

# GREEN SHAKESPEARE

A SYMPOSIUM ON ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AND THE BARD

---

**FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2010**  
**BLOUNT AUDITORIUM, RHODES COLLEGE**

---

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

---

### 2 P.M. LECTURE

**"THE ECOLOGY OF SELF IN *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM*"**

Robert Watson (UCLA)

### 3 P.M. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

**"THE STATE OF THE FIELD OF ECOCRITICISM"**

Daniel Brayton (Middlebury College) • Simon Estok (Sungkyunkwan University)  
Sharon O'Dair (University Of Alabama) • Karen Raber (University Of Mississippi)

### 4 P.M. RECEPTION

**PROJECT GREEN FORK CERTIFIED**

**CO-SPONSORED BY THE DR. IRIS A. PEARCE SHAKESPEARE ENDOWMENT  
& THE RHODES COLLEGE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM**

**WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM  
CODA: THE CENTER FOR OUTREACH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS**

For further information, see <http://www.rhodes.edu/shakespeare/>

# The Ecology of Self in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

## Prof. Robert N. Watson, UCLA

1. “The human gut is a virtual zoo, full of a wide variety of bacteria, a new study found. And scientists say that’s a good thing. The first results of an international effort to catalog the millions of non-human genes inside people found about 170 different bacteria species thriving in the average person’s digestive tract. The study also found that people with inflammatory bowel disease had fewer distinct species inside the gut. More than 99 percent of the different types of genes in our bodies are not in fact human, but come from microbes. Bacteria ‘rule this planet, including our body,’ said the study’s co-author. ‘I think it’s important that people realize that we are not really human — we are a walking colony of bacteria and they are crucial for our well being and health.’” (*Nature*, March, 2010)
2. Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (1634): “**to call our selves a Microcosme, or little world**, I thought it onely a pleasant trope of Rhetorick, till my neare judgement and second thoughts told me **there was a reall truth therein,**” which is that “**we live the life of plants, the life of animals, the life of men,** and at last the life of spirits...**for though there bee but one [world] to sense, there are two to reason; the one visible, the other invisible.**”
3. John Beale’s 1658 letter to Samuel Hartlib wondered “Whether there bee not some kinds of **spirits (whether they may all at all times bee properly called Angells, or not) That run parallel & have their offices in & over every part of the Creation...**some to Mineralls, some to Vegetables, some to Animalls.” These spirits may be “**soe small & soe invisible, that with our best Micropticks we cannot find it,**” because it is only 1/8,200th of a “**mustard seede, or Cypresse seede.** Bee not these spirits...? Hence it did not misbecome the phansy of Paracelsus to **call the seede of animals, & vegetables a sprite; & to devise the strange & newe names...; For the soundest wits cannot soe name these internall agents, & secrete operators, as to give a visible demonstration, or a distinct light to them that doe not concur in the same phantsy.**”
4. OBERON    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. (2.1.176–82)
5. OBERON    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...  
                  And there **the snake throws her enamel’d skin,**  
                  **Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in.** (2.2.249–55)
6. 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... (2.2.27–30; cf. 64)

7. THISBE Most radiant Pyramus, most **lily**-white of hue,  
Of color 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. (3.1.93–96)
8. PUCK 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. (3.1.108–11)
9. PUCK 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. (3.2.19–24)
10. HERMIA **Out, dog, out, cur!** thou driv'st me past the bounds  
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him then?  
Henceforth be never number'd among men! ....  
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. (3.2.65–73)
11. HELENA We, Hermia, **like two artificial gods,**  
**Have with our needles created both one flower,**  
Both on one sampler...  
Like to **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.** (3.2.203–12)
12. HERMIA O me, you juggler, you **canker-blossom,**  
You thief of love! What, have you come by night  
And stol'n my love's heart from him? (3.2.282–4)
13. TITANIA Come, sit thee down upon this flow'ry 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...  
**So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle**  
**Gently entwist; the female ivy so**  
**Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.**  
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! (4.1.1–45)

14. THESEUS We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,  
And mark the musical **confusion**  
Of hounds and echo in **conjunction**.
- 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 **all one mutual cry**: I never heard  
**So musical a discord**, such sweet thunder.
- 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 **dewlap'd** like **Thessalian bulls**;  
Slow in pursuit; but match'd in mouth like **bells**,  
Each under each. (4.1.109–24)

15. PUCK Now the hungry lion roars,  
And the wolf howls the moon....  
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. (5.1.371–82)

16. John Donne, *Devotions* (1624): “And then as the other *world* produces *Serpents*, and *Vipers*, malignant, & venomous creatures, and *Wormes*, and *Caterpillars*, that endeavour to devoure that world which produces them, and *Monsters* compiled and complicated of divers parents, & kinds, so this world, our selves, produces all these in us, in producing *diseases*, & *sicknesses*, of all those sorts; venimous, and infectious diseases, feeding & consuming diseases, and manifold and entangled diseases, made up of many several ones.”

17. PUCK 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. (5.1.409–14)

18. “**Our ecological sensibilities seem to stop at the edge of the visible**.... Our overuse of antibacterials and antibiotics and the common belief that all microorganisms are harmful reflect our obsession with destroying the unseen.... I argue instead for a new take on the world of the unseen—one that acknowledges the vital and subtle relationships that all plants and animals have with microorganisms. Without the microbial worlds that accompany us, human life would not exist. **We should honor these relationships**.” Robert Dorit, *American Scientist* (2008)

19. “If the whole bodie were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?... those membres of the bodie, which seme to be more feble, are necessarie... God hath tempered the bodie together, and hath given the more honour to that parte which lacked, Lest there shulde be anie division in the bodie: but that the members shulde have the same care one for another.”  
— (1 Corinthians 12:17-25, Geneva Bible; 1560 edition)