

**A101: An arts foundation course**  
**A101/06: Interpreting a dream**

**Producer: Nancy Thomas**

**Contributor(s) in the clip:**

**Peter Brook**

**James Mossman**

**Clip transcript: A101 A Midsummer Night's Dream 2**

**Peter Brook:**

Shakespeare in talking, in writing a play of which there are many themes, if we say 'illusion and reality' there's only one of the themes, decided that as a, as a metaphor for this, something that he could work through, he would – he took the most dazzlingly simple solution which was there, he would work through the theatre. So he said, I'm going to do a play about illusion and reality and for this I'm going to use the action of make-believe, the action of make-believe means that my play is going to be about a play within a play within a play. It's a play about some people who are not actors who decide to become actors to do a play, and in the process of their doing the play, strange questions of what a play is even emerge.

**Extract: A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1970, directed by Peter Brook**  
**Act III Scene I**

**Bottom:**

Masters, you ought to consider with yourself, to bring in – God shields us – a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wildfowl that your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

**Snout:**

Therefore another prologue must tell he is not the 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 ask you', or 'I would request you', or 'I would beseech you' not to tremble, not to fear. My life for yours: if you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity on my life. No. I am no such thing. I am a man, as other men are' – and then indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

**Quince:**

Well, it shall be so.

**James Mossman:**

How important for you is that conversation of the workmen preparing their play for the nobles? It seemed to be the very key to you?

**Peter Brook:**

Yes, because in a very short time all the arguments, all the theories of the modern theatre are all dealt with. But you can find the whole of the work of Brecht; you can find the results

of almost all the round tables and discussions of directors all over the world, all through the last century, all summed up in these very, in these few lines, of which the strongest one for me is the assertion that the theatre is about men, by men for men.

**Extract: A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1970, directed by Peter Brook  
Act III Scene I**

**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 (as Thisbe):**

Most radiant Pyramus, most lilywhite of hue,  
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant briar,  
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. Ninus.