEUS

Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

DEMETRIUS

No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear
without warning.

HIPPOLYTA

This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

THESEUS

The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst
are no worse, if imagination amend them.

HIPPOLYTA

It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

THESEUS

If we imagine no worse of them than they of
themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here
come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Enter Lion and Moonshine

Lion

You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

THESEUS

A very gentle beast, of a good conscience.

DEMETRIUS

The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

LYSANDER

This lion is a very fox for his valour.

THESEUS

True; and a goose for his discretion.

DEMETRIUS

Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his
discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

THESEUS

His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour;
for the goose carries not the fox. It is well:
leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Met opmerkingen [1189]: Now she is more negative than her husband. Disappointed?

Moonshine

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;--

DEMETRIUS

He should have worn the horns on his head.

THESEUS

He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moonshine

This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

THESEUS

This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon?

DEMETRIUS

He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

HIPPOLYTA

I am awearry of this moon: would he would change!

THESEUS

It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

LYSANDER

Proceed, Moon.

Moonshine

All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

DEMETRIUS

Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter Thisbe

Thisbe

This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion

[Roaring] Oh--

Thisbe runs off

DEMETRIUS

Well roared, Lion.

THESEUS

Well run, Thisbe.

HIPPOLYTA

Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace.

The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit

THESEUS

Well moused, Lion.

LYSANDER

And so the lion vanished.

DEMETRIUS

And then came Pyramus.

Enter Pyramus

Pyramus

Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!

Eyes, do you see?

How can it be?

O dainty duck! O dear!

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood!

Approach, ye Furies fell!

O Fates, come, come,

Cut thread and thrum;

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

THESEUS

This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

HIPPOLYTA

Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyramus

O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
 Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
 Which is--no, no--which was the fairest dame
 That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd
 with cheer.

Come, tears, confound;

Out, sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus;

Ay, that left pap,

Where heart doth hop:

(Stabs himself)

Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.

Now am I dead,

Now am I fled;

My soul is in the sky:

Tongue, lose thy light;

Moon take thy flight:

Exit Moonshine

Now die, die, die, die, die.

Dies

DEMETRIUS

No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

LYSANDER

Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

THESEUS

With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and
 prove an ass.

HIPPOLYTA

How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes
 back and finds her lover?

THESEUS

She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and
 her passion ends the play.

Re-enter Thisbe

HIPPOLYTA

Methinks she should not use a long one for such a
 Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

DEMETRIUS

A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which
Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us;
she for a woman, God bless us.

LYSANDER

She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

DEMETRIUS

And thus she means, videlicet:--

Thisbe

Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These My lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters **Three**,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue:
(*Stabs herself*)
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu.

Dies

THESEUS

Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

DEMETRIUS

Ay, and Wall too.

BOTTOM

[Starting up] No assure you; the wall is down that
parted their fathers. Will it please you to **see** the

Met opmerkingen [I190]: The three goddesses of Fate

Met opmerkingen [I191]: Dislocation of the senses again.

epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

THESEUS

No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there needs none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

A dance

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity.

Exeunt

Enter PUCK

PUCK

Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Met opmerkingen [I192]: Generally a comedy was completed by a dance. The problem here is that this spectacle was a tragedy in the eyes of the players but rather grotesque comedy in the eyes of the select audience. A Bergomask is a rustic dance after the manner of Bergamo, Italy; but utter nonsense too, perhaps referring to the aristocratic custom of the Masque

Met opmerkingen [I193]: Hecate, Demeter, Persephone, threefold Goddess of Krete

Enter OBERON and TITANIA with their train

OBERON

Through the house give gathering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire:
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

TITANIA

First, rehearse your song by rote
To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

Song and dance

OBERON

Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

Exeunt OBERON, TITANIA, and train

PUCK

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here

Met opmerkingen [1194]: After the conflict and confusion on all levels everything is right again, so the supernatural powers can do their blessed work which normal people never notice

While these visions did appear.
 And this weak and idle theme,
 No more yielding but a dream,
 Gentles, do not reprehend:
 if you pardon, we will mend:
 And, as I am an honest Puck,
 If we have unearned luck
 Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
 We will make amends ere long;
 Else the Puck a liar call;
 So, good night unto you all.
 Give me your hands, if we be friends,
 And Robin shall restore amends.

Totus mundi agit histrionem

In this text we have investigated 15 understatements connected to mimetic theory, the most important of which are mimetic rivalry and the illusion of autonomy. Here they are again, to discuss in a concluding session.

1. Mediation
2. Desire
3. Sacrifice
4. Illusion of autonomy
5. Literary and film models
6. Mimetic rivalry
7. Metaphysical desire
8. Double bind
9. Reciprocity
10. In conflict the object fades
11. Auto/hetero-violence
12. Undifferentiation
13. Crisis
14. Chaos
15. Catharsis

*Investigating the catharsis in MND we now appreciate how difficult it is to discern the scapegoat in comedy. We conclude that Puck caused and solved the mimetic crisis (which was an identity-crisis as well) and therefore embodies it. He is the **pharmakos**, poison and medicine at the same time. So... can we leave it with Puck?*

He is a fairy and we have been reading a play. Our world is real and we can choose to remain blind, of course. Shakespeare offers all possibilities!

But... all the world is a stage.

Met opmerkingen [I195]: Words above the entrance of the Globe-theater in London, and told by melancholy Jaques in *As you like it*.

Met opmerkingen [I196]: Likewise in *Pyramus and Thisbe* (play in the play) and in *Romeo & Julia* (tragedy) herbal poison has a significant double function, depending on its quantity.